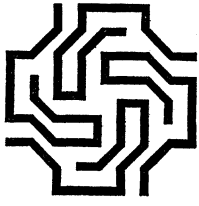
The daily power game

International series on the quality of working life

Vol. 6



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Mauk Mulder
Foundation for Business Administration

Martinus Nijhoff Social Sciences Division
Leiden 1977

ISBN-13: 978-1-4684-6953-0 e-ISBN-13: 978-1-4684-6951-6
DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4684-6951-6

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Introduction

Politicians, social scientists, entrepreneurs, trade unionists, church leaders, philosophers, all of us in fact have caused such vast vagueness and confusion about the term 'power' that this can hardly be attributed to mere chance. Apparently, there is so much at stake, whenever we think about power or are involved, that it may be worth our while to keep the concept blurred.

This is most clearly seen in social science. Power, inequality in power, struggle for power are a kind of prime movers in social life, but power problems have seldom been studied, compared to the research done on other subjects, such as satisfaction about personal achievement, perception, mental processes, achievement motivation, cultural differences, etc.

Power appears to be under a taboo in society and most social scientists agree not to discuss it (ref. 23, pp. 55 and 56). Whatever research there has been reveals the peculiar trend of restricting itself to the study of power differences and power struggles as world- or macro-problems. Studies of mondial problems have covered relations between America and the Soviet Union, or between rich and poor countries. China has also been included of late. The studies on macrostructural problems will cover subjects like the power of particular groups within the nation, such as retired army generals and politicians working in various sectors of trade and industry (ref. 21, pp. 11 and 281), or the number of representatives of large banks on the advisory boards of other companies (ref. 22).

In the Netherlands Mokken et al. carried out an investigation on the latter subject after Frank Mertens (president of the Netherlands Catholic Trade Union at that time) presented his '200' formula. He claimed that key positions in business and so 'real power' in Holland were occupied by the same 200 persons, the same happy few.

The uses of microanalysis have been neglected, however, although there are good grounds for giving the highest priority to the study of power problems on a small scale.

To begin with, any 'large' social process, notably the struggle for power, also runs its course in smaller social units, that offer a better opportunity for study. Inequality in power and the struggle for power occur in small groups too; are even 'normal'. The struggle for power within families, sports teams, clubs, classes, boards, committees and working groups offers an abundance of data for scientific or non-scientific analysis.

A smaller unit may be subjected to systems analysis, e.g. the interaction of components playing such a large part in the escalation of the struggle for power, or to the analysis of components, e.g. the motivation of individuals. It would certainly be efficient to know more about microanalysis since the struggle between 'big' powers like America, the Soviet Union and China is often described in terms used in microanalysis like' . . . an aggressive movement by the first party provoked the other to retaliate", . . . fears Cuba like a pistol on his chest';' . . . believes Vietnam to be a threat to his flank'.

A far better reason for microanalysis is that any action, including fighting for power, is planned and started by small groups. The Soviet Union means Stalin and his followers or Khrushchev ranking first among his peers. In the case of China, the result of the struggle for power between Mao and Lin Piau, each supported by his own clique, was the determinant, because the remaining small group was to play the larger role in the country's decisions on policy.

The Club of Rome, up to now only presenting analyses of mondial or macrorelations and neglecting microanalysis, offers a very good example by saying that fundamental revision of behaviour, values and objectives on the individual level is necessary (ref. 5, pp. 183, 187, et al.). The Club is not large, but felt the need for an even smaller group and selected an Executive Committee of six persons. Further, the ultimate result of the Club's efforts does not depend on the validity of Meadows' analysis, but on the action taken by thousands of other small groups, of school children or youth associations starting campaigns for improvement of the environment, etc., etc.

The Club of Rome appeals to the world for a better 'total environment' policy, but actually works in small groups, carrying on the battle. The same applies to the battle carried on in all parts of the world, where people try to get rid of injustices and disadvantages clinging to inequality in power or to overcome some inequality in power in social life.

In 1651 Hobbes supposed that human beings possessed 'a restless desire of power after power. Man is in a condition of war of every man against every man' (ref. 13, p. 69). Later, Nietzsche presented the same ideas when he wrote: 'Diese Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem! Und auch ihr selber seid dieser Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem' (ref. 45).

If this is true, should we not investigate these fundamental processes on the smaller group level? I believe that social scientists *could* contribute to the development of society on the right lines and *must* do so, if we are to stop submitting to fate like an ant colony that reacts promptly to disaster without any follow-up.

If we really wish to get a good grip on the power problem, grounded on facts, we need more knowledge and better insight into the causes of the continuous struggle for power, how differences in power may be reduced, what conditions have to be created and what will then be the consequences. In short, we shall have to develop theories and check them carefully by scientific analysis of basic factual data.

This will be the only way to enable people to decide on the big issues of the near future and substantiate some individual freedom. In the face of the belief that the search for regular patterns and the application of systematic methods is unnecessary because the explanation of the 'here-and-now occurring' single event in social reality will serve the purpose just as well, or even better, I hold that we then allow and even invite subjective arbitrariness in interpretation, which is highly undesirable. This is just the thing we should avoid in the study of power problems. It will be clear to the reader why many people are interested in restricting to a minimum investigations and keeping the results of any analysis of power recondite and equivocal.

This book aims at contributing to the better understanding of

fundamental processes on a small scale, reporting on:

- my theory on the struggle for power and the reduction in power differences ('power distance reduction' theory).
- the methods applied to test hypotheses,
- the factual data we have found*, and
- the main outlines of a few societal conclusions.

The theory and hypotheses are discussed in Chapter 1. The methods of investigation are explained in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 the research findings are reported, per hypothesis. Chapter 4 is devoted to summing up, and ends with a few social conclusions, which permits this chapter to be read separately. The sequence of the interrelated hypotheses is given in a separate list (p. 92) for easy reference. Definitions of important concepts have been listed on page 90.

* A detailed report on the data is not given here; readers are referred to the listed published reports (p. 94). The names of numerous persons who co-operated with me during ten years of research are given in the bibliography, but one name should be mentioned here: Peter Veen.

1. The theory of inequality in power and struggle for power

The power distance reduction theory has been laid down in interrelated hypotheses. This is of particular importance because the factual confirmation of a single hypothesis will also provide some support for the other hypotheses. Page 92 presents a methodical listing of the hypotheses that will be discussed in the given order.

The striving for power

If the exercise of power is defined as determining or directing the behaviour of others to some extent (and more than in the reverse direction), the power distance theory starts from the hypothesis that the individual feels satisfaction in exercising power and strives to increase his power.

Theoretical concepts that differ from this hypothesis are:

a. the individual wants to be independent of more powerful Others and strives for independence by trying to increase his own power (autonomy theory)
b. the individual wants to be responsible for the completion of his task and strives for more power to safeguard this responsibility (achievement motivation or self-realization theory)
c. the individual strives for power to satisfy primary biological wants and wants derived from these. Power enables him to acquire food, money, etc.

In these three concepts power is obviously seen as a beautiful thing or, at least, as a less handsome means to an admirable end.

Social sciences in America particularly present the view that man is a rational or economically rational being, ever striving for direct

profit or direct expedience. This utility theory is also applied to power that would never be exercised for its own sake, but used to reach a purpose. The principle of the 'economically rational' human being proves to be wrong, even in our culture, and is notably untrue in the field of power (see Case 1).

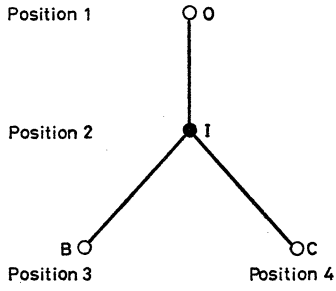
Case 1: I was about nine years old when an older and much stronger boy asked me to tell him my father's Christian name. No one else was around. I told him, although I felt humiliated. The next thing he wanted to know was my mother's name. This was too much and, feeling trapped, I started a fight. Illustration never provides evidence, but the situation shows that the boy was merely exercising power, which cannot be explained by the theories given under *a*, *b*, and *c*. You may try to recall similar experiences of your own and see how you would interpret them. I am inviting you to do so now and later, for the purpose of finding out whether the theoretical interpretations given in this book tally with your experiences or how they differ from your interpretations.

Stack Sullivan, the psychiatrist, speaks of 'the biological strivings for power' and of 'ability or power, ordinarily much more important in the human being than the impulses resulting from a feeling of hunger or thirst' (ref. 50, pp. 6-8 and 120-122). According to Sullivan, and others, the striving for power is a primary desire and should not be seen as a motive resulting from other motives.

Descartes formulated his philosophy as 'I think, therefore I am', but it might well be adapted to 'I exercise power, therefore I am'. The power distance theory does not suppose, however, that there would never be any activity to be explained as outlined under *a*, *b* and *c*. It only says that power will sometimes be the original motive and cannot be derived from another motive, as mentioned in the three theoretical concepts or others. *Hypothesis 1* therefore says: 'The mere exercise of power will give satisfaction' (ref. 23, pp. 53-58) and it should be noted that the Individual need not be independent

of others (see fig. 1, power structures). In the inverted Y-structure of fig. 1, the Individual (I) depends on the Other (O) but has power himself; there also is a difference in power (power distance) between him and the persons in positions 3 and 4.

System 1: inverted Y-structure (small power distance I-O)



System 2: wheel or yoke structure (great power distance)

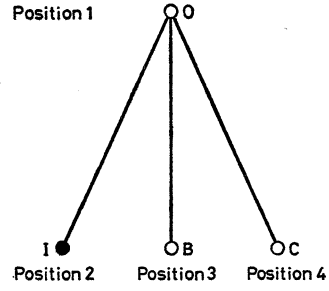


Figure 1. Power structures.
O = the Other more powerful person (leader)
I = the Individual, less powerful than O, but more powerful than B and C in system 1 and just as powerless as B and C in system 2.

The struggle for power in keeping less powerful persons at a distance

If we elaborate on the general principle, given as hypothesis 1, we shall see that the Individual often functions as a part of a larger or smaller system involving others who are more powerful or less powerful than he is. So we see power at three levels at least, finding that individuals tend to pull away from less powerful persons, 'keeping their distance'.

The power distance theory says that the more powerful Individual (see fig. 1 for comparing I's position to the B and C positions in

the inverted Y-structure) will try to increase the distance to the less powerful person (ref. 23, pp. 65-67) and *hypothesis 2* is formulated as 'The more powerful individual will strive to keep or increase the distance to the less powerful person'. He will avoid association with less powerful persons and his feelings towards them are negative. He cannot recognize himself (i.e. the picture he has made of himself) in less powerful persons and experiences any increase in power of the less powerful person as a threat to his own, relatively more powerful, position. (See Fromm on the attitudes of German middle classes before 1933, ref. 12.)

Specified by *hypothesis 3*: 'The greater the distance from the less powerful person, the stronger the striving of the powerful to increase it'. This tendency to increase the power distance is closely linked with the power distance reduction tendency, the following point to be discussed. It is also hard to distinguish between these tendencies in social reality and in experimental work. Increasing the distance to less powerful persons often coincides with reducing the distance to the more powerful persons in social reality, as will be seen by the movement of the Individual with some power (I) in the direction of the Other more powerful person (O) in the inverted Y-structure of fig. 1 (cf. ref. 23, pp. 100-105) (see Case 2).

Case 2: Again, these abstract relations may come alive when you draw on your own experiences. You will have noticed again and again, that a climber on the power ladder keeps aloof from his inferiors mentally and physically, sometimes even feels ashamed of yesterday's friends or pushes them out of his circle, giving them the cold shoulder in the presence of more powerful people.

Illustration: Addressing the president of the company, a researcher referred to his talk with an associate of the president. It appeared that the associate was a doorman, which made the president wince. He never thought of a doorman as an associate, the distance being too great. In many organizations, where quality is said to count in business or emancipation is the slogan, people roar with laughter at the suggestion that women could be leaders. Powerful people push others down with so much force that they will never take any up-

ward movement of the latter seriously. The right man must be in the right place and not the right *person*. Language always reflects social trends (cf. footnote, page 82).

Do you know any commercial organization or trade union in the Netherlands that does *not* show the tendency to keep women a long way from exercising power?

There are two cultures – of the powerful and of the powerless.

The struggle for power in reducing the distance to the more powerful person

The quintessence of the theory, expressed in hypotheses 4 and 5, relates to the striving of the less powerful persons in the social system in which they function with more powerful others. Their striving is directed at reducing the difference in power.

Hypothesis 4: 'Individuals will strive to reduce the power distance (power difference) between themselves and more powerful persons and to equalize'.

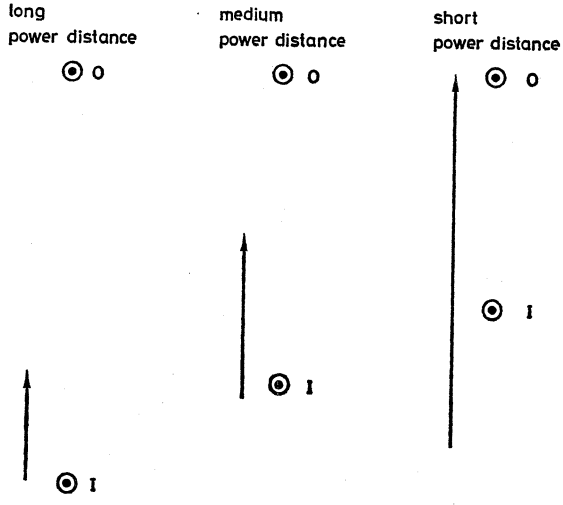


Figure 2. Varying strength of power distance reduction tendency.
The length of the arrow represents the strength of the power distance reduction tendency in I at various distances from the other, more powerful person (O).

Hypothesis 5: 'The smaller the distance from the more powerful person, the stronger the tendency to reduce it'. (Cf. I's positions in systems 1 and 2 of fig. 1; I's tendency to reduce the power distance I-O will be stronger in system 1) (ref. 23, pp. 69-70.)

Paradoxically, the power distance reduction tendency grows stronger as the distance decreases. According to the theory, persons of the lowest rank of power will not strive to reduce the power distance, but relatively more powerful persons will.

According to the power distance theory the tendency to reduce differences in power will not be strong in persons who have hardly any power at all, but will be strong in persons whose power wants have already been satisfied, or should have been satisfied to some extent (see Case 3).

An economically rational theory would predict that the power-striving is strongest in persons who most lack power and whose need is greatest, i.e. those who rank lowest in power.

The deprivation or dissatisfaction theories of social science do indeed say this and compare lack of power to hunger creating a strong need of food.

Case 3: As a student I was a member of a group that met every week for discussions and consisted of a few professors and a fairly large number of students. The professors and a few students were working at an institute that had not long been established. One student assisted the professors and this function was rather important for starting and developing new activities. This student, a very nice, intelligent fellow, was clearly striving for more power and identifying himself with the powerful professors, which was attended by increasing the distance to the other students. He was very active in the group and got himself the job of reporting. He was always very demonstrative, 'hanging on the professors' words', and took far less notice of the less powerful students, though much larger in number. He even tried to modify his speech. I remember an incident that was amusing but very negative. I heard another student make an observation, that included an interpretation and a suggestion, which I

believed to be very valuable at that moment. Nobody paid any attention, least of all the group reporter. Ten minutes later a professor discoursed on the content of the observation (without referring to the student who had contributed). The reporter pounced on it, displayed great activity in taking notes and then went further into the matter, using such words as 'the professor's remarks' 'strike me as very valuable' etc., etc.

I then thought: 'Who is mad here? If I'm not, everyone else is!' Later it became clear that none of us were. The relatively more powerful student only showed the power distance reduction tendency that was still very weak in me, a new student with no power.

I became assistant to the professors later and in the same situations I showed the same power distance reduction mechanisms. Then I understood.

It may be added that the group reporter was a studious fellow, but his behaviour could not be explained by his eagerness to learn. On the contrary, he was not open to opportunities of learning offered by the less powerful students.

You will be able to recall behaviour and feelings or recognize them in your own everyday life that show how you did not relax when you gained more power, but were more active in increasing your power in social reality. Also, how you felt more affinity with the powerful person, like the group reporter who turned towards the professors (very powerful people in those days) and paid far less attention to his fellow students.

The power distance reduction theory is a theory of *addiction.* The greater the recourse to power, the stronger the desire for it, just as the use of 'hard drugs' will result in a stronger craving for drugs. In other words, the goal is beckoning and the nearer the goal, the stronger the power distance reduction tendency. When the difference in power is too great, an individual will stop trying to reduce the distance and the power distance reduction tendency will be replaced by feelings of solidarity with other powerless persons, and other responses. It is the smaller difference in power that will cause the stronger craving for more power in the less powerful person (hypothesis 5).

According to the power distance theory the struggle for power

will be most violent when the difference in power is small, not particularly because the powerful resists, but because the less powerful will *all* fiercely compete to narrow the gap with the powerful (cf. ref. 26, p. 318).

It is striking that people will go to extremes of consideration for the most powerful person, the leader, pampering him no end, with hate-and-envy patterns developing among those whose power approaches his. In such a situation the leader has no difficulty at all in keeping aloof, in spite of the strong power-craving in each of the less powerful persons.

Hitler and his clique provided us with an extreme example of such a situation.

Hypothesis 5 states that the strongest power distance reduction tendency will be seen in an individual who is very near to the other, more powerful person. In other words, the individual will have power himself. At this point we may ask whether the way in which the individual acquired power is significant. For example, would it make a difference whether he rose to his (relatively) more powerful position by his own excellent achievements or not? This is not seen as a decisive factor in power distance theory, in which it differs from the following alternative explanatory hypotheses:

a. The mobility hypothesis states that the individual might have experienced rising to a level of some power from a position of no power by processes at work in the system of which he is a part. The experience of moving upward may literally 'mobilize' him and motivate him to push upward from his new power position.
b. The success hypothesis states that, rightly or wrongly, the individual might interpret the kind of promotion described under *a* as the result of his own successful performance. He is rewarded for doing his work well. This experience of success may induce him to work for further promotion.

