LUND
UNIVERSITY

Department of Education
Box 199, 221 00 Lund

Involving employees

The relations between redistribution of power, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts

Sigríður Indriðadóttir and Cathrine Kimmehed

Lund University
Department of Education

ABSTRACT

Type of work:	Bachelor Thesis
Pages:	44
Title:	Involving employees - The relations between redistribution of power, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts -
Authors:	Sigríður Indriðadóttir and Cathrine Kimmehed
Instructors:	Viveka Jerndorf, Mina O'Dowd
Date:	2006-06-01
Summary:	Power, influence and employee empowerment are topics which have been of great interest to many researchers for a long time. However, there has been limited research on *upward* influence and employees' *perceptions* of empowerment. In addition, there has almost been no research on the relations between upward influence and employee empowerment. This thesis deals with these relations, and how they can be manifested in organizations in terms of employee involvement.
	We introduce three background topics which we discuss in relation to our results. First, the Swedish law concerning employees' right of participation in decision-making, or MBL. Second, a Swedish research article which indicates that too much freedom and responsibility in employees' work can make them stressed and mentally ill. Last, the continuously changing business environment, which organizations and their employees deal with every day.
	The study was implemented through a literature study with a qualitative method with an inductive and iterative approach. We thoroughly examined different previous researches on redistribution of power, upward influence and employee empowerment. Our analysis indicates that empowerment and upward influence are strongly connected and dependent on each other. The conclusions suggest that if employees perceive they are empowered, they feel they are both motivated and able to perform. Further, our results imply that the feeling of being empowered is followed by the feeling of being able to exert upward influence. Finally, our findings suggest that it is important for organizations to carefully consider what has do be done to involve employees, so they will perceive they are empowered and able to exert upward influence.
Keywords:	Power, power redistribution, employee empowerment, upward influence, MBL, organizational change.

Table of contents

Forewords

Thank you, Viveka, for inspiring us and pushing us forward.

Thank you, Mina, for believing in us and being so supportive.

Hjörtur, Inga María, Silla and Mirra. Þið eruð best!

Thanks for your love and support.

Peter, thank you for giving us the opportunity to take a break once in a while ☺

1. Introduction

Power and influence are two conceptions that have always been important and in use. Even though not defined, or even used in a conscious manner, the ability to exercise power has been of interest in all times. All the way from Caesar ruling his kingdom with a rod of iron, to today's managers, trying to convince employees their personal interests are in agreement with the goals of the organization.

The competitive business market today demands quick solutions on the spot and there is no longer time for hierarchic and time consuming ways of making decisions. Employees have been provided with more access to decision-making processes because organizations have downsized and become flatter. By that, organizations are more able to take advantage of all the knowledge stored in their systems. As a result, *empowerment* has become a big catchword in many companies.

The relationship between management and employees has been in focus for a long time. The issue has been widely studied by many researchers, aiming to find out how managers best can derive advantage from influencing their employees. Researchers have identified a number of ways of how managers can influence their employees. There has, however, been rather little emphasis on research which deals with the other angle of this relationship; the potential influence that employees can have on their superiors, or in other words *upward influence attempts*. That matter, on the other hand, is of our interest since we are going to work with personnel matters in the future, but also because of the lack of research in this area.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 MBL, the law concerning employees' rights of participation in decision-making processes

One of the most central law which regulates the working market in Sweden is the law concerning right of participation in decision-making processes, or MBL. In the 1970's, a committee was set up by the Swedish government to investigate the then in force legislation on industrial peace in the country. The primer purpose for the committee was, within the frames of the existing law, to propose legislation measures with the intention to support employees in establishing a democratization of working life. This resulted in the MBL, in order to widen employees' influence in working life. Since then, MBL has been continuously updated through the years (MBL-prop 1975/76). MBL applies to the relationship between employers and employees, and supports among other things employees' rights to be provided with information, rights to participate in decision-making processes along with the rights to negotiate with the employer (Göransson & Nordlöf, 2004). Since employee participation in decision-making processes is actually stated in Swedish law, we will discuss this law in proportion to employee involvement in organizations.

