BOOK REVIEW OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS BY JEFFREY PFEFFER

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Abstract

This book had initiated "new wave" organizational studies that begin to edit, prune, apply, and synthesize what we have in order to see what we do not have yet, what we have too much of, and what we agree on as the basics. What makes this assessment plausible is the fact that Pfeffer has shown that the several perspectives now dotting the field can converge more strongly on a problem than mere lists of properties can. Pfeffer applies multiple perspectives simultaneously to a durable puzzle in organizations and shows not only that power is less puzzling than we thought but also that all perspectives we are currently working with have something to say about how that puzzle can be untangled most meaningfully. In doing so, Pfeffer has made a major contribution in the form of an important book.

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Introduction

This classic book which titled Power in Organizations had initiated "new wave" organizational studies in its time that begin to edit, prune, apply, and synthesize what we had in order to see what we do not have yet, what we had too much of, and what we agreed on as the basics. What makes this assessment plausible is the fact that Pfeffer had shown that the several perspectives dotting the field can converge more strongly on a problem than mere lists of properties can. Pfeffer applied multiple perspectives simultaneously to a durable puzzle in organizations and showed not only that power is less puzzling than we thought but also that all perspectives we were currently working with have something to say about how that puzzle can be untangled most meaningfully. In doing so, Pfeffer had made a major contribution in the form of an important book.

Jeffrey Pfeffer is the Thomas D. Dee II Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Graduate School of Business, Stanford University where he has taught since 1979. He is the author or co-author of 16 books and more than 150 articles and book chapters. Dr. Pfeffer received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Carnegie-Mellon University and his Ph.D. from Stanford. He began his career at the business school at the University of Illinois and then taught for six years at the University of California, Berkeley. Pfeffer has been a visiting professor at the Harvard Business School, Singapore Management University, London Business School, Copenhagen Business School, and for the past 14 years a visitor at IESE in Barcelona. Jeffrey Pfeffer has won the Richard D. Irwin Award presented by the Academy of Management for scholarly contributions to management and numerous awards for his articles and books. He is in the Thinkers 50 Hall of Fame and has been listed as one of the Most Influential HR International Thinkers by HR Magazine.

Organizations are systems in which influence processes play an important role. As part of any study of influence, the topic of power and the political activities through which power is acquired and exercised is important. Although power is an important topic in the analysis of organizations, it was difficult to find good teaching materials to use in presenting the subject. This condition motivated Jeffrey Pfeffer to write this book. He had been engaged in the empirical study of power phenomena for several years, and he wanted to consolidate his thinking on the subject, and to incorporate into one source many of ideas and materials that were available for explaining power and the political analysis of organizations.

The perspective adopted in this book is basically sociological. Power is seen as deriving from the division of labor that occurs as task specialization is implemented in organizations. When the overall tasks of the organization are divided into smaller parts, it is inevitable that some tasks will come to be more important than others. Those persons and those units that have the responsibility for performing the more critical tasks in the organization have a natural advantage in developing and exercising power in the organization. Although individual skills and strategies can certainly affect the amount of power and the effectiveness with which it is used, power is first and foremost a structural phenomenon, and should be understood as such (Pfeffer, 1981).

Because the literature on power is not particularly large, and the empirical study of power and politics is unfortunately a rare event, this book has several aims. First, this book aims to synthesize what is known about power in organizations, and to develop a reasonably consistent theoretical perspective that can guide analysis and understanding of power phenomena. Second, it aims to point out where there are significant gaps in empirical research and to stimulate further research and additional analysis of the phenomena described. Third, this book aims to demonstrate that power processes are both ubiquitous and beneficial rather than harmful to organizations and to the people who work in those organizations.

Content Overview

The book begins by considering why power has been neglected in the organization literatures. Alternative views of decision making are considered in the first chapter. This book emphasizes the political model of organizational choice, but the other perspectives need to be appreciated. In the second chapter, the issue of how to define and assess the power of various political actors in organizations is addressed. Then, in Chapter 3, the conditions under which power and political activity are likely to be employed in decision making are considered. In addition, understanding the conditions in which power is employed can help predict difficulties in the implementation of normative choice procedures, as well as indicate the circumstances in which such procedures are more or less appropriate.