The power distance theory does not deny that the success hypothesis may be correct in certain circumstances, but it does say that a short

power distance in itself is sufficient to cause the power distance reduction tendency without any experience of promotion, including well-earned promotion on the grounds of successful performance *(hypothesis 6)* (ref. 36).

Reality, irreality and the costs of power

In power distance theory an individual may act out attempts to reduce distance at several different levels of reality (cf. refs. 25 and 29). A prisoner will have no trouble in seeing himself escape and set up a new life in imagination. He is functioning at a very low reality level, or rather outside reality. He would meet totally different barriers if he really tried to get out. The 'costs' of his imagination are low.

At a fairly high reality level, an individual might actually reduce the power distance. For example, he may start talking to more powerful people with a definite purpose in mind, i.e. to ingratiate himself, often causing resentment in others.

The individual's behaviour shows a very high grade of reality when he takes over the power position here and now, i.e. *equalizing in reality*, as far as power is concerned.

Offering the opportunity to take over the power position is used in our investigations as the best way of 'measuring' reduction in distance in reality, when testing the power distance reduction theory.

If the step upwards is believed to be impossible in social reality, it may still take place at the level of irreality. Take, for example, the imaginary occupation of the position of the more powerful person or the belief of being equal to the more powerful person possessing properties connected with power (there is only a small difference between 'I am equal to. . .' and 'I am his equal'; doing and thinking as he does will make me the kind of person he is). Or one may credit oneself with sufficient abilities to do the job as well as the more powerful person. The feeling of being attracted to the more powerful person (personal preference, liking) may even be interpreted as power distance reduction at a low level of reality (irreality).

Power distance reduction at the level of irreality, such as personal liking for a powerful leader, does not fit in the theory of the 'economically rational' human being. The term 'magic identification' applies to the situation in which the individual wishes to be 'one' with, identified or linked with the more powerful other person (ref. 23, pp. 64 and 65) (see Case 4).

Case 4: We will all be able to observe situations like the following. The leader of an organization or department uses particular forms of speech, has a way of dressing and movement, has particular preferences such as pipe-smoking or likes to drive one make of car only. When you call one of his associates on the telephone, you might sometimes think you are speaking to the man himself. His associate, often quite unconsciously, has adopted his manner of speech or intonation. You might also find that everybody now prefers cigar-smoking or the same kind of pipe, etc.

Extremes will be shown by the spontaneous behaviour of very young people, less inhibited behaviour in mass meetings or a combination of the two in the movements and noise production of the young audience of a favourite pop-singer.

The supporters of the ego-defence theory interpret this personal liking for a leader as follows: the individual feels dependent on the leader and threatened by him; the individual tries to protect himself against the leader's whims by playing up to him, expressing liking, etc. In the ego-defence theory this behaviour is displayed by individuals at a long power distance from the leader, because they are almost powerless. Individuals at a shorter distance from the leader will not feel such a strong need to flatter, etc. Power distance reduction theory predicts the reverse of this behaviour.

The difference between reality and irreality is a matter of degree; it is, however, clear and sometimes of great importance (refs. 17, 18, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31).

An individual may cherish and express his phantasies, views and desires as often as he wishes, but achievement of his goals at this low level of reality meets far less difficult barriers than in the real world of hard facts, that exists regardless of an individual's wishes.

The *costs* are low, as an individual does not put himself to great trouble or take risks when he *imagines* himself to be in the position of the director of the organization in which he performs a task. The 'psychological price' of the risk of failure, of the pressure of responsibility, of devoting all his energies is hardly considered as a factor, for wishing does not wear him out! But reality, the world of hard facts, is very wearing. A person pays dearly for the exercise of power, in particular as he will finally be deprived of warm human contacts, lose his health, never have time for fun, etc. Taking barriers in reality is not as easy as it seems in irreality, which is a factor in the power distance reduction tendency. A person will only be eligible to manage a large organization if he has great ability and ambition, and 'connections' too perhaps; he must also have completed his past tasks successfully.

The power distance reduction theory says that the costs of power cause a complication in the power distance reduction tendency in reality. The tendency will be stronger in the individual at a shorter distance from the more powerful person (hypothesis 5), but the theory also predicts that the expected losses will increase more sharply than the expected gains upon reduction of the power distance (*hypothesis 7*) (refs. 25, 29, 34 and 35) (see Case 5).

Contrary to Miller's interpretation of the goal-gradient hypothesis (ref. 19) I believe that the individual will expect the losses to be higher than the gains for the following reasons:

a. An individual creates an image of the world around him by his response to persons and things. His cognitive map of the world includes the activities and the position of the more powerful person. At a shorter power distance the individual will have a better view of the situation, which allows him to interpret his perceptions more sharply and correctly.
b. At a shorter power distance the individual has more personal experience of the exercise of power.

Case 5: I have known the following situations:

Somebody plays with the thought of being the leader of a group, *if* he were invited, or he thinks he *might* be the president of a big company, or he decides that *in 2 years' time* he will accept a function that will give him a lot of power. Such thoughts are characteristic at a low level of reality; the person concerned proves to be enthusing over the gains, such as higher status, financial gain, the challenge of a new kind of work, but is not spending much thought on the costs. When those 2 years are running out or he is approached to accept the position of leader, he feels the pressure of reality and his thoughts take a totally different turn. The costs will now be considered first and he estimates them to be far heavier than he had in the past. He will now consider all efforts and difficulties which the higher position will entail. The implication is that the nearer the event in time the higher the grade of reality will be.

At a shorter power distance the individual's weighing of pros and cons will therefore be more realistic. A longer power distance would bring him nearer to the lower level of reality at which he is inclined

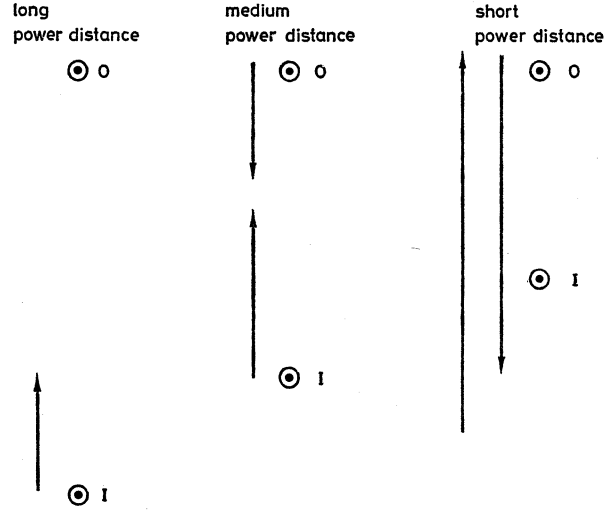


Figure 3. Driving and resisting forces influencing the power distance reduction tendency at various distances in social reality. The length of the arrow indicates the strength of each force.

to underestimate losses. The *driving, power distance reduction forces* are then opposed by the *resisting forces*, stirred up by the estimation of losses. The theory says that for this reason the resisting forces will sooner gain strength than the driving forces. If the power distance is fairly long and the resisting forces have already gained some strength, the shortening of the distance will not cause a power distance reduction tendency because the resisting forces will increase more sharply than the driving forces, and become the stronger of the two (cf. fig. 3).

This raises the question why people are prepared to accept new, more onerous jobs, contract a marriage, risk their lives, etc. The answer is that a person in such a situation of a high reality grade would often prefer to reverse his decisions and only perseveres because he has definitely committed himself.

Unintentional effects of participation

Nowadays the word 'participation' covers both hope and fear; the hope of the believers in participation bringing power and happiness to the 'have-nots' and the fear of others who expect the hopefuls to be disappointed in their belief that participation will be beneficial. Powerful people will fear a loss in power (this is the tendency to keep or increase the distance from the powerless). The outlines of the theory of hope are: mutual communication by participation, emphasis on equality and the wiping out of differences in power between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' (ref. 40).

Assuming that the well-being of the less powerful is intended, hypothesis 8 of the power distance theory is important, pointing at the *unseen dangers of participation.* In discussing hypothesis 5, we have seen that an individual will not strive to reduce the distance to a more powerful person when the difference in power is (too) great. Well, there is a wide gap between the persons representing the lower levels in an organization and the more powerful people such as in representative bodies: the work council in Holland, the workers

council in Yugoslavia. The more powerful people in our organizations, our work councils, have much more information on technical and economic matters and are much better trained in the skills of verbal expression, memorandum composition and the like. Briefly, their power is based on knowledge and proficiency and so they possess *the power of expertise* (ref. 40).

The result is that the less powerful in employees' councils will not be motivated, or only weakly motivated, to strive for more power and will not increase their power through work councils in actual fact. The difference will not become smaller as intended and might in some cases even be enlarged (see Case 6).

If power is defined as the *possibility* to exercise power involving one or several other persons (ref. 23, p. 55), the powerful person will always have to solve the problem of *how to put power into effect.* Participation in representative groups by the less powerful persons in an organization offers a good opportunity for the powerful to present their knowledge and use their skills in the presence of the less powerful, for which reason *hypothesis 8* says: 'More participation in decision-making will not reduce but increase a great power distance'.

Case 6: In a family of four, *all* important problems, whether family or other problems, were discussed from the moment they cropped up until the final decision, the parents always presenting a common front. Should we be pleased about the full participation of the two children or be sorry for them as two powerless people under the crushing weight of superior power getting its way?

The members of a work council approved the appointment of two new members to the supervisory board of the company (running ahead of new laws that still had to come into force). But they were wrong in their appraisal. If they had been as well informed as the directors, who also favoured the appointment of these two persons, they would have acted differently.

An analysis of the published research on the course of affairs in the workers' councils of Yugoslavia showed us that the power distance reduction theory exactly predicts what will happen (ref. 40), because a few powerful people in fact decide what is to be done in 9 out of 10 important matters.

Illegitimate power is identical to legitimate power

The theories presented by Weber, French and Raven (ref. 10) and others, describe various power relationships, such as formal power, legitimate power, expert power, the power of sanctions, etc.

Formal and legitimate power are involved when an individual believes that he ought to obey the Other.

Positive or negative sanction powers are involved when the individual's behaviour is directed by the expectation of reward or punishment by the other person, upon fulfilment or non-fulfillment of the latter's wishes.

The power of expertise is involved when the other person shows more proficiency and/or has more relevant information, the individual assuming that the other is willing to use his greater stock of knowledge for honourable purposes.

In power distance theory, a relationship that does not involve power has been defined as a *persuasion-directed* relationship. This relation exists when a group, including a leader, is willing to be persuaded. All members of the group keep an open mind and listen to arguments presented by anybody. The power relationship is not applicable, as the powerful person will not automatically be right. The pros and cons are weighed by each member in deciding whether the argument is correct or acceptable. The situation is operationally characterized as: the winner cannot be predicted on the grounds of probability, as in a power relationship.

We have isolated this persuasion-directed relationship and the various power relationships in survey research (refs. 39-42) (see Case 7).

Case 7:

Example A. A manager at a high level in a big organization would say: 'My associates do as I say, which is only natural because I am the head of this department' without ever noticing discrepancy with another of his sayings: 'What A (his Chief) instructed us to do, is just idiotic' (and he did not follow A's instructions). We may exercise

our legitimate power but do not expect us to be the subjects of it!

Example B. A company decided to use a computer. Computer specialists joined the company and started issuing orders, for instance informing the bookkeeping or production departments how to collect data. However, the departments could not possibly know whether these demands were necessary or correct. This just goes to show how high-handed experts can be. No explanations, just 'take it – and woe betide you if you leave it!'

Example C. A large company started a study group, made up of members of the commercial, bookkeeping and computer departments, for the purpose of making a joint plan of campaign. The optimum was to be reached by discussing the problems, gaining insight and finally agreeing on solutions. This misfired, because the group members were too slow to learn, which made progress in the persuasion process slow, and/or the company was too impatient to get results, under the pressure of external circumstances.

Referring to the legitimate exercise of power, French and Raven predict that the result will be a positive attitude, such as liking for the powerful person. Reactions to the illegitimate exercise of power will be negative. Power distance reduction theory predicts that at the lower levels of reality reactions will be positive (e.g. personal preference) on account of a short distance between the individual with some power and the powerful other person, *hypothesis 9* saying: 'The quantity of power, i.e. the power distance, is a more decisive factor than the quality of power (proper or improper use)' (refs. 27-31).

Legitimate and illegitimate power must be forcefully exercised, i.e. at a high grade of reality, if cultural standards are not to determine a person's reactions. In other words, he will condemn and resist irregular power in an effort to keep things 'nice', if he can do so at no expense to himself and others are likely to notice his behaviour. But we will often see that power is far from 'nice' at a high level of reality (see Case 8).

Case 8: You probably know somebody among your own acquaintances, who has power that is felt to be illegitimate, because there is no ground for it and therefore it cannot be justified. Nevertheless reactions are hardly ever negative; positive reactions gradually gain momentum after a careful start of finding excuses like 'Oh, he means well', or 'Oh, he is not such a bad fellow at heart'.

Did you not make a positive contribution, expressing acceptance, appreciation, enthusiasm, when this person remained successful and his illegitimate power could withstand attacks?

Haven't you left the individual who resisted to fend for himself, saying to yourself that he might be right in resisting, but played it the wrong way or did not see things from the right angle? Didn't you ever just dismiss the subject of right or wrong power under such circumstances?

You would not be human if you did not recognize such normal reactions.

Therefore, the exercise of legitimate or illegitimate power will produce the same chief results. At a short power distance the individual will tend to feel and express a liking for the person making an illegitimate use of power; at a long distance he will express only little liking for the person legitimately exercising his power.

Personality theory

Personality theory is not a subject for psychologists only. In everyday life people will link up a particular characteristic with other personal characteristics and decide that there are situations requiring very definite qualities. The line between stereotyped arguments and scientifically proved theory is often difficult to draw. Our *hypothesis 10* states: 'In crises people need leaders who show great self-confidence and exercise their power forcefully' (refs. 26, 32, 38 and 42). People may not like to be dependent, but external circumstances may cause such perplexities that they will trust in a powerful leader to weather a crisis. Our *hypothesis 11* states: 'When leaders

exercise their power forcefully, people will attribute great self-confidence to them' (refs. 27 and 31). Consciously or unconsciously, people relate a particular wielding of power to a personal quality, i.e. self-confidence.

The following is in keeping with these hypotheses. We have already discussed how the exercise of power involves gains and costs. There are people who are more willing to accept costs, perhaps because they disregard part of the losses on subjective grounds, i.e. they underestimate the costs; or the gains are thought more important than the costs, i.e. they are prepared to take a greater risk for greater gains; or they will feel their costs less than others, being more energetic and capable; or they have more sense of responsibility, i.e. they feel 'called upon'.

In underestimating the costs or taking a greater risk, personal motives are emphasized.

When a person feels 'called upon', external factors are more likely to be involved: the emphasis is on others believing him to be the right person (as he does himself!) for a position of power; this gives the person concerned good empirical grounds to consider himself the best man for wielding power.

Our *hypothesis 12* states: 'People with great self-confidence and strong power motives will show a greater power distance reduction tendency' (refs. 30, 32, 35 and 38).

The total of outstanding characteristics, named 'individual prominence' as defined and measured in other investigations, is complex and refers to objective willingness or ability to take command when required. Individual prominence is activated in a person when he is attributed with a strong personality and particularly with self-confidence. Individual prominence does not cover the subjective striving for 'self-exaltation' (cf. ref. 38, pp. 435 and 448).

The situation receives particular emphasis in *hypothesis 13*, saying: 'When less powerful individuals find that they have more self-confidence than the powerful person, they will show a stronger tendency to reduce the distance to the powerful person' (ref. 34). The individual's theory on personality here makes him compare himself with the powerful person. In this situation the individual

intercepts a signal from the 'outside world', telling him of a vacuum; this motivates him to 'fill the gap'. In social reality the filling of a manifest vacuum in leadership occurs as often as the use of a so-called 'poor show' of leadership in the justification of a personal striving for power (see Case 9).

Case 9: Weighing what you hear and see today will immediately bring to mind the striking facts about the groups that have been fighting power during the last ten years or so, the purpose being a decrease in power differences.

Among student activists you will see, again and again, that individuals, full of self-confidence and with marked qualities, will take the lead (in spite of themselves?) in the thick of the fight, i.e. when a crisis occurs.

In a group of workers taking action, you will see that people with self-confidence, possessing relevant skills such as powers of expression in formulating problems, will take the lead an particularly in cases when the management shows disability at some point. You will know by your own experience that in a situation when you lost confidence or seemed to lose confidence, others took over immediately.

Effects of an imaginary short power distance

It has been said in hypotheses 5 and 6 that individuals will show a stronger power distance reduction tendency at a short distance from the powerful person, irrespective of very recent experience with promotion or successful job performance. This raises the question whether immediately preceding actual experience of the exercise of power is necessary to produce a power distance reduction tendency. In other words: What will the individual's reaction be to a merely represented short power distance (cf. fig. 1, inverted Y-structure)?.

The inverted Y is immediately interpreted by people of our culture as: O is higher than I; and I is higher than B and C; and higher means

more powerful. I will show a power distance reduction tendency when he is functioning at the halfway position in reality, but will he also show this tendency when he imagines himself to be in that position?

Case 10: In the United States we often see that the qualities of the Vice-president complement those of the President, and the same holds for many organizations. The man just below the top does not have the qualities a top man should have in everybody's opinion. But everybody also regards succession by the second man as 'normal', if ever the top man has to stop working.

I myself was once working in a small social system with one man at the top and no difference in rank between the others, among whom there was one man who had more power than the others because he had been there longer, had adopted a particular attitude and the top man responded to him because he had complementary qualities. When the top man left, we and the second man himself considered it normal for him to be the leader, otherwise he would have been 'passed over'.