1.2.2 Too much freedom at work

In 2003, the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter, published an article regarding that too much freedom in the work situation can make employees stressed and mentally ill. The article is based on research which indicates that employees, who are provided with much freedom and responsibility, do not know how to carry out their work tasks and perceive that they suffer from too much workload and stress. The article's authors imply that this can lead to that employees become insecure, feel burnt out and need to go on a sick leave (Strannegård & Ernsjöö Rappe. 2003). This can not be seen as desirable situation, neither for employees, nor organizations. This article seems to be related to power redistribution, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts. In our discussion chapter, we will relate the subjects of the article to our results.

1.2.3 Continuously changing business environment

Because of the continuously changing business environment of today, it is important for organizations to constantly develop and improve their performance. This involves necessary changes in order to adapt to this changing environment. Organizational change is not just something that has a start and an ending; it is an ongoing process. However, research has shown that if organizational change fails, the two biggest reasons for that failure can be found in management ignorance and resistance from employees (Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003). Therefore, employees' involvement, in form of employee empowerment and upward influence, seems to be of great importance if organizational change is to be successful. We will discuss organizational change in relation to the results of our study in chapter 7.

1.2.4 Relating the background to the thesis

This bachelor thesis deals with the relations of employee empowerment and upward influence attempts. We find it interesting to discuss our findings in relation to the existing legislation in Sweden, since it is actually stated by MBL that employees are to be involved in organizational matters. In addition, the arguments for too much freedom and constant change in organizations can also be related to employee involvement. We will not, however, review further the MBL, the DN article or changing business environment. Those are just concepts we find interesting to relate to our results and will, like we have already pointed out, be a part of our discussion in chapter 7.

1.3 Main purpose

- *Analyse the relations between redistribution of power, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts, and discuss how these relations can be manifested in organizations.*

1.4 The pedagogy in the study

Pedagogy is often referred to as upbringing, tuition and education. Practical pedagogy stands for supporting the development of some qualifications in a human being's relation to the surrounding world. The advance of the qualification of a person takes place in knowledge, proficiencies and values, which finds its expression in changing an individual's thoughts and behavior (Svensson, 2004).

The statement above tells exactly what this thesis is about; to exert influence on someone in order to bring about a change in that person's behavior or mode of thoughts.

1.5 Delimitations

In this thesis, we have decided to work from employees' perceptions of empowerment and upward influence, not managers'. We base our choice on the fact that there are already a lot of researches which deal with how managers can influence their employees. We did not, however, find as much research which deal with empowerment and upward influence attempts from employees' perspective. This was though in our interest. Even though it would have been of general interest to compare managers' and employees' perceptions of those concepts, it clearly would have been a matter of a more comprehensive study than this. In addition, we decided not to consider what happens if employees show resistance and do not want to be empowered.

Regarding the law concerning right of participation in decision-making, or MBL, we are not going to discuss whether or not the law actually works. Instead, we are going to examine which ways are possible for employees to participate in decision making processes from a bottom-up perspective, and how management can apply the MBL law to organizations. In addition, we are not going to deeply examine the ever changing business environment or too much freedom and mental illness. Those are, however, topics which all concern employee involvement, and which we are going to discuss in relation to employee empowerment and upward influence attempts.

1.6 Disposition

After this first chapter of introduction, we present the methodology of our thesis. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 cover the literature review and our analysis on power, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts. Chapter 6 involves our conclusions and chapter 7 reviews our discussion.