In Chapter 4, the author explores the question of the origins of power, or the determinants of the power of organizational actors. Chapter 5 considers coalitions, cooptation, the use of committees, and the legitimation of power through the use of objective criteria and outside expertise. Chapter 6 considers the subject of political language in detail. Chapter 7 considers some examples of power in use, and presents a review of evidence for the importance of power in understanding various aspects of organizations. Chapter 8 treats the topic of institutionalization. An understanding of institutionalization is important for predicting the circumstances in which change is likely to occur, as well as understanding the relative importance of organizational adaptation; this is contrasted with selection processes as sources of change in populations of organizations. Finally, Chapter 9 discusses the implications of power and a political perspective on organizations for some rather crucial topics: organizational performance, the selection, training, and skills required by managers, design of organizations, and the likely future of organizations in terms of how politicized they will be. The importance of power in organizations requires that some attempt be made to explore its implications for the management, design, and performance of organizations.

Now, let's take a look in a more detail about the chapters in this book. In the first chapter, Pfeffer (1981) begins with the explanation of why organizational power and politics have been neglected in the organization literatures. It is certainly not because the terms power and politics are concepts used infrequently in everyday conversation. Nor they are neglected because they lack relevance in explaining what occurs in organizations.

Power has been neglected for several reasons. First, the concept of power is itself problematic in much of the social science literature. Second, while power is something, it is not everything. There are other competing perspectives for understanding organizational decision making. Third, the concept of power is troublesome to the socialization of managers and the practice of management because of its implications and connotations.

Most definitions of power include an element indicating that power is the capability of one social actor to overcome resistance in achieving a desired objective or result. For instance, Dahl (1957) defined power as a relation among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done. Well, power maybe tricky to define, but it is not that difficult to recognize: "the ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire." (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977b).

Pfeffer (1981) argued that power is context or relationship specific. A given social actor, by which we mean an individual, subunit, or organization, is not powerful or powerless in general, but only with respect to other social actors in a specific social relationship. And the power of a social actor can and probably will change over time. Although power is relationship or context specific, it is not necessarily specifically related to a limited set of decision issues.

In line with Perrow (1970), Pfeffer (1981) recognized that power is, first of all, a structural phenomenon, created by the division of labor and departmentation that characterize the specific organization or set of organizations being investigated. Pfeffer (1981) also said that it is important to distinguish between power and authority. The distribution of power within a social setting can become legitimated over time, so that those within the setting expect and value a certain pattern of influence. When power is so legitimated, it is denoted as authority. The transformation of power into authority is an important process, for it speaks to the issue of the institutionalization of social control. This transformation can be seen most clearly in the relationship between supervisors and subordinates in work organizations.

If power is a force, a store of potential influence through which events can be affected, politics involves those activities or behaviors through which power is developed and used in organizational settings. Power is a property of the system at rest; politics is the study of power in action. An individual, subunit, or department may have power within an organizational context at some period of time; politics involves the exercise of

power to get something accomplished, as well as those activities which are undertaken to expand the power already possessed or the scope over which it can be exercised.

After explained about the concepts of power, authority, and politics, Pfeffer (1981) continued with the explanations of major contending models of organizational decision making. They are rational choice models, bureaucratic models, decision process/organized anarchy models, and political power models. Pfeffer (1981) stated that political models view organizations as pluralistic and divided into various interests, subunits, and subcultures. Political models of choice further presume that when preferences conflict, the power of the various social actors determines the outcome of the decision process. Some organizations are characterized more by the political model, and others by the rational model.

Next, in Chapter 2, Pfeffer (1981) explained about assessing power in organizations. The assessment of power in organizations is important for several reasons. First, the exercise and use of power is facilitated by an accurate diagnosis of the political situation confronted by the social actor. Second, the measurement and assessment of power is important for those who would do research on the topic. Third, one way of understanding what power is, is to consider how the concept can be examined and used.

