



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

ECAY4004:
Agency, Empowerment and Anti-oppressive Practice
The Concept of Power
2024



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Session Outcomes:

An introduction to the concept of power

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Learning Review

What can you remember from our previous session?

- Oppression
- Anti-Oppressive Practice



Learning Review: 5 Faces of Oppression

- Violence
 - Direct harm inflicted upon marginalised groups
- Exploitation
 - Unfair use of people's labour for profit without proper consent (i.e. Sweatshops)
- Marginalisation
 - Pushing specific groups to the margins of society, denying them equal opportunities
- Powerlessness
 - Stripping individuals of agency and influence
- Cultural Imperialism
 - Dominant cultures imposing their norms and values on others.



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Learning Review: Anti-Oppressive Practice

- Anti-oppressive Practices strives to empower individuals by reducing the negative effects of social hierarchies, promoting equality, and dismantling oppressive structures and practices.

(Thompson, 2016)

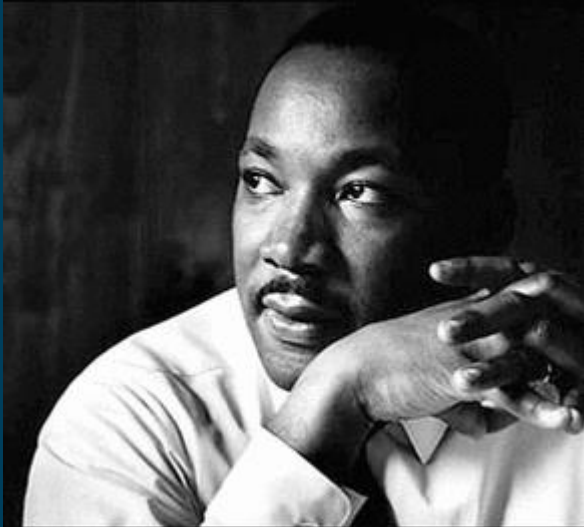
Power

Consider...

- An experience that made you feel powerful
 - Discuss with the group
- An experience that made you feel powerless
 - Discuss with the group



Power is both dynamic and multidimensional, changing according to context, circumstance and interest. Its expressions and forms can range from domination and resistance to collaboration and transformation.



Power...