2. Methodology

2.1 To begin with

The main purpose of our study is to analyze the relations between employee empowerment and upward influence tactics. To be able to achieve our purpose, we had to seek some knowledge regarding our two main topics. Based on that, we found it appropriate to do a literature research. It could have been interesting and fun to do an empirical research, but considering our strict time limits, we found that not to be an option. According to Mertens (1998), literature reviews can be important as a research tool to provide a comprehensive understanding about what is known about a topic. In our case, implementing a literature review meant that we had to create a theoretical foundation by examining research based literature regarding both empowerment and upward influence. However, we discovered early in our research process that there has been little attention given to these concepts, at least from employees' point of view.

2.2 Research Strategy

2.2.1 Basis for choosing a method

Methods are the instrument in knowledge seeking strategies (Walhjalt, 1999). In social research, it is possible to choose between two different methods, quantitative and qualitative (Bryman, 2004; Starrin, 1994). We chose to work with a qualitative method, and we based our choice on Mertens' (1998) ideas. Mertens (1998) distinguishes between three possible reasons for choosing a qualitative research method. First she mentions research paradigms, or the researcher's way of looking at the world. Second, she mentions the nature of the research question, and last, practical reasons associated with the nature of qualitative methods (Mertens, 1998). In our case, it is both our view of the world, along with the nature of our research question, which leads us to use a qualitative method. We will begin by describing different paradigms in social research, which leads to our position within these paradigms.

Mertens (1998) discerns between three major paradigms in social research. First she mentions *positivism/post positivism* as the most dominant paradigm. This paradigm is based on the belief that there is one reality and that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world. The research methods within this paradigm are mostly quantitative which emphasize quantification in both data collection and data analysis (Mertens, 1998). Furthermore, quantitative methods involve a deductive approach, meaning that the accent is placed on testing theories instead of generating them (Bryman, 2004). The ontological position in quantitative methods is called objectivism, which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Bryman, 2004). Based on this, we found the nature of positivism and quantitative research methods not suited to our study, so now we leave the discussion of quantitative research methods.

The next paradigm is the *interpretive/constructivist*, which reflects the belief that reality is multiple and socially constructed. The researcher's understanding and interpretations of the world is the main issue (Mertens, 1998). The research methods within this paradigm are mostly qualitative. Interpretivism is a term which came up as a reaction to positivism, because some social scientists found that the positivism paradigm did not respect the difference between people and the objects of the natural sciences. Instead, by using qualitative methods, they were better able to grasp the subjective meaning of social action because there is an interactive link between the researcher and the subject. The ontological position is called constructionism, which entails that the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than a version that can be regarded as definitive (Bryman, 2004). Values are made explicit and the researcher creates his findings (Mertens, 1998). Because of the fact that our study relies on our own interpretations of the relations between employee empowerment and upward influence attempts, we find our study to be placed in this paradigm.

Even though we have already presented our view of the world, we will also briefly review the last paradigm, the *emancipatory paradigm*. This paradigm was created as a reaction to the two previous paradigms, and views multiple realities, shaped by many values, like politics and culture, ethnicity and gender. Critical theorists, Marxists and Feminists have among others placed themselves within this paradigm. The researchers are concerned about a number of different issues, and there is an interactive link between researcher and participants. Contextual and historical factors are described, especially as they relate to oppression.

Like we mentioned before, the nature of the research question can also lead researchers to choose a qualitative method. According to Mertens (1998), one type of such questions is if detailed, in-depth information is needed about certain matters (Mertens, 1998). In our case, we need to closely examine the literature, to be able to analyze and interpret the relation between employee empowerment and upward influence attempts. Therefore, our research question, or to be more specific our main purpose, also leads us towards a qualitative approach.

2.2.2 More on qualitative research methods

Qualitative research methods are used in research which is designed to provide a thorough description of a specific subject (Mertens, 1998) and can be defined as a research strategy that emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2004). Qualitative methods usually emphasize an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. It means that emphasis is placed on the generation of theories, based on the researcher's analyses of the data collection (Mertens, 1998). In other words: findings lead to theory (Bryman, 2004).