At another stage I was the second man in a situation, sketched by the inverted Y-structure. The leader left and I said that I was not available to take over. This was considered very odd by the other persons involved. The second man in the inverted Y-structure can often claim the top position and is sometimes duty bound to take over when the top position is vacant.

Hypothesis 14 says: 'When an individual builds up an inverted Y-structure in which he imagines he is halfway between the powerless and the powerful, he will also display a stronger power distance reduction tendency' (ref. 41). This hypothesis emphasizes the strength of the theory. If power distance reduction tendencies are produced in an individual by a cognitive representation, it means that such tendencies deeply penetrate social life in our culture (see Case 10).

Mutually reinforcing power mechanisms

The different power mechanisms with social systems may thwart (hypotheses 5 and 7) or reinforce each other.

An example of mutually reinforcing tendencies can be derived from hypotheses 3 and 5. The weak tendency to reduce the power distance which hypothesis 5 forecasts for the powerless in the social system is thwarted, furthermore, by the stronger tendency of the powerful to keep the least powerful at a distance (hypothesis 3). The have-nots in power are severely handicapped in their power distance reduction.

Those in the intermediate position, those with more power, are much better off: their stronger tendency to reduce the power gap encounters fairly weak opposition from the most powerful.

(Hypothesis 3/5. The 'downward' tendencies of the powerful to increase the power distance and the 'upward' power distance reduction of the less powerful reinforce each other.)

This hypothesis predicts tendencies to division into two classes: (i) the multitude below the power threshold who will never achieve effective power distance reduction, and (ii) the few at the top of the power ladder, together with those who are on the way up (they hope!).

Similarly, two extremes are developing by the types of power, resulting from the well-knit union of formal power and (increasing) power of expertise. People in the top positions of formal power often have, by virtue of their position, access to important information. And in this way they acquire great expertise. They have two courses of action: either they share the information with others, promoting favourable conditions for open discussion and a smaller power gap, or they keep the information to themselves, remaining the sole possessors (*filter theory*).

This clearly shows that individual have-nots in power, who are sometimes even isolated, do not wish to, or cannot, reduce power distances. This explains the normal, prolonged passivity or apathy at the base of social systems. But there are limits to this passivity and impotence. Let me explain this on the basis of the power distance reduction theory.

To start with, hypothesis 5a states that less powerful individuals, who desist from reducing the power distance, evolve other motivations, in particular an attitude of solidarity with others who share their lot.

(Hypothesis 5a. Less powerful individuals, who desist from reducing the power distance because the gap is too big, will develop other motives like a striving for solidarity with other 'have-nots' in power.)

The feeling of solidarity will sometimes only serve to appease, offering the have-nots something to prevent them from striving to reduce the power distance.

However, it may generate new developments, such as reference relationships: the powerless can recognize themselves in other powerless people; identify themselves with the 'powerless class'; and especially reflect upon what other have-nots in power think and feel.

After all, according to hypothesis 3/5 the least powerful, farthest from the highest power in their social system, will tend to desist from reducing the power distance between themselves and the powerful. *They have nothing to gain, nothing to lose as far as power is concerned; and so they are free to resist*! The power distance reduction tendency, which implies a positive attitude towards the more powerful (!) does not operate (any longer). The system has no hold on them, cannot reward them, cannot manipulate them; and so they are free to combat the powerful, though not necessarily in the struggle for power.

(Hypothesis 5b. The powerless class in a social system, who do not strive (any longer) to reduce the power distance from the powerful, may refuse to follow the powerful any further and put up stubborn resistance (*despair pierces apathy*).)

In other words: when forced into the farthest corner of powerlessness, the have-nots in power become stronger in their social situation, because they are less susceptible to the power game. Despair can then pierce apathy.

Is this resistance more than an expression of the deepest despair, more than blowing off steam, psychologically speaking? Can it be

effective? It can indeed. Though more conditions must be met.

To start with there is a popular saw which everyone instinctively knows and which forms a kind of biological 'law'. It is even applied in the animal kingdom: unity is strength!

The weak, if united, can be strong. This is explained by hypotheses 10 and 12 in the power distance reduction theory.

The have-nots in power can confirm that their fellows' opinions are correct; their dealings with their peers will reinforce their feeling of 'being in the right'. They will also produce and obtain emotional support among themselves ('nice that we're doing something about it'), especially if some action is taken. They will also comment favourably on one another's activities, which will give them more confidence that they are doing the right thing, that they have the accomplishments that count. They will form closed ranks thanks to their reference relationships. The members will be receptive to one another's influence and shut out the influence of people who do not belong to their group.

In other words: *the 'have-nots' ' reciprocal power of reference limits the 'haves' ' power of expertise*!

The essence of our considerations is, however, that the individual power of many powerless (which in itself is slight) will, when united, be equal to relatively great power. United they can, for instance, build up a power of sanction vis-à-vis the powerful. United, they can also exercise effective influence 'outwards'. The 'collective' of those with little power is powerful enough compared with the 'collective' of the powerful. The power distance between the two social (sub)systems becomes relatively small. Everyone lacking in power partakes, in this way, in the great power, and this determines the collectivity of their behaviour. It will be sufficient to generate a strong tendency to reduce the power distance, to produce strong opponents.

(Hypothesis 5c. When several powerless individuals are united, they are powerful compared with those in power in their social system, and will behave accordingly (unity is strength).)

In other words: 'alone is but alone', 'there's safety in numbers'.

The powerless create the boundaries to the Others' superior power, even to the power of expertise.

The union of powerless persons will, however, only form effective counter-power to the powerful if it is well organized. Hypothesis 10 is particularly important in this respect.

Good organization includes using everyone's skills, compensating everyone's weaknesses, creating good information processes. Especially in crises, which can be expected in situations when the 'foot' of a social system turns against the top, a strong nucleus must exert considerable power – i.e. there is a large power distance between the nucleus and the members at the 'base' who undertake the action.

(Hypothesis 5/10. The strength of the opposition of the united powerless persons will depend on the strength of their organization; forceful, central exercise of power (or a large power distance) is essential in crises.)

In other words: in the actions of the powerless power mechanisms also make themselves felt; the hypotheses of power theory again apply. The action of the powerless at the base, aiming at giving everyone his 'say', also has to permit power to a 'power nucleus'; a large power distance has to be created. Yet another paradox in the *power game*!

Hypotheses 5a, 5b and 5c are connected. 5a and 5b refer to the motivation of the powerless to oppose the powerful. Unity is a condition for the formation of a counter-power (hypothesis 5c), though not sufficient alone; opposition must be well organized (hypothesis 5/10).

This will cause unusual dilemmas. The actions of the powerless stem from despair, linked with their complete lack of power. The distance to the powerful is reduced, because of their unity. The 'logic of the crisis' then requires a large power distance between their own crisis leaders and the other campaigners.

Equalization tendencies outside power relationships

The comparison between striving for equal power and striving to equalize in other respects will be necessary to see the power distance reduction tendencies in social reality in their right perspective.

Hypothesis 15 says: 'When observing others in certain circumstances, not involving a power relationship, individuals will also show the tendency to equalize, to make themselves equal to Others'.

I developed a theory on contagious behaviour, which says that people are inclined to imitate warmth and kindness without any advantage to themselves, whenever an example is set, but they will also be inclined to take a leaf from an aggressive person's book. This has nothing to do with rational economics either. In social reality, people appear to be, under certain circumstances, open to all kinds of outside processes, such as aggressive or kind behaviour, modes of speech and postures of others. I believe that they also allow themselves to be carried away, even when their examples have no power at all and it will bring no advantage to follow them.

There are indications of a general tendency to equalize, to do the same things, to behave in the same way, etc. (ref. 43).

People are often far more bent on equalization than they realize (ref. 43). These theories and investigations are important to power distance theory, showing the relative importance of power equalization tendencies, i.e. if tendencies to equalize in another dimension than power also prove to play an important part in social reality.

2. Applied research methods

The power distance theory has been tested in a series of investigations with the aid of several methods, such as experiments, observations and interviews in social reality, etc. The situations to which a particular method was applied varied greatly and this chapter is devoted to describing the situations; the results of the investigations will be given in the next chapter.

The objectivity of researcher and method

Social scientists are normal people, often loaded with prejudices against or in favour of the subjects of their studies. In the course of their investigations they will meet people whose prejudices in turn prevent the expression of their *real* concern. Discussions on power will arouse strong bias and a study of power therefore requires a very high grade of objectivity and most careful checking of data. The experimental method is the best in such cases (cf. ref. 24, pp. 89-100 and ref. 53, pp. 34-46), the more so, because the aim was to analyze conditions and consequences of inequality in power and the struggle for power from the angle of carefully formulated hypotheses about relations between particular causes and effects. Many investigations were carried out in the laboratory, enabling us to *simulate microsystems of inequality in power*. A few studies were directed at microsystems (refs. 26 and 52) or macrosystems (refs. 32 and 38) in social reality. We also performed action research (change projects) which have so far rarely been suitable for publication (one single example: ref. 28). I believe that field studies should be included in a well-composed package of methods, the most important factor of a field study being the fact that it will corroborate the relevance of confirmed connections. A confirmed con-

nection in a field study must be relevant, because effective factors will be beyond control and there will be a greater chance of interference. Objectivity can never be absolute, but will reach a high grade in a comprehensive research programme, when several methods have been used, (part of) the investigation has been repeated and when the methods allow not only the researchers but others to develop their own opinions on the theory, the subject of the investigation, the acquisition and processing of the data.

Simulation permits the small-scale laboratory reproduction of important complex processes and situations, identified in social reality, without impairing their essentials – as will be seen in the following three examples.

Example 1. The inequality between higher and lower personnel of large organizations is reproduced in groups of 4 persons, representing the inverted Y-structure (fig. 1, page 3).

Example 2. The power struggle between the 'learned elite', with more relevant know-how and abilities, and others is reproduced in experimental situations, simulation making a man undergo the experience that he is 'better' than the leader; or situations in which a man realizes he has less knowledge than the leader and that knowledge does indeed mean power.

Example 3. Leaders of very small private enterprises are made to believe in the dangers of economic developments in social reality. They are given plausible reports, they are 'offered' potential 'saviours', cast in the role of very strong personalities, able and willing to exercise power, or persons presenting an average of such ability and willingness.

In simulation the subjects meet other persons, with their opinions and arguments, and have to deal with opposing opinions, another person's characteristics such as self-confidence and ability to do the job. They may encounter favourable opinions of themselves, particular working group structures and the greater power of another person to reward or punish, to help you out, to surpass another group, etc. In this way inequality in power, class conflicts, crisis, etc., is simulated, permitting a direct and close study of the *struggle for power, class struggles, inequality relations, the birth of*

power elites, etc., as dynamic processes taking their course in time.

The striking feature of the third example is the use of *camouflage* techniques. Generally, the subjects do not know that they are participating in a study of power and sometimes they do not even know that they are subjects. This camouflage is a means to an end, because in the study of power we are not interested in the beautiful thoughts that are generally presented to cover up the ugly features of the power exercised or strived for. This is our reason for counter-camouflage, which, considering the importance of the investigation, strikes us as a more responsible way of using the subjects than the usual approach, as our investigation will not hurt or harm the subjects.

It need hardly be said that camouflage techniques are also used in the systematic measuring of behaviour. As explained in chapter 1, human behaviour shows several grades of reality. (The prisoner with his high-flown dreams, at a low reality level; the individual who ingratiates himself in order to 'equalize', at a fairly high reality level.) Behaviour at a low level of reality was measured in our investigations by the answers to:

- Who are the members of your group whose company you would prefer on a cycling trip, a camping tour or to work with under the same boss? Who ranks very low with you?
- Would you be able to do O's work as well as he did?
- Would you like to do the leader's work?
- Would you like more responsibility?
- He is a nice chap/unpleasant fellow.
- I think O's work is very attractive.

Behaviour at a high level of reality was measured by systematic observation to see:

- whether arguments had made a person change his original, strong opinion;
- whether a person was practising obstruction by intentionally leaving undone what one or more group members expected him to do;

- whether a person communicated forcefully in trying to make others adopt his views, etc.

A person might be asked to select the position he wanted to occupy in the next working period and this served to find out whether he wanted the power position or not.

It will be clear that camouflage could also be used at the high level of reality and the subject had no idea of being measured for power, but there were also situations in which he could more or less see that this was taking place.

Simulated microsystems of inequality in power

System A. Working groups, consisting of four twenty-year olds, were to solve a series of 15 fairly simple problems. Each group had to work quickly and find the best possible solution. Each member of a group was supplied with part of the necessary information, requiring some reciprocal exchange of information. Group members could contact one another by intercom and a particular structure would be created as a consequence of what the members were doing, three being role-players. In this way either structure of fig. 1, showing power distance, could be developed during the session.

In the study of behaviour, the subjects were never asked to play a role and they were never aware of the fact that the others were simulating. In most investigations they saw the others for a short time and were offered good reasons why each member of the group had a room to himself. So there was hardly any face-to-face interaction; the subjects communicated in writing or by telephone which prevented them from deducing anything from facial expression or intonation. Still, as it transpired, subjects would always make fairly profound remarks on the personalities of the other group members.

Clearly this approach gives the opportunity to confront the subject with behaviour, arguments, opinions, decisions, etc., according to a standardized plan.

In system A, Other's power was a mixture of power based

on the leader position and power based on relevant information available to him (formal power and expert power) (see refs. 39 and 42).

The subject was not only informed (by verbal communication) about the power relations between him and the other members of the group, but during the session he also acted in this system, structured as inequality in power. With all his thoughts, emotions, deliberate decisions as a human being, the subject *lived and acted* in a situation of inequality in power and, as will appear later, power struggle. The inequality in power was introduced at a high level of reality!

Halfway through the session, the subject believed that he had got to the *critical stage*, though this came at the end of the session as far as the researchers were concerned, when the situation had developed to the point of *measuring* the strength of the power distance reduction tendency.

This tendency was measured at a low level of reality in this case. The subjects received a list of questions about their satisfaction in their work, their position, etc., and had to write down the answers, also expressing their personal preferences with regard to the other three members of their group and comparing the others' abilities with their own.

It was important to inform the subjects at this point that their answers would not be read by the other group members or that anonymity would be maintained.

The subjects were also observed in order to detect obstruction; such behaviour occurs at a high level of reality.

System B. Inequality in power was again realistically introduced by the activities of the group members. Unlike system A, system B had no built-in variation of the subject's power but of the leader's power. Each individual member had to perform simple tasks that required great concentration and the leader checked the quality of the performance.

Three power distances were simulated and each situation permitted the leader to reward or punish the subject for the quality of

his work with 10 cents* (small power distance), 190 cents (medium power distance) or 250 cents (great power distance). At the start of the session the subject received 250 cents and was first punished and then rewarded several times according to a fixed schedule to the effect that reward and punishment were almost balancing at the critical stage of measurement. The leader's powers of sanction were positive and negative (refs. 27 and 31).

The power distance reduction tendency was measured at a low level of reality: the subject likes the leader, the subject assesses his own ability to perform the leader's task, the subject forms a judgment about the leader's self-confidence and his satisfaction, and finally expresses his own satisfaction.

System C. This simulation showed a high level of reality. The situation was real to the participants in the 15-18 age group, picked from schools and volunteering for a study of co-operation. They worked in groups of four and simulated one leader, an assistant leader (the subject) and two performers. The four members worked in separate rooms and communicated by written messages. Casting lots was simulated for the purpose of making the subject the assistant leader. It was said that casting lots was not a sensible way of doing things, and that later, when all the members knew what was happening, they could choose a position themselves. In situation C_1 (ref. 34) the performers had to describe 15 fairly complicated situations, the leader and his assistant gave their judgment with the aid of their own data and their rewards or punishments were 50 cents. They could exercise the power of expertise and sanction. The group leader's decisions ranked over the assistant's when they could not agree and it was simulated that the group leader's initial opinion always opposed the assistant's, so the leader had formal power over the assistant. In case of a small power distance the leader fell in with the subject's opinions in 7 out of 15 problems, the assistant's opinions being nearly as often decisive as the leader's. With a great

* A Dutch guilder = 100 cents; 250 cents is, very roughly, the equivalent of one dollar.

power distance, the assistant's opinions were only decisive in 3 out of 15 problems.

The subject, the assistant, had 9/20 of the necessary information at a small power distance and 3/20 at a great power distance, which meant that the leader also had the power of expertise over the subject.

In situation C_2 (ref. 35) the whole group worked on locating 20 buildings in a town plan to be designed, for which were allotted 2 full sessions of three hours. A group competed with the other and the members of the winning group were to receive 500 cents each. The opinions of leader and assistant leader were decisive, if they differed with the performers; the final decision was taken by the group leader if he differed with his assistant (formal power). The power distance was small throughout.

In the critical stage of measurement the leader had given in to the subject in 4 out of 10 cases. In the C_2 situation the cost aspect of power was strongly emphasized by holding the leader responsible for winning or losing and announcing that the leader had to account for his conduct.

The power distance reduction tendency was measured at a high level of reality in the two C situations. At the critical stage the subject was told that a position could be selected because 'everybody now knew what was happening'. As 'chance' would have it, the subject was the first person to select the position he would occupy from that moment. He was free to take the position of great power or not.

System D. A very high level of reality was simulated in situations comparable to system C, but the participants did not know that they were the subjects of a study. They were paid for doing some clerical work at the institute. The leader was not a member of their group but their 'boss' from the institute, who divided the tasks, checked the work done, gave positive or negative information, sometimes asking them to correct their work, etc. The small power distance was realized by the boss delegating part of his job to the subject; this was done:

- at the beginning in a way which made the subject believe that the assistant's job was given to him by pure chance and might just as well have been done by somebody else (cf. fig. 4, situation 2, page 42);
- after some time during which the subject had exercised very little power and he was again made to believe that he had acquired more power by pure chance (fig. 4, situation 3), the power distance between the leader and the subject thus being reduced during the session (see remarks on mobility in the discussion of hypothesis 5 in chapter 1);
- or after a working period in which the subject had had little power and was put in the more powerful position in the next period because he had proved himself to be an excellent worker, which made him experience success (fig. 4, situation 4 and see discussion of hypothesis 5 in chapter 1).