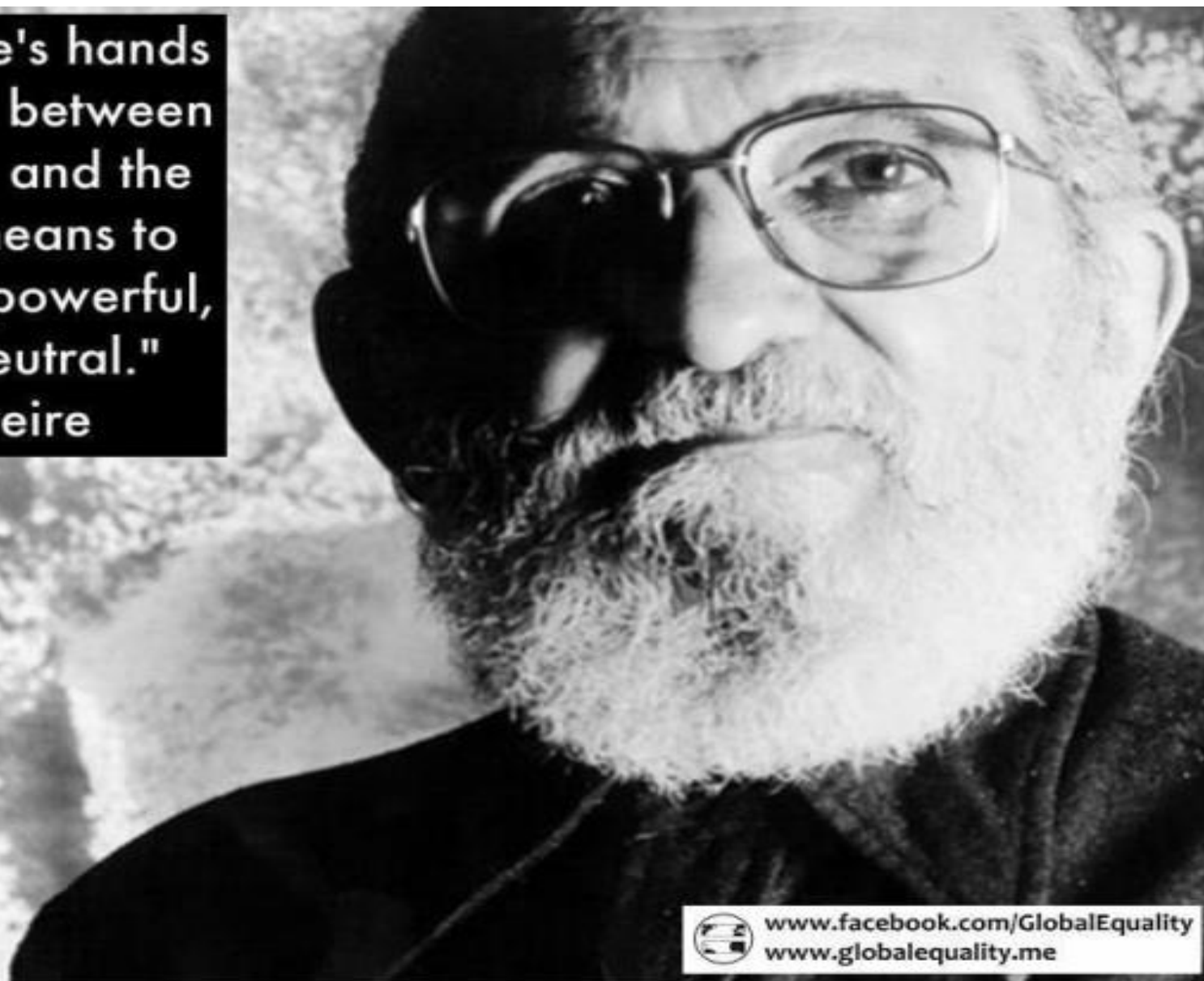
“the ability to achieve a purpose. Whether or not it is good or bad depends on the purpose.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



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"Washing one's hands
of the conflict between
the powerful and the
powerless means to
side with the powerful,
not to be neutral."
-Paulo Freire



www.facebook.com/GlobalEquality
www.globalequality.me

Freire

Conscientization – Developing consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality'

(Taylor, 1993: 52).



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The master's tools will never
dismantle the master's house.