Bryman (2004) claims that inductive process is though likely to entail a little bit of deduction, but deduction involves that theory guides the research. By that, Bryman means that once the phase of theoretical reflection on a set of data has been carried out, the researcher may want to collect further data to try to establish the conditions in which a theory will or will not hold. This strategy involves a weaving back and forth between data and theory, and is often called iterative strategy. It is though worth noticing that

induction represents an alternative strategy for linking research and theory, but it also can contain deductive elements (Bryman, 2004).

2.2.3 More on the literature review

When a literature review is implemented to provide a comprehensive understanding of what is known about a topic, the process can be rather long (Mertens, 1998). This was the issue in our case. Because we had no empirical material to work with, we had to search for whatever that could be useful for us. We placed ourselves within the interpretive/constructivist orientation. According to Mertens (1998), literature researchers, placed within this paradigm, are supposed to have a good understanding of previous research, but remain open to possible hypotheses that would require examination of additional literature during the study. This was what happened to us. We thought we had read enough, we thought we had found all the literature we needed, but then we suddenly came on to something which led us to another angle, and we had to find new literature to complete our research. This is also a form of the process which we named earlier and Bryman (2004) calls iterative strategy.

2.3 Implementation

2.3.1 Search strategy

When developing a search strategy, Mertens (1998) states that it is important to have three sub-steps in mind. First, the researcher has to identify preliminarily sources like databases, abstracts and indexes that contain compilations of bibliographic information for a wide range of topics (Mertens, 1998). We followed these instructions, by searching in relevant databases like ELIN, ERIC and Emerald Insight. We also found some relevant books by searching LOVISA and LIBRIS. We knew much about searching in these databases and libraries, but we also got a little help from librarians at the Library of Social and Behavioral Sciences here in Lund. We searched by using key words like influence tactics, influence strategies, power and employee empowerment. We also combined those words, both with each other to see if there was some research which dealt with our purpose, and with other words like subordinate, employee, superior and management. Our results often dealt with something quite different. To reduce these irrelevant search results, we excluded certain keywords and came up with more relevant results.

The next step in the search process is to identify primary research journals, for instance by examining the reference lists found at the end of relevant journal articles or books (Mertens, 1998). We identified a few relevant research journals, and got access to them through the database ELIN. We also identified some relevant books. Since we have applied the most of the past year in studying leadership, organizations and learning in working context, the course literature have made us familiar with Yukl's book on leadership in organizations (2005). A part of his book deals with influence tactics, and we were able to find some articles and books related to this subject by checking the reference list in the book. Through our studies, we had also read a few articles about

empowerment, and the reference lists there were our starting point in our search for literature on employee empowerment.

After we had found a few relevant articles and read them, we noted that some researchers were more quoted than others. Based on this discovery we found some more articles regarding both empowerment and upward influence strategies. This approach can also increase the reliability of our study, because according to Bell (2000), researchers who are often quoted by other researchers can be seen as "authorities" within their research fields, and can therefore be considered reliable sources. The whole time we aimed on finding primary research sources, and then find more recent studies which had built on, or confirmed in any way, the findings from the primary research.

Mertens' (1998) third step in the search strategy is to use the researcher's access to personal networks, by talking to people who are doing work in areas related to the researcher's interests. We found out that one of our teachers in Lund University was examining empowerment, and she helped us find some articles. In addition, our study instructor also gave us useful information regarding employee empowerment and upward influence strategies.

Despite our expansive literature search, we did not come up with hundreds of relevant articles or books. We found maybe thirty or so, on each subject. However, most of the resources were useful to us. The ones which were not, we simply excluded.

2.3.2 Selection of literature

Bell (2000) suggests that the researcher sets up quality criteria to work with when choosing the literature (Bell, 2000). According to Larsson (1994), quality criteria are constantly used in all research (Larsson, 1994). We decided to set up three criteria to base our selection of literature on; the relevance in relation to our main purpose, scientific relevance and finding primary research sources. We downloaded all interesting articles and borrowed the interesting books. Then we checked out the abstract or the index to assess the relevance of the source. Next, we evaluated the scientific relevance by checking the researcher's background (if possible), looking through the reference lists, check if the source was published in a scientific publishing house or journal, besides reading the sources' methodology.