Having identified the relevant political actors, or the unit of analysis, it is then necessary to develop estimates of their relative power. One method for assessing power involves developing an understanding of what causes power in the social system under study. This method assesses power by its determinants. Instead of trying to measure power directly, power is assessed by considering how much of each of the determinants of power the various individuals, subunits, or groups possesses. The distribution of power can also be assessed by examining its consequences as these become manifest in decisions made within the organization. To assess power by its consequences, several things are necessary. First, it must be possible to recognize those situations in which resources or decisions are likely to be determined on the basis of power in the organization. Second, it must be possible to assess which social actors have gained or lost in decisions that are made on such critical and contested issues. Assessing power also can be done by its symbols. Such symbols include things such as titles, special parking places, special eating facilities, restrooms, automobiles, airplanes, office size, placement, and furnishing, and other perquisites of position and power.

Other way in assessing power is using reputational and representational indicators of power. Because there are a variety of ways of assessing power distributions within organizations, the most reasonable approach in diagnosing power then is to look for a convergence of power indicators within social systems. There should be a correlation between the ranking of the determinants of power, the consequences of power, the symbols of power, and the reputational and representational indicators of power. An index constructed from all of these factors is likely to provide a reasonably good approximation of the distribution of power in the organization at a given time.

In Chapter 3, Pfeffer explained conditions for the use of power. The first condition of the use of power is interdependence, a situation in which what happens to one organizational actor affects what happens to others. The second condition is heterogeneous goals, or goals which are inconsistent with each other. The third condition producing the use of power is scarcity. The greater the scarcity as compared to the demand, the greater the power and the effort that will be expended in resolving the decision. The fourth condition is heterogeneous beliefs about technology. These four conditions produce conflict. Whether that conflict eventuates in politics, the use of power in organizational settings depends upon two other conditions. The first condition is the importance of the decision issue or the resource. The second condition is the distribution of power. The political contests that sometimes occur in organizations take place only because there is some dispersion of power and authority in the social system.

In the end of this chapter, Pfeffer summarized that the concept of activation is important for understanding the use of power in organizations. Power follows from situation in which there is conflict. Conflict is produced to the extent that there exists interdependence among organizational subunits, a condition of resource scarcity, and disagreements concerning goals, preferences, and technology of the organization, or the connections between actions and consequences. These conditions produce decision situations in which the use of power and politics is more likely. Power will not be activated unless the choice is consequential. When power is highly concentrated or centralized, there will be little political activity observed. Without some dispersion in power, other participants will not have the capacity to engage in substantial political activity.

The conditions predicting the activation of power and political activity in organizations can also be used to determine what kinds of strategies can be employed to reduce the incidence of power in choice processes, and to forecast when the implementation of normative, rationally-based decision procedures will be problematic and possibly inappropriate. Predicting when power will be used in decision making is important for those seeking to analyze organizational processes as well as for those seeking to intervene in such processes.

Chapter 4 explained sources of power in organizations. The amount of power each actor possesses is derived, first, from the importance of the activity performed. It can be said that power is structurally determined. Power also derives from the skills of the various actors and their ability to perform their tasks in organization. Power can also derive from the ability of participants to convince others within organization that their specific tasks and their abilities are substantial and important. It means power is more than

structurally determined, power is affected by the capacity of organizational participants to enhance their bases of power and to convince others in the organization of their necessity and value. In sum, what determine power are both structural position and the ability to deal with critical problems and contingencies as well as the personal skills and characteristics that facilitate the use of those power resources.