Audre Lorde

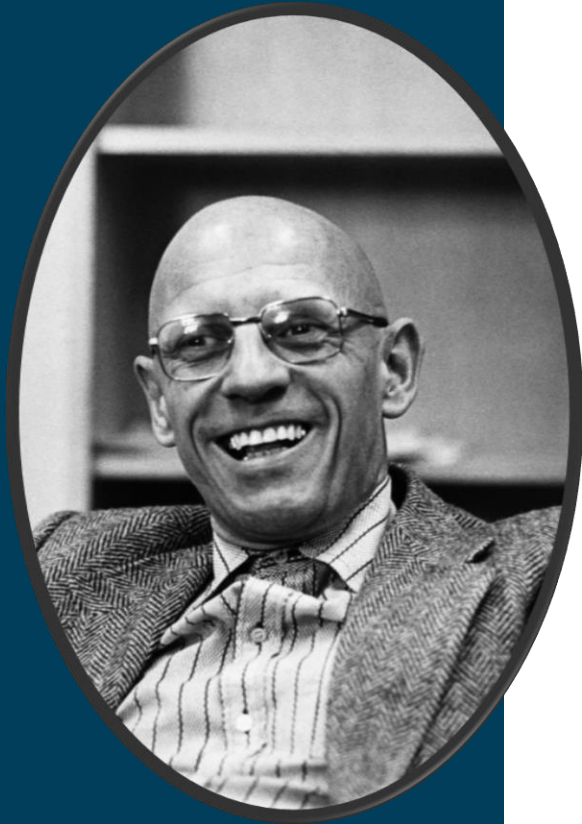
www.thequotes.in





Theoretical Perspectives of Power

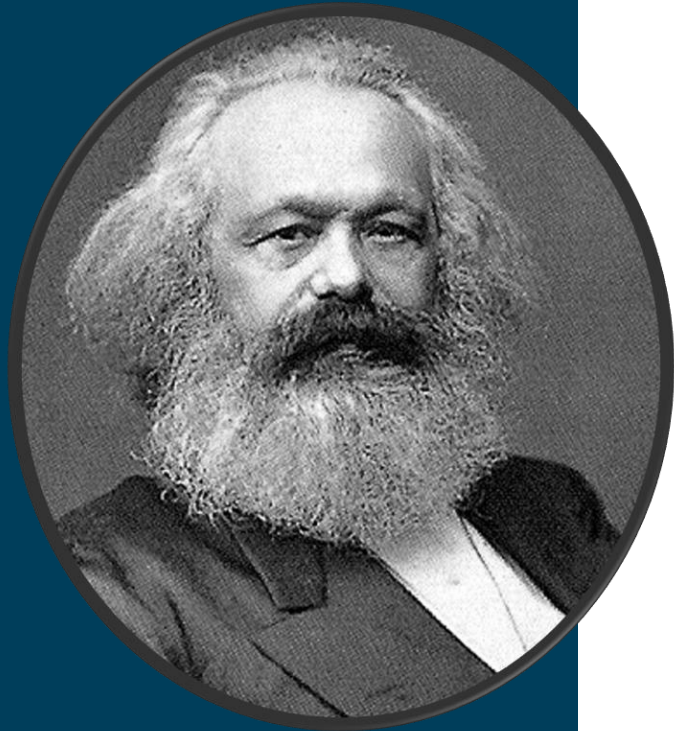
- Max Weber studied power and authority, differentiating between the two concepts and formulating a system for classifying types of authority.
- Power is an entity or individual's ability to control or direct others, while authority is influence that is predicated on perceived legitimacy.



Theoretical Perspectives of Power

- Micheal Foucault's theory of power offers a nuanced analysis of power as a relational and discursive phenomenon, emphasising how power operates through disciplinary practices, surveillance mechanisms, and techniques and normalisation and control.
- Foucault's concept of 'biopower' explores how power penetrates and regulates bodies, behaviours and populations, shaping social norms and governing individuals' lives through institutions such as prisons, schools and hospitals.

Theoretical Perspectives of Power



- Karl Marx emphasised the role of economic power and class struggle in shaping societal dynamics, highlighting how capitalist systems perpetuate inequalities and exploitation through the concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of the ruling elite.



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WHAT IS POWER?

Power can be positive..

- 'POWER TO' do something
 - the ability to make a decision and take action. It involves bringing about changes in people's lives.
- 'POWER WITHIN' a person
 - self-confidence and self-awareness, which are often linked to faith and culture. Individuals who have 'power within' believe they are able to make positive changes in their own lives. We sometimes say such people are 'empowered'.

Power can be positive..

- ‘POWER WITH’ others
 - collective power, which comes about through acting and speaking out jointly. It involves collaboration, organisation and solidarity.
- ‘POWER OVER’ others
 - the power of the strong over the weak. It is a form of control by one person, or a group of people, over others. It includes the power to exclude others.

Power to

Power within

Power with

Power over

Group Task

- Identify and describe the kind of power depicted in each of the next four drawings.
- Explain the impact of this kind of power on citizen participation.
- Discuss your findings.



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Power to
Power within
Power with
Power over





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Power to

Power within

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Power to
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Power to

Power within

Power with

Power over



Group Task

Findings:

Picture 1:

Picture 2:

Picture 3:

Picture 4:

Power to

Power within

Power with

Power over

‘Community’ has no inherent virtue. It can be a powerful excluder of minorities. The old people’s club that runs a publicly funded community hall too often excludes young people from the premises – or even the old people in the next street or tower block. Again, effective supervision by people reporting to a broader electorate will be needed to control these tendencies.