Our demand on finding primary research sources resulted in that we found some old literature regarding our subjects, like Mechanic's arguments from 1962, on power sources of lower participants in organizations. However, we found Mechanic's findings to be important for us, due to the lack of recent researches dealing with the subject, so we decided to accept his work as a relevant source. In addition, his work has been considered as widely influential by other researchers through the years. When we were not able to fulfill the demand on primary sources, we judged the importance and scientific relevance of the secondary source instead.

2.3.3 Data analysis

When we had found the first articles, we read them and started to categorize them. When working with qualitative methods, it goes just fine to start to categorize and analyze the data before the researcher has even collected all he or she needs (Bryman, 2004). This is partly because that the categorizing and the analysis can give the researcher deeper understanding of the topics he or she is working with (Bryman, 2004). This fitted our study well because we worked inductively, which means that we did not know much about neither employee empowerment or upward influence attempts or their relations. We did not even know if there were some relations between them at all.

We used the computer program Excel to help us categorize and analyze the literature sources. We placed the articles in the columns and aligned them by the year they were published. We placed the eldest first and the most recent last. According to Bell (2000) it is the work with the sources along with the notes the researcher makes, who leads towards the final study. Therefore it is very important how the researcher works with his or her sources. If the researcher has some ideas and has made some suggestions of headings to work with, it is easier to categorize the sources (Bell, 2000).

Based on this knowledge, we identified relevant categories when we read through the articles and placed them in separate rows. After doing this, we went through all the articles, one by one, and filled in appropriate page numbers in a matching category row. We also inserted memos and notes which we felt were relevant for us to have in mind when we would begin to write. After all this, we placed the categories under mutual topics, like "understanding empowerment" or "employees' perceptions" or so. By then, we had found some basis for the future structure of our project. This took a lot of time, but when we look back, we find that this approach was very helpful when we began to write. It also helped us to set some limits, and identify which information was relevant in relation to our purpose and which information was not.

Then we started writing and analyzing. We focused on one category at a time, simply by highlighting the row in Excel and check every page number we had written down. Then we were able to locate all information we had found on each category in every literature. By doing this, it was easier to compare the literature, see which researchers shared the same opinions, which researchers had dealt with the same matter and so on.

In the middle of the writing process, we sometimes discovered that we might need more information about this or that specific topic. Then we did some more literature research until we found what we were looking for. This was punctiliously like the iterative process which Bryman (2004) described. We were weaving back and forth between data and theory. We did not, however, have an unending time. Therefore, we stopped this process when we found the categories to be saturated, and that further readings would not give us more information.

We built our analysis on our own interpretations of how redistribution of power, employee involvement and upward influence attempts are related. We chose to write our analysis in relation to our literature review, instead of writing first three chapters of pure facts and then tie everything together in a single standing chapter of analysis.

Because we are analyzing the relations between power, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts, we found it more interesting to analyze each topic at a time, relate it to the next topic and by that, progressively lead the reader from chapter to chapter towards our conclusions.

2.4 Method discussion

Literature studies are to be based on two different components; the theories that lie behind and the researchers own ideas and interpretations. For that reason, we have aimed to be thorough and critical in both our selection of literature as in our interpretation and analysis. We find our selection of literature to be decisive for the quality of our study. Like we have mentioned before, we set up criteria for our literature which we followed to the utmost possible extent. For example, most of our literature sources are quoted or retorted several times by other researchers. We find this to be a good quality aspect in our work.

Regarding the quality of our own working-strategy, our intention was to remain as professional as possible in proportion to our work. We understood during the working process that this is very hard. Yet, the fact that we are two persons writing this thesis has made it easier for us not to become blind to defects in our own work. By constantly reading trough each others work, we think we have been able to eliminate most of those defects. We consider ourselves to have been careful in our work with literature, yet the risk that we have actually misconstrued a source can not be totally excluded.