In Chapter 5, Pfeffer described some of the political strategies and tactics that are used in the acquisition of power and which are employed in the exercise of power and influence in organizations. Most strategies for the exercise of power involve attempts to make the use of powerless obstrusive, and attempt to legitimate and rationalize the decision that is to be made as a result of the exercise of the social power of an actor in the organization. It can be said that some political strategies and tactics have two major purposes: to make decision making process appear to be rational and, thus, legitimate, and to obtain additional support for the subunit's position on important and contested organizational issues. Two types of tactics were explained in this book, cooptation and exchange. Cooptation is executed through the use of participation, committees, and other forms of involvement in the decision process. Exchange is implemented in which policy commitments or, at times, positions are bargained either explicitly or implicitly for future support. As in other exchange systems, power comes from the relative dependence positions of those involved. Therefore, the strategy of promoting the unobvious choice, or someone who is at best marginally qualified for a job, ensures those doing the promoting of a faithful follower.

In chapter 6, Pfeffer explained about political language and symbols. One critical focus of political activity in organizations is the creation of meaning – meaning which justifies the positions of power of some participants, which justifies and rationalizes decisions and actions, and which discredits the motivation or information of opponents. In this meaning creation process, language, ceremonies, symbols and settings are important ingredients, and those effective in organizational politics know how to use these elements.

Symbolic action can have consequences for the motivation and mobilization of support, the diversion or satisfaction of demands, and the implementation of policies in organizations. The four general forms of symbolic action are language, ceremonies, the use of symbols and settings. Language can mobilize support by convincing others of a commonality of interests, thus enhancing the coalition building process. Language provides the justification for action necessary for the legitimation of political choices. Meanwhile, political language was seen as symbolic language, which was evocative and motivating, but did not produce an accurate assessment of self-interest.

There are numerous ceremonies in organizations that provide occasions for the mobilization of support and the quieting of opposition. Ceremonies and language typically are associated with each other, and both are associated with the use of symbols, another form of political language. Organizational structures serve symbolic as well as substantive functions, and therefore become a focus for change in political contests within organizations. The ceremonies, the language, and the symbols are more or less effective depending upon the physical settings in which the symbolic activity takes place. The size, location, and configuration of physical space provides the backdrop against which political activity takes place, and thereby influences the interpretation and meaning of that activity, as well as its effects.

Chapter 7 discusses power in use. The task of this chapter is to explore power in use in the following context: the politics of budgets, the politics of succession and careers, and the politics of structures. In considering power in use, evidence was reviewed that not only indicated the effects of power and politics but also provided illustrations of the formation of coalitions and the use of political language in efforts to legitimate decisions.

Chapter 8 discusses perpetuating power. The institutionalization of power in organizations, derives from three effects. The first effect, which is commitment to decisions and strategies previously adopted, tends to cause administrators to persist in courses of action long after the courses of action have outlived their usefulness. The second effect is the institutionalization of beliefs and practice within the organization. This phenomenon occurs when rules, processes, task procedures, and beliefs about the world become unquestioned and taken as objective reality. The third effect involves the fact that the possession of power enables those participants with the power to obtain additional determinants of power.

The last chapter discusses power, politics and management. Pfeffer stated that this chapter was originally going to be titled: "The Manager as Politician", but he was told that Managers are not politicians. However, as they talked about their activities during their work, his informants told him about maneuvers which were relevant to their career advance, such as showing up opponents at meetings, getting access to some critical information, making a point with the boss. He heard a lot of political activity. Power and politics are often part of organizations, and need to be understood as fundamental and important processes. Power and politics are basic processes which occur in many organizations much of the time, and are empirically researchable and analyzable using a set of conceptual tools which are already largely in place and which have constituted the subject matter of this book.

Analysis and Critique

Like Weick (1982) said, after read this book, this seems like the right time to initiate "new wave" organizational studies in its time that begin to edit, prune, apply, and synthesize what we had in order to see what we do not have yet, what we had too much of, and what we agreed on as the basics. What makes this

assessment plausible is the fact that Pfeffer has shown that the several perspectives now dotting the field can converge more strongly on a problem than mere lists of properties can. Pfeffer applies multiple perspectives simultaneously to a durable puzzle in organizations and shows not only that power is less puzzling than we thought but also that all perspectives we are currently working with have something to say about how that puzzle can be untangled most meaningfully. In doing so, Pfeffer has made a major contribution in the form of an important book.