In the basic situation of a great, unchanging power distance the subject remained relatively powerless from start to finish (fig. 4, situation 1).

In this system the critical stage was created as follows. The subject was told that the 'boss' from the institute, the leader, had to leave immediately and his position had to be taken over. The two other members of the group, also simulated, had already indicated their willingness to take over by marking a straight, vertical line of 10 cm, drawn on a piece of paper. A mark higher up the line indicated more willingness to take over and the two simulators had already put their marks $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm over and under the centre before the subject received this paper. He could, therefore, take the boss's position by putting his mark over the highest mark or indicate his unwillingness by putting his mark below the highest. The disappearance of the leader was experienced as a unique event by all subjects.

The introduction of inequality in power and the measuring of the power distance reduction tendency therefore occurred at a high level of reality; the subjects lived through an experience that was part of their normal social reality and there was no question of study or measurement among them (ref. 36).

System E. The situations were the same as in system D, but conditions differed greatly in one respect: the subjects were not put to work in reality and did not experience or act in any given situation as they had done in system D. The subjects only examined the situations. They were *told* that there had been a group, who had to perform a particular task. They were informed how the jobs had been divided among the members of the group and what had happened, including the final stage when the leader had had to leave suddenly and the members had been asked to indicate their willingness to take over the leader's job. In system E, the subject was then asked which position he would have wanted.

At that moment the subject in system E could only have a mental picture of the structure in which the subject in system D had been functioning at a smaller or greater power distance from the leader. The subject in system E *knew* that the power distance was small, or that the medium position of power was taken at the beginning by pure chance or gained by fortuitous promotion or gained by reason of good performance (see fig. 4 for diagrams presented to the subject in system E). System E was presented to the subjects as a study of 'insight in situations' and accepted by them as such (ref. 41).

System F. The subject worked in his own room on the problem of town planning. He formed his own well-founded opinions before he communicated with the simulated leader, whose opinions would always diametrically contradict the subject's opinions. They both possessed relevant information but the leader's supply of information had been larger. The leader at a small power distance had slightly more (roughly 5:4), but at a long power distance he had much more information (10:4).

In two experiments formal power was added to the power of expertise; the leader was the boss. In a third experiment the subject and the simulator were equals formally and the only difference was the amount of information. It should be noted that the power of expertise as described here is only potential power; it has not actually been substantialized, so it was not (yet) effective.

The final actual power distance in this experiment was measured

at a high level of reality by finding out whether or not the subject abandoned his own ideas under the leader's influence (ref. 37).

Field research on inequality in power

System G. Peter Veen measured the power distance reduction tendencies at levels of reality and irreality in the younger members of a sports club, age group 10-15. The trainer of each group of 3 to 5 boys was a few years older. The trainer supervised the weekly training for eight weeks. The small power distance was realized by letting the boys gradually have increasing influence on the training programme. The great power distance was maintained by the trainer whose boys simply had to follow directions.

The measuring of the power distance reduction tendency at a high level of reality was related to the wishes of the boys to accept the position of trainer's assistant, a new position that had already been announced, and particularly to the suggestions for a training programme sent in by the boys. Measurements at a low level of reality were related to the desire for more influence and the expression of liking for the trainer.

System H. The affairs of a large organization were studied in social reality without any interference from researchers. This was done by sending questionnaires, completed by 390 members of the organization, and by systematic observation by researchers (refs. 32 and 38). Inequality in power at varying degrees existed in social reality between the higher and lower ranks of the organization and there was no need to simulate. The power distance reduction tendency was measured at high and low levels of reality. At the low level of reality the members of the organization could express whether they thought themselves just as capable as their chief for this more powerful position and would like to have his job. At the high level of reality, the real effects of the power distance reduction tendency could be measured.

System J. In social reality the subjects volunteered to take part in group discussions about problems that were very important to them. The discussions were organized by an institute that was known and accepted in their own circles. The group discussions also contained a camouflaged experiment, following a strict pattern.

The subjects were confronted with simulated dangers of the world around them, that were experienced as very real, because their scope for economic existence was imperilled. The subjects could react at a high level of reality, among other things choosing a leader of great individual prominence, who also possessed self-confidence, or a leader with less prominent characteristics (ref. 26).

3. Research results*

Satisfaction given by power (hypothesis 1)**

The relation between power and satisfaction was proved in a simulation built on system A (ref. 23). On a ten-point satisfaction scale, the more powerful persons scored an average of 6.8 and the less powerful scored 5.1. (See fig. 1. and compare I's positions in the two systems.) The difference is statistically significant, p (= probability:) is less than .001.***

On other points, the subjects behaved at a high level of reality in their *spontaneous expressions of dissatisfaction, even obstruction.* Dissatisfaction was expressed by 25 per cent of the persons in positions 2, 3 and 4 in system 2 of fig. 1. (wheel structure), but such remarks were only made by 10 per cent of the persons in position 2 of the inverted Y-structure. The difference is significant ($p < .05$). The less powerful persons were obstructing more often than the persons with some power; 25 per cent as against 3 per cent ($p < .05$). The data on obstruction were striking and showed a high level of reality, as such behaviour actually cut off a group. Therefore, an increase in power meant more positive behaviour. Two alternative explanations, as discussed in chapter 1 under the heading 'the striving for power', did not fit. The power that clearly pleased the subjects of our tests could not been seen as autonomy, because they always had to depend on the power of the leader (O). Independence had nothing to do with the subject's pleasure in having relatively more power than others. It also appears from data, not reported

* The results of the various tests have been arranged per hypothesis.

** See page 92 for sequence of hypotheses.

*** For statistical techniques, see earlier publications of inquiries. Chiefly used techniques: chi-squared distribution, Fisher's distribution, likelihood-ratio test. Mann-Whitney test, Sign- and T-test and correlation-, variance- and factor-analyses. An established difference has been taken as a systematic difference, having significance if the chance of its being a random event is very small, e.g. at $p < .05$ (p for probability).

here, that motivation for achievement does not apply either, because responsibility for solving a problem did not influence satisfaction.

The *differences in power*, power distances in our terminology, were sufficient cause for the differences in satisfaction. The findings confirmed hypothesis 1, that people experience satisfaction in the exercise of power.

The results of the investigation built on system G also supported the hypothesis by the measurement of satisfaction and spontaneous expression (ref. 52, pp. 178, 179 and 320). System G was field research and the findings are an important addition to the results of the simulation built on system A, because, in social reality, numerous factors may determine satisfaction at a given moment. When the relation between power and satisfaction has been proved to exist, it means that the power factor is very important in social reality too.

Increase in power distance to the less powerful (hypotheses 2 and 3)

In the struggle for power, people will hold on to what they have. Hypotheses 2 and 3 refer to this mechanism. An individual will tend to increase the distance to a less powerful person (hypothesis 2); the tendency will be stronger at a longer distance (hypothesis 3). The investigation was built on system A (ref. 23) and in the measurement period the subject could *make a positive or negative choice* with regard to one, two or all members of a group of four, i.e. to work and play together or not. Imminent realisation of these preferences seemed small, which made for measuring at a low level of reality.

A negative choice meant that the subject did not want a particular person for a partner, so *his attitude was not very positive.*

With regard to the persons in positions 3 and 4 (B and C) the 'noes' amounted to 71% and the 'ayes' to 20% (a significant difference, $p < .001$). The subjects felt more inclined to reject the less powerful when they had some power themselves, and less inclined to do so when their own power was very slight indeed. The subjects

in position 2 in the inverted Y-structure (fig. 1, system 1) rejected persons in positions 3 and 4 more often than the subjects in position 2 of the wheel structure; 82% against 62% ($p < .02$). The relevant abilities of the group members in positions 3 and 4 were also assessed adversely by 23% when the subjects had some power, and by 9% when the subjects were powerless ($p < .07$ and almost significant).

Hypotheses 2 and 3 are supported by the findings; the subjects distanced themselves from the powerless, the more so when the distance was great. As has been said before, the tendency to increase the distance is really the complement of the tendency to reduce it.

Reduction in power distance at a low level of reality (hypotheses 4 and 5)

In research, according to system A, the subjects could select one, two or all members of the group to share in work and play. They showed a far greater preference for the powerful people in the leader's position than for the others in positions 3 and 4 ($p < .001$). The selection of leaders for sociable occasions is remarkable from a merely sensible point of view. The subjects could only know the differences between personalities during a working period: the relationship between the subject and the other three group members only differed in power and so the subjects opted for power!

The subjects with some power preferred the leader far more often than persons with little power (fig. 1, cf. I's position in the two systems), choosing the leader to the exclusion of everyone else in 74% of the cases as against 45% for the less powerful ($p < .002$).

In the assessment of relevant properties the same tendencies manifested themselves: 91% of the subjects evaluated the capacity of the powerful highly. Still in the context of this extremely positive attitude, this tendency appeared to be stronger in the more powerful: 18% of them exclusively evaluated O, not the occupants of positions 3 and 4, as capable, compared with 3% of the less powerful ($p < .03$).

To summarize, the findings showed that the subjects' attitude

was positive toward the powerful, expressed by personal preference and the attribution of ability. This did not serve a useful purpose, because the subjects did not gain any advantage, as the powerful leader did not know any names. Therefore, an individual wishes to be classified with the powerful in one psychological structure, to form a unit, to associate with the powerful group, in the hope of 'belonging'.

This kind of identification does not fit in the 'economically rational' theory. Such expressions are interpreted in power distance theory as the signs of a power reduction tendency at a low level of reality. Hypothesis 4 is supported by the findings.

At the level of irreality, hypothesis 5 is also supported by the findings; the power distance reduction tendency is stronger in individuals at a short distance from the leader.

A few simulations were built on system B. Their experimental design was very complicated (it can be found in previously pu-

Table 1. Combined data of three studies on the power distance reduction tendency at a low level of reality, built on system B.

The theory predicted:	Personal liking for leader	Personal ability attributed to self	Individual's satisfaction
short p.d. > long p.d.	12/12(9/12)	7/8(0/8)	4/5(2/5)
short p.d. > medium p.d.	10/10(5/10)	4/6(1/6)	4/5(1/5) +
medium p.d. > long p.d.	7/10(4/10)	5/6(0/6)	1/5(0/5)

Note: A short power distance between the subject and the leader, a medium or long distance by the leader's rewarding or imposing a fine on the subject were simulated (see system B). The denominator is the number of independent tests per prediction. The numeration is the number of correct predictions. The number of significant results with a p value of $< .05$ is given in brackets. Example: 12/12(9/12) means that per 12 independent tests, the subject's personal liking for the leader was in 12 tests greater, when the subject was at short distance instead of a long distance. In 9 of 12 tests the difference was significant ($p < .05$). In one case the outcome opposed the prediction and was significant.

blished articles, refs. 27 and 31). The most important results have been summarized in table 1.

The trend is clear, because there is a regular pattern of differences in accordance with the theory, particularly when a short distance is compared to a medium or long distance.

The findings as a whole support hypotheses 4 and 5. The smaller the distance from the powerful leader in the group, the stronger the tendency to reduce the distance at a low level of reality by liking for the leader and the attribution to one's self of sufficient abilities to hold the leader's position.

The findings on satisfaction support the general principle of the theory as given in hypothesis 1 to a lesser extent. It should be noted here that the results could not be explained by financial gains. At the moment of measuring the subject had not won or lost (see description of system B), but he had experienced an upward movement because the leader had started by a fine and had then continued to reward him. At a great distance with larger financial gains, the subject could hope to earn a lot and a positive attitude could have been expected. However, he did not react to the prospect of financial gain, but to the power distance: a smaller power distance resulted in a stronger reduction tendency at a low level of reality.

In field research (system H; refs. 32 and 38) hypotheses 4 and 5 were also supported at a level of low reality. The short distance to the leader as experienced by the subject, was related to the subject's estimation that he could do the leader's work just as well, and his aspiration for more power over his boss (ref. 38, p. 451). The findings were important because the measuring related to people working normally in an organization, to which they had already belonged for a long time and would go on working for in the near future. In this situation a huge number of variables could exert their influence, disturbing the relations that were found all the same! It should also be noted that the distance to the leader as experienced by the subject appeared to be objective (cf. ref. 32, pp. 113-114) instead of purely subjective.

Peter Veen's field study (system G) also confirmed hypotheses 4 and 5 at a level of low reality. The subjects could say whether they

wanted to exert more influence on the leader or on the group. In the period of testing, the subjects at a small distance from the leader scored higher than the others at a great distance (significant differences, $p < .01$) (cf. ref. 52, p. 156).

A series of studies therefore confirmed that individuals strive at a low level of reality to reduce the distance to the leader, the tendency becoming stronger at a smaller distance. This tallies with power distance theory and differs from the ego-defence theory, saying that the powerless would be more inclined to have a favourable opinion about the most powerful persons in their group than the members of the group who do have some power.

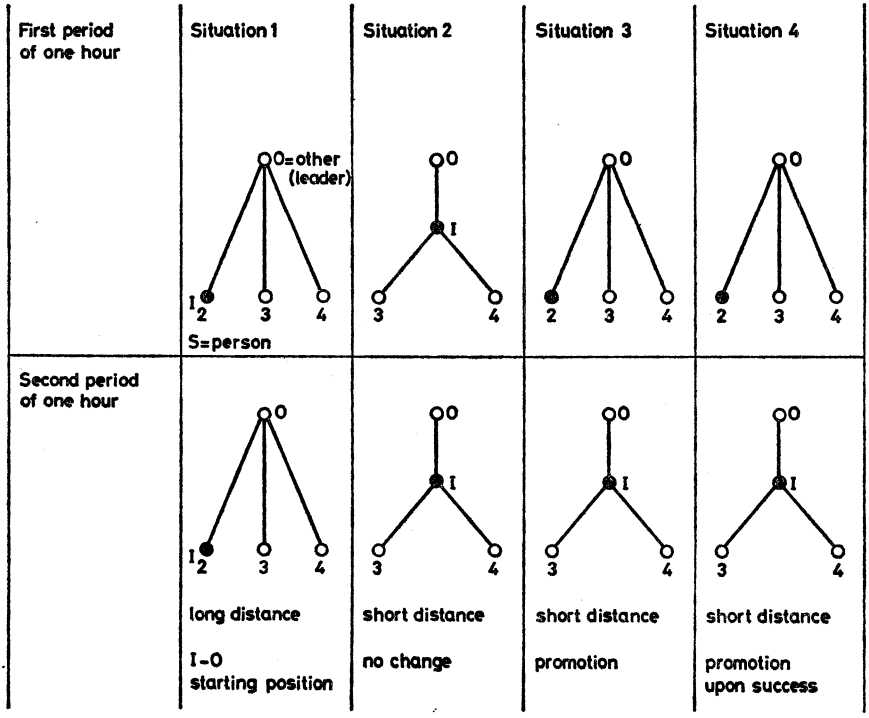


Figure 4. Simulation at a high level of reality. People did not know that they were the subjects of a study. They were paid for doing a particular job.

Reduction in power distance at a high level of reality (hypotheses 4, 5 and 6)

Two experiments, built on system D (ref. 36), were carried out to measure the power distance reduction tendency, as proposed by hypotheses 4 and 5, on a high level of reality. They also tested the alternative explanations, formulated as the mobility and success hypotheses, proving that a short power distance in itself is sufficient cause for the striving for power (hypothesis 6).

The experiment was carried out as given in fig. 4. The subjects had no idea that they were participating in a study; they were paid to do a particular job and any information about the structures of fig. 4 was withheld.

In situation 1, the wheel structure was maintained throughout the session. In situation 2, the leader casually appointed the subject to assist him in dividing up the work. He did this at the beginning of the session in a way that prevented the subject from thinking that he had a special reason for this selection, that any of the other members of the group might have been chosen. In situation 3, the leader did the same after the first part of the session, and in situation 4 he told the subject to allocate the work because 'you do your job better than the others'.

During the second period, the subject also heard one approving remark from the leader in situation 4.

After the second period the subject was told that the leader had to leave suddenly and was presented with apparently 'improvised measuring', that would really allow him to take over from the leader ('here-and-now' choice in reality).

The subjects did not see this as 'measuring' but as a unique event in social reality. Each subject could make a dramatic choice. He could remain in his position, knowing that another member of the group would be the leader; or he himself could be the leader instead of 'that old man from the institute'. The results are seen in table 2.

Table 2. Power distance reduction at a high level of reality; the results of two simulations.

Acceptance of power by subjects	Situation 1 Long p.d. No change	Situation 2 Short p.d. No change	Situation 3 Short p.d. Promotion* (+)	Situation 4 Short p.d. Promotion upon success
yes	22%	51%	67%	55%
no	78%	49%	33%	45%

* In the second study, situation 3 was left out because the simulated upward movement is also found in situation 4. In the first experiment acceptance and non-acceptance did not differ in situations 2 and 4.

It appeared that in situations 2, 3 and 4 the numbers of acceptance did not differ; acceptance was less in situation 1 than in situations 2, 3 and 4 in the first experiment and the two experiments together (all p-values were significant at < 0.05). Among the subjects at a great distance from the boss (situation 1), 22% wanted the higher position and 78% did not. At a short distance from the boss (situations 2, 3 and 4), 56% accepted the higher position and 44% did not, which shows a clear tendency to reduce the power distance at a high level of reality, whenever the power distance is small, *by seizing power, taking over the power position here-and-now.* This confirms hypotheses 4 and 5 at a high level of reality.

