

Power - A Potential and Its Uses

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Power is a very important but underresearched aspect of social life. A lot of differing definitions add some confusion to the scientific discourse. In accordance with the classical definition by Max Weber, power is defined as a potential to realize one's will. A brief overview is given over empirical research on the consequences of a high versus a low level of power. But more important are two very different modes of using power, either in line with the interests of the other, called promotive control, or against their interests, called restrictive control. It will be shown that these two basic modes of using power have quite different consequences (a) for the others concerned, (b) for the power users themselves, and (c) for the social unit in which those uses of power take place.