Further, our attention was to find a balance between the different literature sources that we have used in this work. Since there has not been a lot of research on empowerment and upward influence from employees' point of view, this criterion was not easy to fulfil. As an example we can mention Yukl, whose research we have used a great deal in our work. A lot of space in the section that deals with upward influence is used in his favour. This is due to the fact that a lot of the articles that we found on upward influence were made by Yukl. We are aware that his research might have affected us in a certain direction but the fact that we have been able to compare some of his results with other research results makes our study reliable.

We can not totally eliminate that some other factors may have affected us in certain ways as well. We have, for instance, been influenced by our instructors. In addition, previous knowledge from lectures and the fact that we study pedagogy have certain affects on our approach. This means that we look at our subjects from a pedagogical point of view. It is possible that if contemplated from another perspective, the results might have been different. It is important to keep in mind that the results of this thesis are based on our own interpretations of the literature. We are not trying to find the one and only truth regarding employee involvement, but instead we put forward suggestions of how this matter can be applied in organizational situations.

2.4.1 Dependability

Mertens (1998) states that interpretive/constructivist researcher's standards for reliability are to be named dependability. This is based on the fact that within this paradigm, change is expected, and therefore there is no stability (Mertens, 1998). According to Larsson (1994), truth is always relative which means it may change depending on whose reality it is situated. The fact that there are different perspectives behind every description of reality makes it important for the researcher to actually describe his or her understanding of a situation. By doing this, the researcher makes the reading more comprehensible (Larsson, 1994). We have tried, as far as possible, to account for research on our subject, both new and old so that the reader can be able to form an opinion of how things actually are.

We find our results in this study to be reliable and in consistence with previous research. There has not, however, been much emphasis upon researching the relation between employee empowerment and upward influence attempts. According to Walhjalt (1999), research with a qualitative approach is aiming to describe philosophic aspects that deal with meaning and signification. This indicates that the researcher has to interpret what he or she manage to understand from theory or data since there often are no concrete evidence, as in quantitative research. We based our interpretations on the literature, but also on our own experience and knowledge. Walhjalt (1999) also argues that even though qualitative studies often are accused of being speculative, it is speculative hypotheses, which later are confirmed, that generate new knowledge (Walhjalt, 1999).

2.4.2 Confirmability

According to Mertens (1998), interpretive/constructivist researchers seek to confirm that the data and their interpretation are not figments of their own imagination. A confirmability audit can be used to trace the data to its original sources, and to confirm the process to use a chain of evidence to combine the data and reach conclusions (Mertens, 1998). The confirmability of our study involves that we have used literature which have been used and quoted by other researchers, and that the whole time we aimed at giving a fair picture of all we read in the literature.

2.4.3 The length of the paper

The length of our research paper is due to the fact that we wanted to deeply and closely examine the underlying factors of the relations between power redistribution, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts. We tried to cut it down a little with no satisfying results, so we decided to let it be this way and publish it in full length. We chose to review our analysis on the literature simultaneously throughout the paper, instead of writing first three sections of pure facts and then tie everything together in a separate section of analysis. We found it to be more natural and interesting for the readers to follow us through the whole process and see progressively what we were thinking and how we related certain matters to others.

3. Power - the mutual foundation

Now it is time to begin the literature review. Like we mentioned in the chapter of methodology, we analyze the literature progressively throughout the paper. We begin by examining and analyzing power.

3.1 Power

Power is the ability or capacity to perform or act effectively. Power has always been at the centre of human motivation and is the most easily recognized craving of our primitive needs. In today's competitive world, people constantly strive for power and control over their environment (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Based on our findings from our literature review, power is essential for employees to practice upward influence (Porter et al., 1981). Moreover, power is also the foundation for *employees* to be empowered (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Koh & Lee, 2001; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Therefore, it appears that power is a mutual resource for empowerment and upward influence attempts, and therefore a fundamental factor in the relations between the two topics.