The results are very significant because the choice was not easy, in view of the fact that only one out of five persons in the pilot position (situation 1, wheel structure) accepted a higher position.

Many subjects apparently considered the costs to be heavy, making it even more significant that 56% of the subjects at a smaller power distance did seize the power. The experiments also proved very convincingly that the power distance in itself explains the striving for power. Neither an immediately preceding step upwards (situation 3), nor the experience of promotion as a reward for personal achievement (situation 4) strengthened the power distance reduction tendency; so they cannot be rightfully brought forward as 'rational' explanations for power striving in this situation.

This does not mean that the successful performance of a task will never occasion the power distance reduction tendency (see

the discussion of the personality theory in chapter 1), but the experiments proved that, regardless of the way in which the individual had gained some power and arrived close to the powerful person, the smaller gap resulted in a stronger striving for power. In this study the small distance was sufficient cause to attempt a further reduction in distance. The findings also confirmed hypothesis 6.

The study built on system G, the field experiment by Peter Veen, also proved a stronger power distance reduction tendency at a high level of reality in subjects close to the powerful leader. Subjects at a short distance were *more willing to be the leader's assistant* (difference is significant, $p < .005$) and *more inclined to present well-defined plans for future group activity to the leader* ($p < .05$) (ref. 52, p. 155).

In this field study, as in all field studies, it was hard to separate the factors and to single out the power distance as a sufficient cause. However this disadvantage is outweighed by the advantage that the findings of the field experiment are unquestionably relevant (see chapter 2 on methods).

The striving for power in reality will therefore be stronger when power differences are small and the distance to the more powerful person is short.

In this situation the struggle for power will be fierce when several persons are working at an equally short distance from the powerful person; they will be competing to bridge the power gap. The field study built on system J (ref. 26) shows this. It appeared that people in particular groups felt an urge to entrust a 'strong man' out of their own number with leadership. They anticipated a two-level system with only one person at the higher level and underestimated the contributions to group activity by another member, who was clearly striving for power himself. This did not occur in a situation when one person did not emerge as the most powerful. So we see that they tried to arrest a development by which one of them would become the leader's assistant and they would drop to a third level (the lowest level in the inverted Y-structure). The contribution of a 'future assistant-leader' was not underestimated in a group that had no powerful leader (ref. 26, pp. 325-327).

Power distance reduction theory as a theory of addiction

The quintessence of the theory is hypothesis 5, saying that the smaller the power gap, the stronger the tendency to reduce it. Consequently the strongest tendency will not be found in the powerless, but in people whose power striving is partly satisfied. *The power striving is not fed by dissatisfaction* but by satisfaction. Having power feeds the need, making it comparable to the need for hard drugs. An individual can become addicted to 'power distance reduction'. If he is close to a person with more power, the power distance reduction tendency will occur. When he succeeds in equalizing, he will again show the tendency if he approaches a still more powerful person, and so on. If the individual is set on power, there will be no stopping him, once the power distance reduction tendency has been induced; he will continue to keep the less powerful at a distance and try to reduce his distance to the more powerful.

This theory is *not economically rational.* That theory predicts that the individual will strive for what is lacking and so the powerless will strive for power. Many social reformers just accept this theory; examples can be found in the participation movements, to be discussed later.

Another example of economically rational theory is the '*ego-defence*' theory, adopted by many psychologists. Briefly, this theory says that people feel insecure and threatened in attempts to reach their goals. To get rid of the feeling and to secure their interest, they will conduct themselves in a particular way, mingling with the more powerful. This would be an interpretation for the experience and expression of a positive attitude towards the more powerful. Individuals feel more threatened by the very powerful persons in their group (persons at a long distance in our theory) and the positive attitude of the ego-defence theory should be more clearly exhibited at a long distance.

The results of our studies show that this is not true. The power distance reduction theory is not a theory of defence but of attack. An individual does not strive to keep the power he already has, but strives for more.

Other data from our studies are paradoxical from an economical or rational view, but perfectly logical or, more correctly, perfectly 'psychological' in power distance reduction theory.

The costs of power (hypothesis 7)

The power reduction tendency will not only diminish at a great power distance, but also at a short distance under circumstances. There may be resisting forces when the individual behaves at a high level of reality which will represent the individual's expectation of great costs involved in the exercise of more power. The increase in costs is expected to be larger than the increase in gains (see fig. 3).

In the simulation built on system C_1, the subject assisted the group leader in appraising the work of the two other group members and could influence the judgment to some extent. The two other group members were punished or rewarded a few times. If the leader agreed with his assistant, the subject signed the letter of reward or punishment for up to 50 cents. At a short power distance the subject's opinion was decisive in nearly half the cases and only in 20% at a long distance, i.e. with a big difference in power between the leader and assistant. Halfway through the session the subject had the chance to take over the leader's position. The prediction that the subjects at the shorter distance would be more likely to do so was not confirmed: the percentage was the same in the two situations. Why?

It appeared that at a small distance the subjects estimated their power to be greater than at a great distance ($p < .01$) which meant that they had felt the difference in power. The theory provides an alternative explanation that is also supported by the findings. As said, the subject played a larger part in decisions on reward or punishment at a smaller power distance. The subject's pleasure in rewarding and objection to punishing were measured; subjects at the shorter distance, having some power themselves, were more averse to punishing others than subjects farther away ($p < .05$). No difference in the subject's pleasure in rewarding was measured(!) The costs of power were not offset by the gains. The greater re-

sponsibility of the leader daunted the subject at the shorter distance and caused a resisting force that could neutralize the driving force of the power distance reduction tendency (stronger at a shorter distance in theory). These findings are explained by hypothesis 7.

In a simulation built on system C_2, the cost factor was powerful on purpose (ref. 35). The simulation took the form of a contest between groups. Four schoolboys, 17 years old, formed a group. The members of the group with the best results in two half-day sessions would receive a big reward. They all worked on a town-planning project. The great responsibility of the group leader for winning or losing was emphasized. By drawing lots the position of each group member was determined and at a later stage the members would be enabled to make a well-founded choice for the position of group leader, assistant group leader or performer.

The drawing of lots was part of the simulation, so the subject was always the assistant leader. During the 'inequality session', the subject found out that the leader was not his equal, being two years behind the subject and the performers in school. The purpose was to give the subject the idea that the leader was not fit for leadership on account of this difference, which automatically implies less ability and experience. *The simulation created a community with sharp class differences on a small scale.* In the 'equality situation' the subject found out that the leader had reached the same level in school as himself and the performers. (They attended different schools, of course.)

The power distance was equal in the two situations and small. In four out of ten differences of opinion, the subject's opinion came out on top.

In situations of inequality the subjects were supposed to take over the leading position more often than in situations of equality, filling in the gap in leadership, but the result was 44% against 48%. But it appeared that the subjects in the situation of inequality *found the leader's arguments less convincing*, although the simulated argumentation was the same in both situations, and *were less satisfied with the power relations to the leader*, although they were exactly the same in both situations (p values were $< .10$ and $< .05$).

In the situation of inequality, the subject believed himself to be a stronger personality than the leader, but in the situation of equality he believed the leader to be the stronger ($p < .025$).

Inequality made 59% of the subjects believe that *taking over the leader's position was expected from them*, but only 12% in the situation of equality believed this ($p < .01$).

The subjects in the simulated situation of inequality, who, at the moment of their choice, were under the impression that the leader was two years behind them in school, had plenty of good reasons to take over leadership. Why did they keep their own position? The following will provide the answer with a high grade of probability. In situations of equality, the subjects believed they had a fifty-fifty chance to win, which is an objective estimate because two groups were competing for one reward (a big reward in their eyes). In situations of inequality the subjects only gave themselves a 33% chance ($p < 0.5$).

This difference must result from the fact that the subjects did not greatly appreciate the leader's behaviour in the preceding session. It is apparently an extremely unattractive proposition to have to take over leadership of a group that would probably lose the contest, and then account for one's behaviour. The subjects were only willing to pay the cost if they were strongly motivated to exercise power. In situations of inequality, the subjects who ventured to take over leadership proved to have been *very sharp in their written communications with the leader*, particularly in pressing their points (power distance reduction at a high level of reality!), before they were presented with the possibility of taking over. They also had very high scores in *power motivation* and *individual prominence* (see the discussion of hypothesis 12 in chapter 1).

Conclusion: in situations of inequality, the noticeable driving force of the power distance reduction tendency was set off by a resisting force, that kept the subjects from taking the last step, i.e. accepting leadership.

This resisting force was generated by the subjects' expectation of heavy costs in situations in which the exercise of power coincided with great responsibility for bad results. The findings of this study support hypothesis 7.

Participation; hopes and fears (hypothesis 8)

Participation by the less powerful in decision-making (in most cases by small numbers of people at the top of a social system) is an objective that inspires people in all parts of the world. The real object, participation really being a means to an end, is the reduction of differences in power. We have already explained why participation for the reduction of power differences is a double-edged weapon, when the power distance reduction theory is applied to its analysis.

According to the theory, the less powerful people will not attempt to reduce the power difference when they are too far from the powerful people of the decision-making group. The 'costs' of power distance reduction are very high in reality and they will not have enough energy. But the powerful will then realize their potential powers and lord it over the less powerful. The powerful people in our organizations, in our society, generally have more information, more possibilities to train and bring out relevant abilities and more power of expertise (refs. 37 and 40).

The use of potential power of expertise is fostered by participation. We designed three experiments to test the hypothesis that when the more powerful in a system (group, organization, society) have considerably more power of expertise than the less powerful, more participation will not reduce but increase the power distance (hypothesis 8).

The simulation was built on system F. The subject individually formed a strong opinion on the best solution of a complicated problem, participating with a more powerful person in the final decision-making. The power distance which had come about by the end of the session was measured at a high level of reality, determining whether *the subject changed his opinion* under the influence of the more powerful person. The more powerful person had some more information or much more information, plus formal power in two experiments. Participation by the less powerful varied between slight and great. The results are given in table 3.

Table 3. Effective power over subject; results of three simulations (percentage of subjects changing their opinions).

	Slight participation by subject	Great participation by subject	Total Average
Some power of expertise	27.6*	27.6	27.6**
Big power of expertise	44.8*	86.2***	65.5**

* significant difference: $p < .05$.
** significant difference: $p < .001$.
*** significant effect of interaction: $p < .05$.

The table shows that more expert power was effective, because over 65% of the less powerful persons changed their opinion, as against 28% in a situation with very small differences in expertise.

The same applies when participation is slight (roughly 45% as against 28%). The most important finding was that in the combination of far greater expertise and full participation, the subjects were much more dominated than in any other situation, 86% changed their opinion. So participation means an increase in power distance when the more powerful are much more expert than the less powerful.

These data reveal that the power distance (inequality in power) should not be too great with participation. Otherwise great volubility and activity at meetings will not be accompanied by a reduction in power distance, but, on the contrary, greater inequality.

A preference for illegitimate power (hypothesis 9)

Power distance theory has concerned itself with the *quantity* of power, disregarding the quality of power, the kind of power relationship. Other theories are only concerned with the kind of power relationship. French and Raven (ref. 11) say that the legitimate use of power will result in positive attitudes, but illegitimate use will result in negative attitudes of the subjects.

In power distance theory, positive or negative attitudes depend

on the distance. The length of the power distance will have more effects than the kind of power relationship; quantity being a more important factor than quality.

We compared the theories in a simulation built on system B, that had variations in power distance and the difference in legitimate and illegitimate power. Legitimate power was introduced by telling the subjects that one member of the group already had experience in the work to be done. After a reasonable explanation why the group would need a leader, the group members were asked to consider his appointment. The subjects then received a questionnaire; they had to give their opinions on the desirability of having a leader, on rewards and fines by the leader, and whether it was reasonable to appoint the man with experience. Upon completion of the questionnaire the subjects were asked whether they thought all this the right way of doing things and were willing to participate in the work of the group(!)

The subjects were then told that 10 out of 12 members wanted the experienced man to be appointed. Any objector could find that his objections had been counted, but were shared by a very small minority. He knew that the experienced man had legally been given the position of power and had agreed to accept. The name of the chosen leader was announced and the intercom enabled the group members to hear how he was instructed. The system for simulating illegatimate power was built up in the same way, but quite soon after the leader had received his instructions, the subjects heard through the intercom how one of their number intruded upon the leader and high-handedly told him to go away, because he was one of the two members who had not voted in his favour and he was going to take over. This did in fact happen; the elected leader protested and disappeared. The *usurper* then continued to tell the group what to do.

This dramatic event was followed in detail by all subjects and completely understood (ref. 31. pp. 27-29). The intrusion was crude and clearly illegitimate. In this situation 8 out of 185 participants *refused to continue* (4%). The 306 persons subject to legal power did not refuse to continue. *Illegitimate power is not accepted by everybody.*

The relevant data are found in table 4.

Table 4. The reactions to usurpation of power; average of personal sympathy. The subject could indicate on a 10-point scale how much he would like a social evening with the leader and if he thought him a nice fellow. The averages in the table have been given in this sequence.

	Short power distance		Long power distance	
Legitimate power	7.2	7.2	5.7	6.8
Illegitimate power	6.9	7.8	6.2	7.0

The table shows that the subjects' liking for the leader was greater at a short power distance. It appeared from these and other data, not given here, that the power distance determined behaviour, i.e. the subject's personal liking for the leader. We did not find any systematic effect of quality as the difference between legitimate and illegitimate power had no effect on power distance reduction at a low level of reality (ref. 31, pp. 21-23).

The findings therefore support hypothesis 9: quantity of power counts more than quality. The subjects in the simulation split in two groups after the very crude, illegal usurpation of power; 4% refused to continue and the remaining 96% had, on an average, a pronounced liking for the usurper that was little less than their liking for the legal leader. A man seems to take absurdities in his stride and behaviour experiments may assume the crazy proportions of some comedy series on television. This simulated, crude usurpation, resulting in very illegitimate exercise of power, did not for instance diminish the liking for the usurper! Personal regard, based on power distance, may not be true liking (ref. 31, p. 34). A gradual difference in effects of legitimate and illegitimate power, i.e. real disobedience, will be discussed in a later chapter under the heading of the counter-power of the less powerful. There is little knowledge about the differences between true and false personal liking. In any case the results met our expectations that personal regard (of which

the leader would not be informed) was determined by a short power distance, regardless of whether power was legitimate or illegitimate.

Personality theory and power distance (hypotheses 10, 11, 12 and 13)

The laymen's theory that social systems must have powerful leaders in crisis situations was tested in a simulation built on system J. Crisis situations were simulated at a high level of reality and the subjects' reactions were also on a high reality plane. In a crisis they selected leaders who had shown great self-confidence, expert power and individual prominence (ref. 26, pp. 321, 325 and 326) and apparently believed them to be able to exercise power in an extraordinary way. The results supported hypothesis 10. A field study of a large organization (system H) also confirmed hypothesis 10. It appeared that forceful exercise of power was believed to be necessary in crisis situations; this included great self-confidence, individual prominence and expert power, attributed to the leader (ref. 38, pp. 441-446). In our culture, the personality theory that people with great self-confidence, expert power and willingness to lead, when necessary, are most suitable to exercise power forcefully, seems to be the starting-point for most individuals. (The investigation proved the theory to be true objectively, and not only in the imagination of those closely involved, though this is not all that relevant here.)

Hypothesis 11 was tested in a simulation built on the B system. At a great power distance, when the leader distributed rewards and fines (following a rule he had not made himself) of up to 190 cents*, much greater self-confidence was attributed to him than at the distance when rewards and fines were only 10 cents. The connection was tested 6 times and every time the difference pointed in the expected direction ($3 \times p < .01$, $1 \times p < .05$) (ref. 27, p. 381; ref. 30, p. 31). Individual prominence, the capacity to guide others,

* See footnote on page 31.

showed six differences in the same direction ($3 \times p < .01$, $1 \times p < .05$). These results confirmed hypothesis 11. Forceful exercise of power will make people think of great confidence and individual prominence, although they do not have sufficient reasons to do so.

Power distance theory stresses the costs, because some people will be more willing to bear the costs of exercising power. They may be more willing because they have a stronger wish for power or possess more aptitude and confidence. The attitudes may be measured as they are fairly stable characteristics. Hypothesis 12 says that people with great self-confidence and a strong power motive will show a stronger power distance reduction tendency. Hypotheses 10 and 11 deal with the personality theories of the laymen in our culture determining the effects as the attribution of self-confidence to the leader in hypothesis 11. Hypothesis 12 is the scientific personality theory, which is not derived from laymen's theories (although this is not entirely impossible!).

In an early simulation study following system A (refs. 30, 49) the subjects expressed their views on their own self-confidence. There appeared to be a relation between the subject's *confidence* and *how attractive the leader's position was to him* (the relation was significant in four out of six possibilities). In 6 out of 6 possibilities, the subject's self-confidence had a significant relation to his opinion that he could do the leader's work just as well as O did. Subjects with greater self-confidence were also more inclined to think themselves the leader's equals in relevant characteristics than others with less self-confidence.

In the field study, built on system H, we also found a connection between the subject's self-confidence and his belief that his own abilities were sufficient to fill the post of the leader, his nearest superior. The greater the subject's self-confidence the shorter he estimated the power distance (he was asked to what extent he influenced his superior).

The correlation coefficients were .34 and .42 (ref. 32, table in appendix IIa). Although these values are not high, they are significant, for in social reality many factors influence the situation and if results of the field study corroborate the theory, the theory is confirmed.

From data that are not reviewed here, it also appeared that the subject's estimation of the short distance to the leader was not only subjective, but had a few grains of realism (ref. 32, p. 94).

The findings of these studies support hypothesis 12 that people with strong power motives and self-confidence s how a stronger power distance reduction tendency at low and medium levels of reality.