Meyer (1983) said that power is central to organizations and society, yet the social sciences know little about power, not even rudimentary facts such as the importance of power compared to rational economic calculation in corporate life. The knowledge base of the social sciences is weak partly because positivistic methods do not deal well with the subtleties of power, but partly because the social sciences are removed from the exercise of power, at least in the U.S. Power in Organizations, then, should be read and thought about carefully. While offering few definitive answers, it raises vexing questions about the capacity of social science to address truly important issues. At last, Meyer said that Pfeffer has produced a book that will stimulate not only new research but, more importantly, new ways of thinking about and studying power in organizations.

Comparison with other relevant works in the same field

Hickson et al. (1971) adopted the same definition of power from Dahl (1957), as many others have done (March, 1955; Bennis et al., 1958; Emerson, 1962; Harsanyi, 1962; Dahlstrom, 1966; Wrong, 1968) power is defined as the determination of the behavior of one social unit by another. But then, Pfeffer (1981) gives more explanation that power is context or relationship specific. This opinion is followed by Astley & Sachdeva (1984) in their paper which hopes to offer a context specific analysis of power that is applicable to social relationships within formal organizations.

Yukl (1989) defined power as an agent's potential influence over the attitudes and behavior of one or more designated target persons. The focus of the definition is on influence over people, but control over things will be treated as one source of power. The agent is usually an individual, but occasionally it will be an organizational subunit. There are many different sources of power in organizations. Yukl (1989) stated that there are three main sources of power in organizations, they are position power, personal power, and political power. Power is derived in part from the opportunities inherent in a person's position in organization; this position power includes legitimate or formal authority, control over resources, control over rewards and punishments, control over information and ecological control. Power also depends on attributes of the interpersonal relationship between agent and target person: this personal power includes relative task expertise, friendship and loyalty, and a leader's charismatic qualities. Finally, power depends upon some political processes (political power) such as controlling key decisions, forming coalitions, co-opting opponents and institutionalization.

Perrow (1970) reminded that the preoccupation with interpersonal power has led us to neglect one of the most obvious aspects of this subject: in complex organizations, tasks are divided up between a few major departments or subunits and all of these subunits are not likely to be equally powerful. In industrial firms, there are fairly clear divisions between the basic units of sales, production, research and development (or engineering), and finance and accounting. Equality of these groups is hardly insured by the fact that there is at least one person, the president, who stands above all these functional groups, and by the fact each department is stratified into roughly equal levels of authority –each will have a vice-president and department heads, etc.

Related to the roles of departmental and position power, Welbourne & Trevor (2000) tested whether job evaluation outcomes were affected by departmental power. They found that departmental power had a positive effect on the number of a department's new positions and position upgrades that were authorized at the requested pay grade levels. Additionally, they considered power at the individual level of analysis and found that the effects of departmental power on new positions and position upgrades were greater when the position power of resource recipients was high.

To assess power, Pfeffer (1981) suggested to using an index constructed from all of the relevant factors that likely to provide a reasonably good approximation of the distribution of power in the organization at a given time. Relevant to measuring power, Provan (1980) has reviewed and categories the major approaches used by organizational researchers in measuring organizational power, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of each measure in making the potential/enacted power distinction. Provan (1980) distinguished between potential and enacted power. Potential power is the capacity of one social actor to influence another. This includes power that will definitely be enacted, power that will probably be enacted, and power that will only possibly be enacted. To measure power, researcher should discuss whether the measures assess either the capacity to influence future outcomes (potential power) or the actual exercise of power, as indicated by demonstrated influence over outcomes that have already occurred (enacted power).

Since it is unlikely that any one measure can adequately make the distinction between potential and enacted power, Provan (1980) gave an advice to use of multiple measures of power. Naturally, this implies developing separate measures, each of which accurately reflects one dimension of power, potential or enacted. Although neither measure of power (potential or enacted) is likely to be entirely adequate when used

alone, use of the multidimensional approach that Provan suggested enhances the likelihood that researchers will understand power as it actually exists within and between organizations.