(Donnison, 2009 p.151)



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It's all Politics

Politics of power

Politics is the exercise of power, and the interaction of people with power. When defined narrowly, it refers to the governing of a country or state and is limited to professional politicians. However, when defined broadly, it can refer to the interaction of all forms of power between people.

(Tearfund, 2014, p.33)

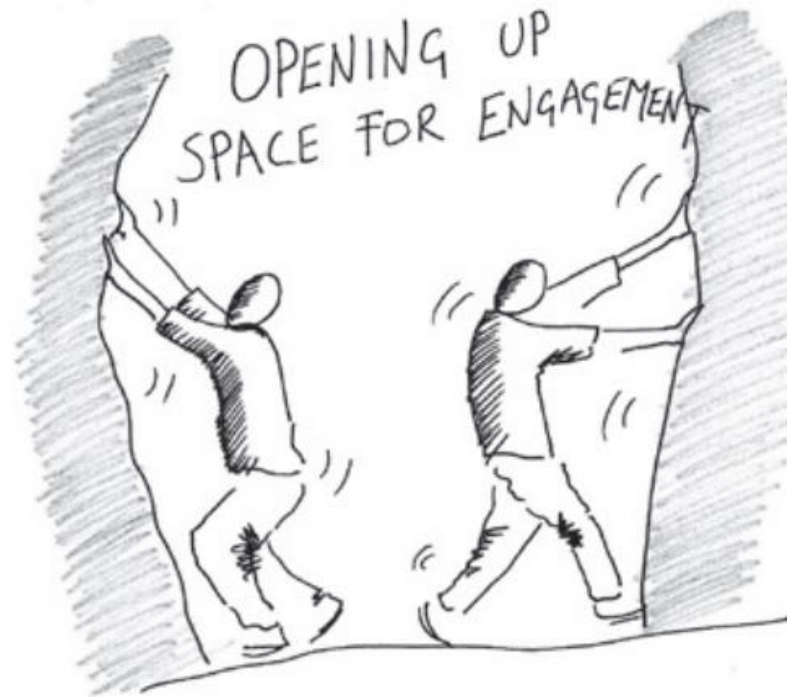
Types of power

- VISIBLE POWER involves decision-making that can easily be seen and understood.
- HIDDEN POWER involves decision-making behind the scenes and may not be immediately obvious
- INVISIBLE POWER involves decision-making based on influences that cannot easily be seen, such as worldview, cultural norms, beliefs, traditions and ideology.

(Veneklassen and Miller, 2007)

Politics of space

- We need to be aware of the political space in which we are working and try to influence change.



3 Types of Political Space

A closed political space is where decisions are made by exclusive groups of people that are not open to newcomers.

An invited political space is where ordinary citizens are asked to participate in making decisions, but within set boundaries.

A created political space is where ordinary citizens are able to claim a space where they can set their own agenda, no matter who is in power.

Political Power:

What is power in Politics?

- The Political power definition in government is the ability of an individual or a group of people to influence the thought, actions, and mindset of people in a nation.
- This power can be legitimate power given to an entity by the people of a nation that holds authority over society.
- Political power can also be illegitimate, meaning power has been seized through illegal or unjust means.

Political Power:

What is power in Government?

- Power in Government is the authority of an individual's or groups right to use power by making decisions, giving directives, and demanding compliance.
- This power can be used for good purposes, such as to pursue society's collective goals and progress a nation forward.
- Political power can be used for evil purposes if authority is placed in the wrong hands.

Political Power:

What is power in Government?

- Power can be achieved in many ways:
 - By Force or coercive means
 - Through democratic or representative means
 - Majoritarianism, where the majority of people in any government or organisation have the last word in the decision-making process
 - Elitism – Theory of political power which asserts that people who have the most resources have the most political power and make decisions for society.
 - Pluralism – Political power is held by influential groups or groups who have been rewarded with power
 - Expert power, where power is given to individuals or groups that have certain leadership capabilities and skills

Political Power Discussion

- Consider power from a political lens.
- Discuss your thoughts as a group

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