In a simulation built on system C_2, the power distance reduction tendency was measured at a high level of reality. We used the Individual Prominence test (refs. 47 and 48), which did not really answer our purpose, as our definition of individual prominence is slightly different (ref. 38, pp. 435 and 448), and so we also used other tests to measure the subject's self-confidence, power striving and the attraction of the leader's powers.

The subjects taking over from the leader 'here and now', showed more optimism about the result of the contest ($p < .05$), more self-confidence and a higher I.P. score (insignificant), a stronger power striving ($p < .05$) and felt more strongly attracted to the leader's position ($p < .05$). So the persons with stronger power motives showed a stronger power distance reduction tendency, and this again supported hypothesis 12.

So the subjects adhered to a personality theory of self-confidence and ability as requisites for the highest position in the social system (hypotheses 10 and 11). When the subject discovers that the leader lacks these, it means a gap in leadership and he will try to fill the gap, which brings us to hypothesis 13, that has less to do with the motivation of hypothesis 12, and more with the subject's *observation of the external situation.*

In a study based on system C_1 (ref. 34) a situation with a leader of small self-confidence and little ability was simulated. He hesitated when he spoke on the intercom, withdrew a decision, made a big mistake and created a picture of *uncertainty and scant competency.* According to the theory, the subjects working with the unsure leader would show a stronger power reduction tendency than the subjects in groups with normal leaders. The tendency was measured at a high level of reality, as at a given moment the subject could take over the leader's position.

In the situation of uncertainty 55% of the subjects decided to take over against 23% in the other situation ($p < .005$).

In another simulation built on system C_2, the decision to take over proved to be connected with the relation between the subject's self-confidence and the self-confidence attributed to the leader. The subjects who elected for the position of power considered themselves more self-confident than the leader; subjects who did not take over believed the reverse ($p < .05$). Hypothesis 13 on the external situation is therefore supported. The situation may invite an individual to reduce the power distance and induce his power motives. In other words, *the situation may teach him to strive for power.*

Power distance reduction based on a mere image

The reviewed studies (fig. 4 and table 2) confirmed that a short power distance causes reduction tendencies regardless of preceding experiences of promotion, success, etc. The subjects only had to exercise some power, even for a short time (functioning at a small distance from the leader) for the tendency to be activated. However, does the subject actually have to function at this short power distance? Might it not be sufficient to represent a structure? Our theory supplies the answer in the affirmative, because power distance reduction is an all-pervading human activity in social reality, as has been observed, and the inverted Y-structure (fig. 1, system 1) is an archetype in our culture. A mere representation may then be sufficient to activate the power distance reduction tendency.

We tested this 'minimum representation hypothesis' by a simulation built on system E (ref. 41) and measured the subject's power distance reduction tendency without letting him function in the position in the middle of the Y, but activating the tendency as follows.

The subject was voluntarily taking part in a study of 'how situations were to be judged'. He was presented with a situation, by a step-by-step description of the correct sequence of a person's experience in a group doing clerical work. The description accurately

followed the study built on system D (as reviewed; see fig. 4). The subject heard the story of what happened in one of the four situations. He was told that the man from the institute had been the boss; the tasks of the boss and the others were described. He was asked to put himself in the place of the performers (fig. 4, situation 1), or the man who had been appointed assistant (situations 2, 3 and 4). He was asked to use his imagination and then try to find out what his own reactions would have been. Finally, the sudden departure of the boss was described, as was the marking of the vertical line indicating willingness to take over. The subject could then mark this line himself, which completed the cognitive representation and was the hub of this study. A number of opinions and attitudes could then be measured without any disturbing influence. The theory predicted that the power distance reduction tendency would be activated as if the subject had lived and acted in the real situation (hypothesis 14). In this double simulation, hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 were also tested. The results confirm the hypotheses as shown in table 5.

Table 5. Power distance reduction tendencies after presentation of structures.

Acceptance of power position	Situation 1 Long power distance	Situation 2 Short p.d. No change	Situation 4 Short p.d. Promotion upon success
Yes	35%	51%	56%
No	65%	49%	44%

35% of the subjects at a long power distance chose the leader's position, compared witch 54% at a short distance (situations 2 and 4), which meant a significant difference of $p < .05$. There was no difference between situations 2 and 4. These results are identical to those of the experiment shown in table 2. Cognitive representation of the wheel and inverted Y-structures tallied with the power distance reduction tendency caused by real action.

Other data from measuring opinions and attitudes are also im-

portant. The subjects *easily reproduced the structures by drawings*, i.e. the three-level system of situation 1, when the subject put his 'double' on the same line as the performers, and the three-level system of the second period in situations 2, 3 and 4, when he put his double in the intermediate position. The differences were significant, $p < .01$ (ref. 41, p. 119).

It was striking that the subjects put their doubles at a shorter distance from the leader in situations 2 and 4, than in situation 1; 35 and 52 mm ($p < .01$).

In theory the subject's double was closer to the leader in the situation described, but he actually had power over the performers in situations 3 and 4, not over the leader. The subject's behaviour proved our concept of power distance to be very adequate!

It should also be noted here that in Peter Veen's field experiment (system G), in which the subject's power over the leader did determine the distance, the differences between small and great power distances were the same as here, i.e. 38 and 53 mm ($p < .05$) (ref. 52, p. 152).

In the cognitive study the subjects at a short power distance also indicated that taking over leadership might be expected from their 'doubles' (difference with long power distance situations: $p < .01$). The subject thought the double the most suitable person for taking over. It should again be noted that no indication of such a view had been given in the description of behaviour. The knowledge about the inverted Y-structure was the sole cause of this view. In measuring power motive and attractiveness of the power position, etc., the situations did not differ (ref. 41, pp. 120-121); differences in acceptance could therefore not be explained by differences in power motivation.

The results are clear. The mere knowledge of the structure in which the subject occupied the intermediate position may also have been sufficient to activate the power distance reduction tendency at a high level of reality in the study built on system H as reviewed. The inverted Y-structure is a 'primitive', a fundamental mathematical figure from which other figures can be constructed.

If the position at the top is open, the middle position is auto-

matically related to this gap and there will be some tension (cf. the theoretical principle of 'closure of good continuation' of the 'Gestalt' theory; ref. 14, pp. 448 and 450).

The person occupying the medium position must fill the gap, irrespective of the reasons why he is functioning in this position* (no difference between situations 2 and 4). The word 'fundamental', or 'primitive', might be used here in the biological meaning of '*a way of knowing and acting learned at a very early stage*' upon which later experiences are built. The implication is that ways learnt at a later stage of development may be dropped without interfering with the fundamental process (situation 2 against situation 4). This hypothesis of cognitive representation refers to a minimum theory on power distance reduction. The 'primitives' are part of our culture, learnt at an early stage of development, but learnt all the same. They, like habits, may be learnt and 'unlearnt'.

Counter-power of the less powerful

We have not designed any experiments to test hypothesis 5a. Hypothesis 5b, 'despair breaks through apathy', has found support in our data.

The study built on system A showed that individuals at a long distance from the leader, having less power than anybody else, *expressed dissatisfaction and practised obstruction* (page 37). A similar trend was seen in the experiments built on system B, that allowed us to find out whether instructions from the leader were carried out or not. We might have expected that the subjects would be more docile at a longer power distance, i.e. more docility in situation 3 with its rewards and punishments of up to 190 cents (see footnote on page 31) than in situation 2 involving 100 cents and even further diminished docility in situation 1, involving 10 cents. In parts of these experiments the leader's power was simulated legitimate power and the subjects experienced this as correct and legitimate. In 3 out

* In a later study, the subjects occupying positions 3 and 4 in the inverted Y-structure might be asked which of the other group members would best fit the leader's shoes.

of 5 cases in which the data allowed independent testing, the subject's docility proved to be much less at a long distance than at a short distance, and in 3 out of four cases less than at the medium distance (ref. 27, page 377). The trend was even stronger when the leader simulated illegitimate power. At a longer distance, when the leader had the most power, the subject's docility had diminished (ref. 31, p. 31).

It should be noted that the subject knew how the leader was checking his work and would notice disobedience. The subject's behaviour was characterized by *its high level of reality* because he knew that he was not dealing with 'soft' opinions but with hard facts, and the consequences of his actions could be severe. At the long power distance the leader could let him have a high reward or a heavy fine, which made disobedience 'bad policy'. The subjects also showed antagonism at a great distance in the study built on system G (ref. 52, p. 320). All the findings were consistent; at a great distance the subjects would sometimes fight authority. From an economically rational view, such behaviour cannot be understood, because it may be detrimental to the subject's interest. But it does fit in the power distance reduction theory.

The powerless will not be winners in the power game, because they will not reduce the distance to the more powerful, *will not suffer any loss in power, which makes them feel free to revolt.* This is exactly what happens in many situations in social reality. Having no power, the powerless are not addicted to power or striving for power, which makes them willing to fight with their backs against the wall, though they will not think of it as a struggle for power (hypothesis 5b).

It also appears in our research that people, feeling threatened, tend to make themselves more powerful by uniting themselves in shared action (ref. 26).

A person capable of attaining the position of most power (alone), tends to recoil from it when he realizes that the group may blame him for what goes wrong, that alone he will have unpleasant tasks like 'punishing' his former colleagues (cost hypothesis 7). The

'costs' of his behaviour will, however be less if he does not reduce the power distance alone, but jointly with several others (the principle of shared responsibility). This joint power will increase the individual's self-confidence, preparing him further for power distance reduction tendencies (hypothesis 12).

Moreover, several individuals united in power can reinforce one another's assurance and self-confidence, both in their opinions and their abilities. They confirm their ideas of 'being right'. They build up a negative power of sanction against the powerful. The many people with little power can, when united, slow down a social system (by 'working to rule'); they can stop it (by obstruction or strikes) and even take it over (occupation/squatting). In this way they build up powerful outward-facing influence, influence on other groups which are mobilized for them. The desperate are united, guided and organized from a central 'power post' and in this way the less powerful are often capable of effective action.

A recent dramatic example of 'hard' power distance reduction in Dutch labour relations has been the Enka factory dispute in Breda in 1972 (reported in field studies (ref. 44)). The united have-nots in power protested most successfully: power distance reduction was effective. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of power confront us with many paradoxes. And so it was at Enka. Those with little power take action, out of their shared powerlessness. This results in a crisis, for them and for their opponents. In order to weather the crisis, a system, leadership, is needed – i.e. a crisis requires a good, strict system of communications and decision-making, characterized by considerable distances in power between the people and the central leaders (hypothesis 5/10).

The entirely unexpected threat at Enka that the factory would be shut down generated desperation and the willingness to take any action at all (which tallies with hypothesis 5b). At the start especially the action was 'in the ranks'. But practice confirmed the theory (hypothesis 5/10) and a very small group, a quadrumvirate, took responsibility for the policy. And in this committee there was one man who turned out to be the powerful leader, taking the most initiative. Concentrated power was then exercised

by a contact group, an 'occupation' committee and an 'occupation' leader. Power distances between the powerful and the ranks were very great. Consultations took place secretly; only a few, selected executives knew of the planned occupation. So the organization was very tight, with a big power gap between the leaders and 'the others'. The works council did not operate as a 'crisis system' between leaders and followers; it was not very important at all during the campaign.

The occupiers were isolated from the outside world, forming a distinct reference system which sometimes opposed unequivocally the outside world. However, the support of outside power groups was necessary to counterbalance the powerful AKZO concern and its board. Support was forthcoming from the trade unions, the public, press and television; other AKZO companies protested in support as well.

AKZO's board rescinded the decision to close the factory. And so Enka Breda is perhaps an example of a dispute which resulted in effective power distance reduction between the haves and the have-nots in power. Enka Breda heralded a new era, as the trade unionists said at the time. But permanent social change rarely occurs very fast and one may wonder what the long-term consequences of ENKA 1972 will be, the more so since a second Enka dispute took place in 1976. One thing is certain: many at the bottom of the power ladder as well as at the top have discovered what 'peaceful' power have-nots can achieve in concerted action. The citadels of the powerful are often more pregnable than they seemed. Insight into 'unity is strength' has been, is still, often too slight; it is a kind of 'sleeping' insight, not fully alive.

Moreover, we need to acquire *specific* knowledge – what conditions should be met for unity to be strength? In the theory of power the primary conditions relate to the crisis leadership and the crisis system of functioning.

What counter-power is possible? In the case of Enka, the negative power of sanction of the united have-nots in power was a distinct counter-power. AKZO was faced daily with adverse publicity, unrest in other parts of the company, criticism from fellow-entrepre-

neurs, the symbol of the 'occupation' itself, the risk of serious damage to installations and the chance that undesirable elements would seize control. The protest leaders used their negative sanction power well. This is essential if it is to remain an effective weapon.

Any campaign provides information which can also be used by the opponents, meaning that their reaction to it becomes more effective. Public support may be exhausted if workers want their pound of flesh, and more, and resort perhaps to unjustified occupation and the like.

The keenest dagger will be blunted by clumsy use. This is clearly demonstrated by another unauthorised occupation of a factory, USFA Helmond. In a long-term strategy of power distance reduction by the less powerful, it was pointless, even harmful because the severity of the action was not matched by what was at stake.

The 'union' of the have-nots in power at Enka had great 'outward-facing' influence. I think the trade unions' counter-power was crucial in this respect. The conflict was characterized by the fact that the AKZO management far outmatched the other side as regards power of expertise. They were backed by regiments of highly capable staff specialists in economic, technological and other fields.

How is it possible, in general and in this case in particular, for the less powerful to reduce a large power distance based on expertise? The theory reveals several important possibilities.

1. Those opposing the powerful select the same point of departure, the same 'value' as the powerful themselves. If the have-nots can acquire power of counter-expertise, the superiority of the leaders' expertise is bound to be reduced.

   In the Enka dispute this was not possible; the problems were very complex. Obviously even the capable trade union executives could not master matters as well in the short time available. The subsequent committee of outside experts was not a cause, but an effect of the earlier return to some sort of 'balance of power', based on power *and* counter-power.

2. Those opposing the powerful select a different point of departure (value). They try to deactivate the (incontestably) superior expertise, by relativity. It is suggested (justifiably, in this case) that the AKZO management had attached far too much importance to purely technical and economic considerations, neglecting the human elements and societal values.

In this way the whole power of expertise is challenged. The leaders' credibility is denied because they had been responsible for modernizing and extending the production machinery and increasing the labour force. And we all know that credibility is essential if the power of expertise is to work!

Reference cadres become closer. The have-nots in power, jointly menaced in their lot, are deaf to all expert arguments: 'That lot have no idea what it's all about'. They only listen to those with whom they identify themselves (reference power-factor), to those who 'speak the same language', foster the same feelings, belong to the 'powerless class'. The trade unions are a part of this; they have fought for the powerless over the years; the unions can profess ideological solidarity in word and deed.

I must repeat one of my previous remarks. The power distance reduction theory results in a realistic conclusion – sceptical if you like – that the 'haves' will not, in general, voluntarily relinquish their power; they will not automatically permit the 'have-nots' to reduce the power gap, even if this is useful for the social system. Some coercion is necessary.

Events occur time and again within Dutch labour relations, causing the management of a firm to reduce the number of planned dismissals not because the arguments have changed but because the management listens better if the arguments are presented by a powerful trade union. The general structure (of power) in society greatly influences the events in the social systems of which this society is comprised. Reduction of the power distance to the big companies by the trade unions is a good thing, as long as the Dutch unions continue to behave as constructively as they have so far!

Equalization tendencies: what is the model's 'message'?

The hypothesis put to empirical test was: in certain situations people tend to equalize with other people, by manifesting, after merely observing others' behaviour, an identical kind of behaviour.

Thus: after observing aggressive behaviour of (an)other person(s) individuals tend to be aggressive, without previous motivation to do so and without expectation of rewards for such behaviour. The same holds for kind, affiliative behaviour, etc. The hypothesis specifies that 'in certain situations' this behaviour contagion or imitative behaviour will occur, for instance, when:

a. a fairly high degree of interdependence exists between the individual and his perceptual environment (when the individual is sleeping this interdependence is too low).
b. no strong other tendencies already dominate his perceptions and actions (as when he is heavily concentrating on solving a mathematical problem).
c. the changes in the individual's environment must be extremely salient (for instance: the model's aggressive behaviour must stand out as a strong 'Gestalt' against the background of the total perceptual field).

This 'minimum perceptual-field-induction' hypothesis has been tested in experiments, in which very young people (5-6 years) were confronted with models, showing either aggressiveness toward others or kindness and helpfulness.

It appeared from our research data that the subjects indeed manifestated a tendency to imitate the category of behaviour exhibited by the models.

Explanations, based upon previous motivation, upon expectations of rewards or punishments, or upon norms about what one ought to do, could be excluded by the design of the experiments. These results are very significant: we learn to do things, just because others are doing them. So, we can learn to be kind, when we observe behaviour which is kind (ref. 43).

The same may hold for power behaviour!

This equalization tendency produces direct, primitive behaviour, and especially in the phases during which we are very sensitive and open to our environment. In our earliest years we are set to learn important forms of behaviour!

4. The beginning and the end of the addiction to power

'Life is change; how it differs from the rocks' (The Jefferson Airplane: 'Crown of Creation')

Economically rational interpretation of power

In our culture the pursuit of power is a strange phantasmagoria. Power is ugly. The exercise of power is scorned. The actual presence of power in all nooks and crannies of life is difficult to reconcile with this picture. What can we do about this descrepancy? Psychologists say that an individual will repress this ugliness and if he cannot do so, he will dream up all kinds of reasons why a given situation requires the exercise of power.