Other Reviewers

Meyer (1983) in his book review stated that Power in Organizations is a pioneering effort to meld the language of politics and power with the language of organizational analysis. He said that Pfeffer had brought together a set of ideas that may be amenable to research. Certainly, this book makes many of the issues surrounding power in organizational settings accessible to students. Meyer (1983) reproduced the key elements of Pfeffer's argument. Power is defined, following Dahl, as the ability of actor A to get actor B to do that which he would not otherwise have done. Power is treated essentially as a function of resources, whether cognitive or monetary resources or brute force. Power is therefore illegitimate or, possibly, alegitimate. Because it is illegitimate, power operates in an arena that is conflictual and often unpredictable. This arena is called politics. Legitimation transforms power into authority. Legitimacy arises out of what Pfeffer calls "institutionalization". Unlike power, authority does not incur resistance. Authority thus operates in the arena of administration where conflict is suppressed and behavior follows predictably from command. Administration, therefore, becomes possible where the power game is held in abeyance. Pfeffer thereby differs from turn-of-the-century reformers who believed politics and administration to be wholly separable. Among different models of organizational decision making, power models, by contrast, attribute to individual constant preferences but inconstant coalitions and affiliations, with no premium placed on consensus.

Having defined power and described its consequences, Pfeffer then develops a model predicting power and politics (as opposed, presumably, to authority and administration) in organizations. The concomitants of power are familiar: heterogeneity and scarcity in the environment, differentiation and interdependence within organizations. These lead directly or indirectly to conflict, hence power and politics. Who ultimately wins the contest for power once it has begun is a function of a number of things, including control of tangible resources, control of intangibles (e.g., information, agenda, and decision premises), and individual political skills. Presumably, settings not conducive to power games reward technical competence more than manipulation of tangible and personal resources.

Chapters on political strategies and tactics and on political language and symbols follow. Meyer (1983) said that they are extremely readable, somewhat anecdotal, and substantially apart from the first four chapters in which the theory of power is constructed. A chapter on "Power in Use" combines quantitative results from organizational research, many of them Pfeffer's, with some case studies, one of a firm pseudonymously labeled "Federal Finance". Most striking is the very weak connection between the indicators used in quantitative research and the subject at hand, power. The case analyses have greater fidelity. The chapter on "Perpetuating Power" fares somewhat better in this respect. Based on research evidence, Pfeffer argues that for individuals, mechanisms of commitment tend toward stability of behavior, whereas for organizations, legitimation of organization as such also tends toward stability. Pfeffer, of course, did not have access to very recent research identifying some tangible concomitants of organizational persistence. For the benefit of readers who imagine that organizations are fixed, Pfeffer then discusses processes leading to change. But rather than treating perpetuation and change as black and white categories, it might have been easier to introduce the idea that rates of change are variable, both across organizations and over time.

A final chapter argues that politics is an inevitable and, in many settings, a desirable component of management, provided it is not labeled as such. Despite overwhelming evidence of anachronism, the ideology of most U.S. managers remains Frederick W. Taylor's. Their legitimacy rests on the belief that technical competence, not political acumen, accounts for their position, responsibilities, and rewards. Meyer (1983) said that he liked this book very much and recommend it highly to students of organizations. This recommendation holds especially for those concerned with bedrock methodological issues of what kinds of phenomena we can study successfully and what we cannot. Although Pfeffer does not address these questions directly, they rather jump off the page at the reader, at least the reader who has had hands-on research experience.

Beside Meyer (1983), Weick (1982) also has reviewed this book. He stated that Power in Organizations represents an important synthesis of the literature on power, a synthesis grounded in the sociological assertion that power is basically a structural phenomenon resulting from the division of labor. Pfeffer's argument spreads across nine chapters and covers the assessment, use, creation, perpetuation, symbolizing, and managing of power as it flows through decision-making processes in organizations.