The layman represses power, but is very much aware that power cannot be suppressed in reality. He cannot close his eyes to the fact that in our world even the violent exercise of power is increasing rather than decreasing; violent power is more common than love. But he will point to others, not to himself, and whenever he exercises power he is doing it 'to help another human being, for his own good' or 'to save him from himself', for instance when he adds to another's education or punishment. Helping and protecting are often hasty rationalizations and often derive from the exercise of power. The social scientist also rationalizes, but in a more subtle way. He says that a man will not exercise power unless he has good reason. He does so, because he wants to gain reasonable advantages. He strives for power to have enough money, enough food or, still better, to be independent of the more powerful and do the things he wants to do. Power striving is therefore reasonable and acceptable; a starting point to talk about the economically rational being, widely used in American social science.

But European social scientists are following the same track. They study how power is divided, how a 'happy few' exercise power through executive and supervisory boards, how a few families wield

an unproportional amount of power in society and how rich a few countries are in proportion to the number of poor countries. This is only *registration* (however useful) leading to the conclusion that the differences will disappear by the application of the principle of 'communicating vessels'.

Connecting rich to poor, powerful to powerless will result in an equilibrium at an even level. But people just do not have the same characteristics as liquids, which goes to show that the principles of physics cannot serve to understand or predict human behaviour. Social science seldom digs deeper to grasp the reasons for wanting power or find the fundamentals of power behaviour*.

But this is necessary to find a better model for change than that of mechanically reaching an equilibrium upon registration of inequality.

Knowledge of fundamental power mechanisms is necessary for people to gain or retain freedom, to be able to make choices re our power behaviour and society

Simulations enable the study of inequality in power, the struggle for power, class struggles, relations in employees' councils, incompetent leadership, the creation of power elites and reactions to crisis as dynamic processes. Other influences that are not based on power, including open discussion, kindness, etc., can also be examined. The common themes are: how do people learn to strive for power, what are the costs and gains in such strivings, what will block the learning of power motives, what are the alternatives for power and how can people be taught them. Human beings must be able to influence the learning of alternatives, to make choices and achieve freedom.

* There are exceptions, such as the research department of Michigan University, Ann Arbor (Cartwright, Zander and others). Tannebaum also tried a new approach, the weaknesses of which have been discussed in another publication (ref. 32, pp. 29-33). Cf. Lammers and Brinkman in the Netherlands (refs. 15, 9 and 4).

The power distance reduction theory and the struggle for power

The value of the theory on fundamentals of power behaviour is determined by the testing methods. The comprehensive testing programme meant the application of many methods, varying from experimental studies, *simulations of inequality in microsystems* to field studies in social reality, of *small groups and large organizations in action.*

The advantage of simulations is that little room is left in method, data processing and theoretical interpretation for the prejudices of investigators, some of whom are very prejudiced indeed. The advantage of field studies is that the relevancy of the findings is safeguarded; if the theory is correct in social reality, with all its disturbing factors, this is very important. We started by showing that people of our culture feel satisfaction in the mere exercise of power and strive for this power.

The empirical results show that the concept of power cannot be replaced by concepts of 'helping each other' or 'striving for a common good'. The less powerful expressed their dissatisfaction and obstructed, which damaged the group. Other explanations, such as: people only want to be independent (autonomy theory) or the primary motive is responsibility for their own task (achievement motivation or self-realization) were precluded in our simulations. This does not mean that they do not have any value at all. They are valid under certain circumstances.

It does mean that people of our culture have learnt to strive for power for the sake of power, even if in a part of these learning processes power has been a means to a different end. The power striving is very important in our society, which gives us cause to analyze the situations in which power striving will develop or not (*analysis of conditions*), as this will show us when and how power striving is learnt. The specification of power theory is found in the 'power distance theory', and these hypotheses were supported by empirical data. As sketched in fig. 1, the powerful persons in a system keep their distance from the less powerful and try to in-

crease it (O's attitude towards I). Nietzsche calls this 'Distanzen aufreissen' (ref. 45, p. 323). People with some power will try to reduce the distance to the powerful which is the '*power distance reduction tendency*' (I is the person with some power, O-I is the power distance in fig. 1).

These two forces in social functioning, the tendencies to keep or reduce distance, cause the struggle for power. The struggle becomes fierce when several people with some power contend with each other in reducing the distance to the powerful (see discussion of hypothesis 5 in chapter 1).

The quintessence of the theory is the hypothesis that the power distance reduction tendency will be stronger at a shorter power distance, i.e. the smaller the difference in power, the stronger the less powerful person's tendency to reduce it. (See fig. 1 and compare I's positions in the two structures.) In elaborating the theory, we must distinguish between behaviour at high and low levels of reality. At a low level of reality, imagination is at work; an individual invents what more powerful persons will believe or do, or he expresses the wish to have more responsibility and take the leading position (irreality). The power distance reduction tendency at a low level of reality was measured in our studies by such expressions as 'I will be just as good in telling others what to do'; 'He the (leader) and I do several things in the same way'; 'I want more responsibility'; 'I should like to meet him socially'; 'I want a position with more power', etc. At a low level of reality people can just do what they want; they can have their fling in their imagination.

But reality is the sum of hard facts, existing independent of a person's wishes. In our theory the *cost factor* enters at *a high level of reality*. Exercise of power in reality is accompanied by psychological losses, such as unpopularity, heavy responsibility, risk of failure, endless spending of energy, etc. But a person thinking and dreaming about a power position will take these costs lightly.

At a high level of reality we measured the power distance reduction tendency by determining whether a person tried to influence the powerful in favour of his own views, by way of communication, or made an attempt to take over a power position by climbing one

rung higher up the ladder than the other group members, by becoming assistant to the leader, or trying to take over the top position, *actually getting hold of power.*

At the higher and lower levels of reality and in several studies the subjects strived to reduce the distance to the more powerful person. The striving was stronger at a shorter distance (hypotheses 4 and 5). The subjects also pushed off the powerless (hypotheses 2 and 3). The findings gain in importance if one realizes that they were obtained in keen simulations and in field studies, with all the disturbing factors of reality. Alternative theories even proved unnecessary. We did not, for instance, need to apply the theory that recent promotion or even promotion upon earlier successful performance is a prerequisite for the striving to reduce the power distance.

The addiction to power distance reduction

The reduction tendency proves to be stronger with a smaller difference in power. The more power the person in the medium position acquires, the stronger his striving to reach the top. This seems a paradox and contrary to economically rational theories. In power distance reduction theory the powerless at the bottom of the ladder will not strive for power, but those who should have been satisfied to some extent, exercising some power at a short distance from the leader. The power distance reduction theory is a *theory of addiction.* More power does not decrease the need as in the case of food, but increases the need as in the case of 'hard drugs'. A small power distance increases the reduction tendency.

The positive attitude of people at a short distance from the powerful at a level of irreality is not economically rational, but contrary to the propositions of the self-defence theory, saying that people are interested in winning over the powerful and try to reach this goal by expressing preference and liking. These positive attitudes should then be stronger when dependence on the powerful is greater and people feel the more need to flatter the powerful.

It has already been said that the findings of our studies showed such attitudes to be stronger at a short distance from the powerful, contrary to the 'self-defence' theory. The positive attitude, the preference for the leader and the belief that one is his equal have a magical character, enabling a man to be psychologically united with the powerful person: 'I belong, I am like him and so I could take his responsibilities'.

This almost religious identification with the higher powers expressed itself in personal preference for the powerful person even in simulations, when the latter was able to reward or punish. When rewards and fines were small (small power difference or short power distance), the subjects expressed a more positive attitude than in situations when rewards were large (long power distance). The subjects' behaviour would have been economically rational if they had displayed this positive attitude at the long distance, because 'there would have been a larger benefit'.

At a high level of reality a limited number of powerless people at a great power distance sometimes expressed great dissatisfaction and obstructed the actions of the powerful person, which is also paradoxical in economically rational theory.

But the behaviour is understandable in power distance theory, and even predictable. Relatively powerless people, at a long distance from the powerful, are not inclined to reduce the distance. It is too long and *they have nothing to win or lose.* They do not fear losing favour with the powerful, and can become a danger to the powerful!

The relations brought into the open in microsystems are also found in macrosystems. Take the start of the 'Black Power' movement in the United States. The result of such a fierce struggle may be that the powerful are willing, sometimes very late in the day, to soften the rules of retaining power (cf. ref. 15, p. 15). A recent example in Dutch labour relations was the Enka factory occupation.

The costs of the exercise of power

The theory says that people are inclined to underestimate costs

at a low level of reality, concentrating on the gains. But the costs will be considerable in reality and expected loss will increase more sharply than the gains at a shorter power distance (hypothesis 7). The first reason is that an individual at a short distance from the powerful person, exercising some power himself near to the leader, will know the leader's part in his picture of the world around him (his cognitive map). The second reason is that he will have experience with power. His ideas on the costs of exercising more power will be realistic! These costs will cause a force counter to the stronger power distance reduction tendency at a short power distance.

A few of our studies have shown fairly successfully that this resisting force existed in reality. In one situation the less powerful feared that, when in power, they would have to account for a loss in their group that was already beginning to show. In a second situation people close to the top disliked the idea of punishing (fining) former colleagues which acceptance of the higher position would entail. The psychological costs of responsibility were too great compared with the gains in the view of many people in these two situations.

Unsuccessful learning processes in participation procedure

The power theory explains why participation may be a double-edged weapon. The basis is hypothesis 5 by which the powerless at a long power distance do not feel inclined to reduce the distance. If the powerful try to increase the distance (hypothesis 3) the power differences will become greater instead of smaller, as intended by participation.

The ever-recurring question is: when and how will the power distance increase?

Our simulations proved that power differences grew with great differences in expertise. They did *not* diminish (hypothesis 8). In social reality this is quite clear as in Dutch work councils and Yugoslav workers' councils (see chapter 1 on the unintentional

effects of participation). The learning then is bad because people learn to reduce power differences merely at a low level of reality while in fact power differences grow. People will then only become equals in their imagination, or size up the situation as 'unintentional cheating' and learn that real participation is hopeless, because they lack the education and cannot easily catch up in training. They foresee that they will have to get through mountains of work to catch up and reduce the distance (cf. hypothesis 7). In this situation they will have insufficient confidence and insufficient motivation to reduce the distance in reality (hypothesis 12)!

Those people who get through these mountains of work have such capabilities that they will not, to my mind, represent the powerless in the organization for long; they will rush up the ladder! According to power theory, representation in employees' councils and the like is a rather ineffective means to reduce power differences. Effective means must meet the requirement that the distance in situations of learning may not be long (cf. refs. 37, 40, 44 and 52 and especially the work of the Tavistock group, refs. 51, 7, 8, 3, 53).

The quality of power

A positive attitude is not only determined by power distance but by many other factors. Restricting ourselves to power theory, there is the comparison with another theory, with contrasting forecasts. The so-called 'typing theory' proposes that legitimate power of the leader results in positive attitudes of the less powerful, and illegitimate power in negative attitudes. As said, power theory predicts positive attitudes at a small power distance.

The two theories were compared in a study and the quantity, i.e. the distance, proved of greater influence than the quality, i.e. the type of power, when the theories presented conflicting propositions (hypothesis 9). When someone took sudden action to get power, contrary to all arrangements and standards, the powerless and persons with some power showed the same positive attitudes towards him as towards the lawful leader. The only difference was of degree;

the nearer to the unlawful leader, the more positive attitude prevailed. These findings mean that we must be critical of power problems, including our own! We have seen time and again that people's behaviour is not very nice; they will show liking for the powerful, if they are near enough, even when illegitimate exercise of power is harsh in rewards and punishments.

So *power corrupts people.* People will 'understand' legitimate behaviour, when they feel near enough and will forget that power is illegally exercised, identifying themselves with the unlawful person after a short time. Power elites are quick to form, with differences in power among themselves but with their own culture and their own standards of treating the less powerful. Those with some power and those without *really live in two different cultures.*

Personality theory and power distance reduction

Personality theory represents a person's fixed opinions on the relations between personal characteristics on the one hand, and the particular requirements of a given situation on the other hand. His ideas may have a scientific basis or not.

An experiment in social reality and a field study in a large organization in action showed that people wanted the forceful exercise of power by a leader in a crisis situation and chose a leader who had great self-confidence and individual prominence (hypothesis 10). Individual prominence refers to the ability and willingness to lead when required.

In crisis situations people do not concern themselves with power distance reduction, but with the threatening danger. The primary interest is survival and they believe that a powerful person will help. A crisis prevents power reduction striving and learning power motivation.

Several simulations showed that people attributed great self-confidence to the leader, when he was exercising power forcefully (hypothesis 11), which demonstrates the personality theory of our

culture: leaders must be forceful in a crisis and this requires great self-confidence.

A third result was that people with great self-confidence and willingness to exercise power showed a stronger power distance reduction tendency, thinking themselves equals of the powerful (low level of reality) and *equalizing in actual fact* by taking over the leading position (high level of reality) (hypothesis 12).

There are three explanations for this:

a. they took over because they believed self-confidence to be necessary in the higher position, making them the right men in the right place. The belief was based on their laymen's personality theory.
b. they took over because their personality structure (confidence, etc.) provided the motives. This is based on scientific theory of human motivation.
c. the theories of laymen and scientists interacted.

The second explanation is the simpler one and corresponds to general personality psychology, saying that powerlessness is part of our being, although it must be noted that numerous experiences will have taught us this helplessness. Some people have learnt that fate is not all there is to life and they can influence their own lives. This kind will sooner take action to reduce distance (cf. ref. 46).

A totally different situation was simulated in earlier studies. The leader lacked self-confidence and ability and this resulted in a stronger power striving in persons at a short distance (hypothesis 13).

The explanation is that when people experience a gap in the system they will try to fill it. Observation and beliefs are at work here. They believe that a leader needs particular abilities; their leader is lacking in these, upon which they must take over, because they do have the required abilities (cf. ref. 14, pp. 448-450). This explanation is based on appraisal of the external situation; the people who take over have not necessarily displayed strong power motivation in the past. The cognitive explanation is sufficient; motivation is not needed. The situation invites people to strive for power and this is the way in which they will learn to do so.

Cognitive power distance theory; primitive power structures

A kind of cognitive minimum hypothesis was supported by the findings of our studies. An imagined 'inverted Y-structure', in which a person saw himself occupying the position between the leader and the powerless, was sufficient to excite the power distance reduction tendency. A vacant top position automatically relates the next in line to the gap in structure; this causes tension between the vacant top and the occupied second position. The three-level structure as a fundamental 'primitive' structure invites the behaviour from the person in the middle. He will strive to reduce the power distance, even without having acted in this structure. This does not preclude motivation, because the individual might have recognized the structure and know how he reacted on earlier occasions working in a similar system, remember experiences, the reactions of others, etc.

The primitive, the inverted Y and the effects clearly show why the power distance reduction tendency is a prime mover in our society. A short power distance *compels* the individual to strive for power, and his freedom of choice is very limited here.

Equalization tendencies outside power relationships

The power distance reduction tendency aims at equalizing on a power basis, but people also strive to equalize in other matters.

I have constructed hypotheses and have investigated equalization tendencies on the basis of aggression and affiliation (ref. 43), in the sense of 'helping and supporting others' or damaging others.

It is important to note here that very young people tend to spontaneously adopt aggression or kindness from others. Seeing other people being kind to each other makes them inclined to be kind to others without any advantage to themselves. They equalize in 'being nice'. Kindness without ulterior motives is evidently

something that can be learnt if we produce the appropriate models of behaviour to each other!

Future expectations; what do we want to learn

The social problem of the seventies is participation as a means of reducing power differences, power distances in small groups, large organizations and society.

The theory and data lead to the conclusion: *power motivation can be learnt.*

Our studies show that a position with some power induces the tendency to reduce the distance to the more powerful. In doing so and reaching the goal, people acquire the abilities to exercise power, which will create a basis for the next step upward. In other words, powerlessness inhibits the striving for power; the powerless will not be active in increasing abilities for the exercise of power.

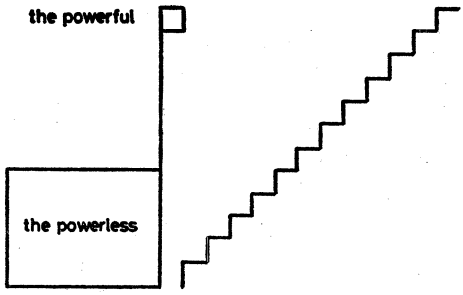


Figure 5. The power spiral – learning according to power theory.

Power distance theory, as illustrated in fig. 5, shows that some requirements must be met if a good learning process for the exercise of power is to be realized. To begin with, the powerless cannot take one big jump to the top position. They will have to climb stepwise for success. Previous participation is necessary if they wish to participate later with success (ref. 11).

Less powerless people must not try to bridge big gaps either;

they have to have learnt self-confidence on good grounds and to have acquired abilities, because they must be willing to bear the costs of exercising power in reality (hypotheses 5, 8 and 12; refs. 40 and 52). The crucial thing is not that people say they want more responsibility, but that they are willing to act, when responsibility is involved in reality. Social science reflects only too often power behaviour at a low level of reality, because interviews and inquiries are mostly the methods of investigation. People will only too easily express wishes at a low level of reality. Simulations or systematic observation are far more effective to determine power behaviour at a high level of reality.

The empirical results of our investigations are dominated by the estimates of costs of power, the addiction to power distance reduction and the necessity of reducing the distance step by step, which means learning how to be willing and able to wield real power.

This learning is threatened, when a small minority elite claims responsibility for a large number of people, who have had no say in this claim. It is wrong in power theory when a small group of social reformers at a short distance from the powerful demands more power for the powerless. The powerless at a long distance from the powerful will not want this power and lack relevant abilities whenever the power is 'thrust upon them' (Stuvanovic on the situation in Yugoslavia, ref. 40, p. 14).

As we have shown, the difference in power will increase, not decrease, if the difference in expert power is too great at the beginning, because the requirements of motivation and ability of the powerless have not been met, and reduction might occur at the low level of reality, with all the disadvantages that entails. People will stop spending much energy on reducing the distance in reality, because they are disappointed and will never be interested again in the good learning processes concomitant with power distance reduction in reality.

The leaders of participation movements in Yugoslavia, Norway, America and the Netherlands are people with some power, because they possess knowledge, ability, self-confidence and a position;

they mostly belong to the academic elite at a small distance from the powerful.

Power distance reduction – often their own goal – is projected on the powerless, whose disappointment will be great, according to power theory. The power theory explains the worldwide movement for participation and the reduction of inequality in power, indicating the cause of its intensity and its start in situations of a small power distance between the powerful and the 'activists'. We saw the start at the universities, particularly in the social science departments (Berkeley, 1960), where the distance between students and staff, staff and professors was shorter than in other departments and in European countries.*

The leaders of the participation movements are threatened by addiction. They have taken the initiative, started the struggle to reach the goal they have set for the powerless. They have also determined the means, for instance work(ers') councils, committees, foremen, etc. They determine the game and its rules; they are the people with power. The theory is plainly working here; we see in social reality that the leaders increase the distance to the powerless. Chris Argyris described a very interesting experience in a study of American students who criticized big commerce for 'aiming at too much power' but showed a very strong power striving themselves (ref. 2). The leaders of the workers movement in Yugoslavia were not inclined to let their co-workers participate in attempts to reach their goals (ref. 40, p. 11), a fact which tallies with the power distance theory on the point of addiction. All this is deadly to the theory of the participation movements, which differ in this respect from class struggle.

When history shows that class struggles have been contrived and conducted by members of the elite against the ruling classes, it does not conflict with the class struggle theory. But when the struggle for equality, mutual respect and communication is conducted by people with power, who want more power and do not accept their followers

* This interpretation based on the power distance theory differs from Cohn Bendit's interpretation (ref. 6; and for empirical data for the Netherlands, refs. 9, 15).

as their equals, the practice of participation conflicts with the theory of participation and this is deadly for the theory!

Power theory predicts these things. Yugoslavian leaders fight for the workers but without the workers. A Dutch trade union leader stated that the members of his union do not know what they should wish for and the leaders must teach them. Top people in organizations use employees' councils to increase their power. People do not plan such evils, but it happens.

If the value of indirect participation, as practiced in work(ers') councils, etc., is questionable according to the power distance reduction theory, one may ask: can power distance reduction theory help us? Yes, it is clear that the learning of power distance reduction can be better done, in reality, in and through the so-called shop-floor consultation, and union/company work at the level where the work itself is discussed by the workers in deciding on division of work, new tools, suitable co-operation in the workshop itself, etc. (refs. 3, 7, 8, 50, 53 and 60). Expertise and motivation of the workers are more likely to be sufficient for power distance reduction at this level, ideal and practical goals may be judged and reached, creating a much better climate for learning to reduce distances. The power mechanisms are also working and requirements must be met, otherwise the workers will not see any point in job structuring, formation of autonomous groups, etc. Here too success hinges on analyzing conditions and applying the theory (cf. ref. 1).

And yet we remain *fettered by power*. Even in learning how to participate there is the danger that people will adapt to the system of power, to the standards of the powerful.

Before politicians discovered the interests of the young workers, I wrote about the significance of teaching less privileged people how to communicate, as this would enable them to participate effectively. But this teaching is then directed at communication, as used by the privileged groups, from which the powerful originate.* This does not leave us much to hope for; there will be no fundamental changes.

* Bernice Martin pointed out that progressive schools and educational systems are adapted to the style of a minority élite, which threatens to keep the children of workers down, because they are not ready for it (cf. ref. 20).

The next generation of powerful people will follow the same theoretical rules. The relatively short distance of the inverted Y-structure keeps working and we are addicted to power reduction. Fighting the powerful will not result in power equality. There will always be relatively powerful leaders of the caravan of the powerless who will, in spite of themselves, be subject to the mechanisms of power distance reduction.

Peace and happiness for each of the two power classes?

We have seen that various power mechanisms all work in the same direction, that is to say: within our social systems they promote, along different lines, the development of two extreme classes, the powerful and the powerless. In the previous pages I have implicitly treated this development as undesirable. But isn't this trend toward two classes beneficial? Perhaps it creates social systems which have one very desirable quality: stability.

The powerful, wishing to keep their power distance from the powerless, are happy when their class is firmly established and the power distance toward the least powerful is maintained. The powerless, adapting themselves to their fate of powerlessness, resign from power distance reduction and develop other motivations, such as solidarity between the have-nots in power, and/or they let themselves be satisfied with 'bread and games'. Then, everyone is happy – or not? There are, to my mind, two major reasons why the trend toward two extreme classes of powerful and powerless will not lead to stability and why this trend should be opposed.

Multiphase theory of social systems

The first reason is that, according to many theorists and practitioners, our social systems need new ways now and in the future of functioning to make themselves more flexible, more adaptable to changing circumstances (ref. 42). Any social system goes through different phases. Crisis conditions follow standard conditions;

turbulent environments follow daily routine environments. Turbulent environmental changes or real crises for the system as a whole will be far less frequent than day-to-day conditions. However, they are more vital: they are decisive for the growth and even for the survival of the social system.

Crisis situations demand concentrated, strong leadership, with a large power distance between the power centre and other parts of the system, based mainly on expertise. Such strong leadership is not only more effective, but people also have a need for strong power exertion in these circumstances. However, in non-crisis conditions the power requirements are quite different. Then most people, when offered the choice, prefer a small power distance from those above them.

But also from the viewpoint of the total social system – on the basis of weighing costs and profits – small power distances in non-crisis situations are highly desirable. This is because they promote contributions by all people, they reduce the risks connected with the one-great-man-show (ref. 23, on the concept of vulnerability), and they assure a distribution of leadership throughout the organization, also in the more peripheral positions where good leadership may be vitally needed.

The key factor, however, is *learning*: the expert power needed in the crisis situation must be developed in the non-crisis phases of the social system. An example: When an airplane tries to land in really turbulent circumstances, everybody will expect the captain to take absolute control and not delegate it to his junior pilot. But the captain can only be expected to succeed if, as a junior pilot himself, he was trained in many comparable situations, in which the degree of difficulty was gradually increased.

To summarize: one reason, sufficient in itself, not to accept the image and the reality of the great shepherds and their herds meekly following them is that nowadays complex social systems will not survive with this type of leadership. The stability of the two extreme power classes will, in the long run, lead to inflexible social systems, too weak to survive adequately through great crises and turbulences. Instead, continuous educational processes, especially power reduc-

tion learning, are necessary to realize a more exhaustive use of leadership potential, spread over the whole system.

The counter-power of the powerless

I posed the question whether a social system based on two extreme classes will be stable. In a short-time perspective, it might be; in the long run there is a second potent reason why it will not.

It has already been formulated that people at the bottom of a very large power hierarchy will tend to develop solidarity with other have-nots in power (hypothesis 5a). This reciprocal solidarity will not in itself lead to events or actions in the power area, but prepares a fertile ground for such processes. The ground is also prepared by another power mechanism. People at a very great power distance have nothing to gain, power-wise, but nothing to lose either. They do not foster positive attitudes toward the powerful – as they would do on the basis of the power distance reduction tendency – and so they can be mobilized toward action, by people, by events. Their apathy can be broken by desperation (hypothesis 5b). In another hypothesis (hypothesis 5c) the old popular saw is formulated that when many of the powerless unite themselves, they produce greater power for themselves. In our research it appeared that people respond to threats by uniting themselves is shared action (ref. 26). For instance, when a large number of workers go on strike in appropriate circumstances, they produce negative sanction power against the powerful. In and because of the action they support one another in their emotional weaknesses and doubts. They increase one another's self-confidence, which is important because self-confidence is a promoting condition for stronger power reduction (hypothesis 12). However, for any action to be successful, a certain degree of organization, of profiled leadership, is required (hypothesis 5/10). Such actions out of desperation are characterized by crisis circumstances. Here special dilemmas arise because the powerless act out of a lack of power and they should therefore reduce the power distance toward the powerful; but the '*logic of*

the crisis' requires a large power distance between the crisis leadership and the other participants in the action.

A dramatic illustration is the earlier-discussed case of the Enka (AKZO) rayon plant in Breda, Holland, which took place in 1972. Technically this was a well-equipped, modern factory. The work performance of the personnel had always been good. Shortly before the events reported here, the labour force had been expanded. Then, suddenly, the personnel received the announcement that the factory would be closed down for efficiency reasons. People were shocked, and became desperate. The unions, in fact, accepted the closure; they negotiated with the corporation management about the possibilities of alternative employment elsewhere. But the people in the factory reacted more strongly and opposed the very decision to close down. For several months, there was a great confusion of moves and counter-moves. Then, strong leadership emerged and developed a coherent local defense organization. In a carefully prepared act of protest, the factory was occupied. After a number of days the management gave in: the factory was not closed down. The counter-power, developed by the united powerless, had been effective. The strength of the counter-power of the united powerless proved to depend on the degree of organization brought about by powerful leadership.

This and many other recent examples show clearly that the apathy of the powerless – a common complaint of managers and of labour union leaders(!) – can change into hard action when, or precisely because, the power distance between them and the powerful is very large. The existence of two extreme power classes does not guarantee long-term stability. We should not regret this, I may add, in view of the considerations on the Multiphase theory, in which it is stressed that the survival capacity of a social system in a turbulent environment is dependent upon broad power distance reduction learning processes.

The power distance reduction theory as a learning strategy

I have argued that the polarization of our social systems into two power classes will not lead to peace and happiness – first, because the systems will lack the strength to survive and second, because at certain moments the powerless will shift from apathy to action. Indirect democracy, with its institutions such as houses of representatives, workers' councils, etc., does not guarantee successful power distance reduction for greater numbers of people and in certain circumstances even contributes to the development of the extreme classes of powerful and powerless we described. There is a need for feasible alternatives. The development of such alternatives is discussed elsewhere at greater length (see ref. 44). However, the following suggestions, based on power distance reduction theory, are meant to provoke the reader's imagination.

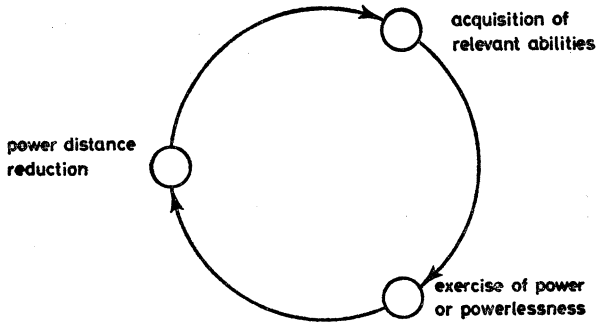


Figure 6. A learning strategy based on power distance reduction theory.

Effective power distance reduction should be learnt step-by-step (see fig. 6). Power distance reduction learning should be made available to as many people as possible, and in selected situations. In this way the growth of a small power elite will be avoided. The situations for learning should be selected carefully; first of all, crises are very unsuited to power distance reduction learning. Beyond this, learning situations should be chosen in which the relevant expertness is not too unbalanced: people of extreme expertise should not con-

front those who are very inexpert. The learning should involve as many different situations as possible, as many different dynamic structures as possible, and be continuous and systematic. A board meeting is as appropriate as a meeting of a works council; the adaptation of *certain* personnel evaluation systems may be as good as an organization development programme. One should especially consider the power distance reduction on the shop floor itself, not as a substitute for but as a complement to the indirect democratic procedures in works councils (ref. 44).

The pioneering work of the Tavistock group and its applications in Norway are especially relevant here (refs. 8 and 3.)

All these considerations are based on power distance theory, on power mechanisms. Again, we remain fettered in power!

Is there some hope left for Man's social activities outside the power realm? Yes, but there must be realistic idealism. There must be room in this world for people to conduct affairs in a human and business-like manner. The world is not only power (Nietzsche) or man fighting man (Hobbes). There need not be only two cultures, of powerless and powerful. There are alternatives we have discovered in our studies. Addiction to power need not be bad in itself. *Power and power differences are part of reality and are inevitable.* This does not conflict with goals like power distance reduction, because *we gain freedom in recognizing power mechanisms, which will permit us to make a choice.*

An alternative has been known for a long time. There is a relationship between people which we have defined and measured as a persuasion-directed relationship, a non-power influence process (see chapter 1, page 15). The partners all keep an open mind, listening to their own and other arguments. The practical advantages are considerable. In my opinion *leaders and followers* could learn in this way. There must be some equality in attitude, motivation and ability. It is also clear that such relations will not be fostered by pressure of time or crisis. Some situations invite power striving (hypothesis 13) and others weaken the power distance reduction tendency. People can stop striving for power when the striving is blocked by high costs (hypothesis 7). The costs may be influenced. If power is highly

valued, we expect to gain, but will not expect as much if we do not attach such high values to power. A negative value, often laid claim to these days, will only be effective when we comprehend power mechanisms. *Open discussions on how power is exercised will enable us to choose.* People may learn other motives. Atkinson demonstrated that striving for achievement may be learnt. In our studies (ref. 43) we found that kindness may be learnt, as well as aggression. There is ample choice. People learn to be kind and helpful when others display amiability towards them.

The need for affiliation offers an alternative to power striving. 'Flower power' has worldwide effects that have not been analyzed yet. The stimulation to learn must occur at an early stage in individual development, if the tender 'affiliation plant' is not to be choked by weeds.

Social science is acquainted with relations outside power relationships, their consequences and how they may be fostered. We also know criteria that will tell us of the existence of such relations. How power behaviour and non-power behaviour may be learnt is also known, but the voice of social science is not often heard. The necessary studies and the best way of communicating the results are lacking for others to benefit fully by them. We shall only be able to make the proper choices on the situations in families, schools, workers' organizations and society, if we possess the correct knowledge about power behaviour and alternative conduct, and pass this on to others. Only then can we decide on priorities in learning behaviour which will prove to be the right choice for our own lives and for those of the people of this world.

Basic concepts

power	the potential to determine or direct (to a certain extent) the behaviour of another person/other persons more so than the other way round.
power distance	the degree of inequality in power between a less powerful Individual (I) and a more power Other (O), in which I and O belong to the same (loosely or tightly knit) social system.
power distance reduction tendency	the striving of the less powerful Individual to reduce or remove the difference in power between himself and the more powerful.
striving to maintain power distance	the striving of the powerful to maintain or enlarge their power distance from the less powerful.
irreality	low reality level = purposive conduct which does not apply to the world of hard facts and set barriers; for example: I should like to hold that position of power, etc.
reality	high reality level = purposive conduct of Individuals in which the facts are far less malleable as regards these persons' aspirations.
costs	all human conduct aimed at achieving certain ends is affected to some extent by the psychological costs: the risks of failure, time and energy, loss of popularity, the unattractive sides to the required behaviour.
exercise of power	a person attempts to put his/her – potential – power into effect.
effected power	the final result of the attempt to exercise power.
participation	less powerful persons take part in decision-making of the powerful, the idea being to reduce or remove the differences in power.

successful participation	participation in which the foregoing is achieved.
experimental approach	some fundamental variables are alternated systematically (for instance small power distance versus big) in order to establish the effects of each fundamental variable whilst other factors are kept constant (e.g. stronger-weaker power distance reduction).
analysis of conditions	it is possible to establish, on the grounds of experimental thinking, the conditions under which certain effects occur, and under which certain effects are predictable.
simulation	factors which are hard to isolate or even identify in social reality can be produced/reproduced in the behaviour laboratory as studyable fundamental variables and/or effects.
external situation	all social systems, including the social interplay between two persons, I and O, function in an environment which influences them and which they influence.
learning choices	by altering the external situation (choice of friends, of certain activities) and setting themselves particular objectives, people can develop their capacities and motivations – i.e. they can change themselves.

The sequence of hypotheses in power distance theory

1. The mere exercise of power will give satisfaction.
2. The more powerful individual will strive to maintain or to increase the power distance to the less powerful person.
3. The greater this distance from the less powerful person, the stronger the striving to increase it.
4. Individuals will strive to reduce the power distance between themselves and more powerful persons.
5. The smaller this distance from the more powerful person, the stronger the tendency to reduce it.
6. The power distance reduction tendency will occur regardless of a recent upward movement to a more powerful position or a recent well-earned promotion.
7. The expected costs increase more sharply than the profits with reduction in power distance in reality.
8. More participation in decision-making will not reduce but increase a great power distance.
9. The quantity of power, i.e. the power distance, is a more decisive factor than the quality of power (its proper or improper use).
10. In crises a social system requires leadership which shows great self-confidence and is capable of strong exercise of power.
11. When leaders exercise their power forcefully, people will attribute great self-confidence to them.
12. People with great self-confidence and strong power motives will show a stronger power distance reduction tendency.
13. When less powerful individuals find that they have more self-confidence than the powerful person, they will show a stronger tendency to reduce the distance to the powerful person.
14. When an individual builds up an inverted Y-structure in which he imagines he is halfway between the powerless and the powerful, he will also manifest a power distance reduction tendency.

3/5. The 'downward' tendencies of the powerful to maintain the power distance, and the 'upward' power distance reduction of the less powerful reinforce each other.

5a. Less powerful individuals, who desist from reducing the power distance because the gap is too big, will develop other motives like a striving for solidarity with other 'have-nots' in power.

5b. The powerless class in a social system who do not strive (any longer) to

reduce the power distance from the powerful individuals may refuse to follow the powerful any further and put up (stubborn) resistance (despair pierces apathy).

5c. When several powerless individuals are united, they are powerful compared with those in power in their social system, and will behave accordingly ('unity is strength').

5/10. The strength of the opposition of the united powerless persons will depend on the strength of their organisation; forceful, central exercise of power (or a large power distance) is essential in crises.

15. Equalization is a human striving, not limited to the power dimension: Individuals strive to make themselves equal to another in circumstances which do not necessarily involve a power dimension: they tend to perform kind or aggressive behavior when they perceive it!

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