According to Weick (1982), the heart of Pfeffer's analysis is the proposal that power and politics vary as a function of the interdependence of differentiated units, heterogeneity of goals, heterogeneity of beliefs about technology, scarcity of resources, importance of the issues involved, and the dispersal (rather than centralization) of power. As these five variables increase, organizations are likely to become more politicized. Weick said that the most striking feature of this book is that it has much wider value than its title implies. This is more than just a book about power and influence. It is a thoughtful, precise introduction to the study of organizations in general. The first four chapters provide one of the best available introductions to the field of organizational analysis. Chapter 1 informs the reader of four major perspectives on organizations (rational decision making, bureaucratic, decision process, political) and indicates where each makes

predictions not handled by the other three. In addition, the first chapter introduces the tension between applied and basic work, describes political issues that infuse the field itself, and illustrates ways to differentiate the four positions on issues where they seem to be saying the same thing. What is even more remarkable is that, even though the book avowedly employs a macro perspective grounded in basic empirical sociology, it is extremely strong in its treatment of social psychology (e.g., commitment, informational influence, escalation); process variables (e.g., tactics of power utilization); cognitive accompaniments of structure (e.g., definitions of the situation); and organizational change (e.g., institutionalization reduces adaptability).

Weick continued that this book is neither derivative nor merely eclectic. It has a distinctive voice. The chapters cohere and are tied together by common themes. There is an emphasis on accurate exposition that is evident in the detailed outlines that organize sections, the informative chapter headings, and the avoidance of clever but opaque phrases. Examples are abundant and tend toward settings that even researchers who have not ventured outside academe are familiar with (e.g., schools of management, university budget making, and professional societies).

Handoko (1987) in his book review stated that Pfeffer's power perspective recognizes the issue of the fail of influence model from March & Simon (1958) which not taking into account the diversity of interests and goals, by encompassing inherent conflict over goals, power coalitions, and organizational decisions that favor the self-interest of those in power. Pfeffer argued that organizations are coalitions composed by varying individuals with different goals and interests, and then pointed out that if we want to understand organizational decisions, we need to assess who participates in decision making, their preferences, and who has influence over the decision. We also need to know what determines each actor's relative power.

Handoko (1987) also stated that Pfeffer (1981) had argued that resource dependence opportunities provide primary sources of acquiring and maintaining power. However, Pfeffer did not see environmental conditions as entirely deterministic. He argued that manipulating definitions of situations, legitimizing the use of power, building coalitions, and using language, symbols, and rituals also play an important part in transforming the potential power conferred by the environment into successful control over decisions.

Handoko (1987) finally stated that Pfeffer's (1981) Power in Organizations, however, has provided a complete discussion of the problems such as distinguishing among political, bureaucratic, chance and rational models using the procedures that have been typically employed – regression; and the issues of measurement of power, particularly how to dimensionalize and conceptualize differences in strategies of power. These problems have to be dealt with in applying a power perspective to the study of organizations, and a better sense of the sorts of studies that might be undertaken within the framework of such a perspective.

Conclusion

This book is important to many people who want to understand about power in organizations; what the role is, how to assess or measure it, in what conditions it will be used, sources of it, political strategies and tactics around it, how to use political language and symbols, how power in use is, perpetuating power, and differentiate power, politics and management. Pfeffer is right to say that power, influence, and political activity all exist. Pretending they do not exist will not make them disappear. For those who will spend their lives working in, buying from, and being served by organizations, and that includes all of us, the knowledge of power is important. The analytical perspective developed in this book can make one a fairly effective forecaster of what organizations are going to do, and can also enhance one's ability to intervene and get things accomplished. Power and politics are inevitable and important parts of administrative activity and should be analyzed and viewed as such. At the same time, because of ideology associated with political as opposed to rational decision processes, power is a topic that may take the reader uneasy. Some discomfort is preferable to ignorance, however. After all, the book is very useful for students, scholars and practitioners who learning about organization theories. Pfeffer has produced a book that will stimulate not only new research but, more importantly, new ways of thinking about and studying power in organizations. That is not overwhelmed I think, because Pfeffer did do so.

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