According to Yukl (2005), power is always a two-way communication. There has to be both an agent and a target involved in the exercise of power. The agent is the person who attempts to influence, while the target is the person who receives the influence attempt and responds to it in order to obey or disobey the request carried out (Yukl, 2005).

3.2 Power and empowerment

We begin our review on power by looking at the relations between power and empowerment. Conger and Kanungo (1988) argue that "power is primarily a relational concept used to describe the perceived power or control that an individual actor or organizational subunit has over others" (Conger & Kanungo, 1988, page 472). They further argue that power arises when an individual's or a subunit's performance outcome are not only contingent upon their own behavior, but also on what others do and/or how others respond (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), actors in organizations who possess power are more likely to achieve the desired work outcomes. Actors who lack power are, on the other hand, more likely to have their work outcomes thwarted or redirected by the ones who hold power. Those kinds of circumstances in organizations led to the development of strategies of resource allocation, in order to increase the power of less powerful parties and reduce the power of the more powerful. Those strategies are now known as empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Appelbaum et al. (1999) argue that the first step to get acquainted with empowerment in organizations is to examine the notion of power. According to Appelbaum et al., all

people have the need to be powerful, and therefore endeavor to gain both power and prestige (Appelbaum et al., 1999). According to Bryman et al. (2005), it is necessary for managers to give people the power to do their job. Power is a complex interactive process whereby empowerment is an act of developing and increasing power by working with others. Bryman et al. (2005) further argue that empowerment is not possible in organizations until power has been shared by the management, and employees themselves perceive the redistribution of power (Bryman et al., 2005).

3.3 Power and influence

Now we turn to the relations between power and influence. Those two concepts have been the focus of scholarly attention for several decades (Bruins, 1999; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2002). According to Bruins (1999), the research of power and influence finds its origin in a famous theorist, Kurt Lewin, who considered power as the possibility of inducing force on someone else. Later, French and Raven followed Lewin's idea and defined influence as a force that one person (the agent) wields on someone else (the target) to make the target change (Bruins, 1999).

Porter et al. (1981) have similar ideas, and they view power as the capacity to influence. Power can therefore be seen as the source to all influence attempts, meaning that an unbalanced power relation between the target and the agent is a prerequisite for an influence attempt (Porter et al., 1981). Yukl (2005) defined power as "the absolute capacity of an individual agent to influence the behavior or attitudes of one or more designated target persons at a given point of time" (Yukl, 2005, p. 146).

Somech & Drach-Zahavy (2002) examined if the relations between agent/target power and choice of influence strategies. They define power "as the inferred potential of one person (the agent) to cause another person (the target) to act in accordance with the agent's wishes". In addition, they define influence behavior as "the agent's actual behavior, which causes behavioral or attitudinal change in the target" (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2002, page 168).

Considering these definitions, it is obvious that the relation between power and influence involves both an agent and a target; it is the agent who exerts an influence attempt, and uses his or her power in order to influence the target. However, researchers have noted that it is important to consider the dynamic nature of power since it is a variable that changes due to the target, the source, the situation, the time period and the influence objectives (Mechanic, 1962; Yukl, 2005). This brings us to the next section of our study, different types and sources of power.

3.4 Position power and personal power

According to Yukl (2005), French and Raven maintain that if power is to be understood, distinctions between different types of power were required (Yukl, 2005). Researchers distinguish between two different aspects of power; position power and personal power (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Yukl, 2005; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). Yukl and Falbe (1991) implemented an exploratory study to increase knowledge of the types of power used to

influence subordinates and peers. They distinguished between position power and personal power, and their results indicate among other things that those two types of power are relatively independent of each other (Yukl & Falbe, 1991).

3.4.1 Position power

Position power is based on authority and stems from a person's position or role in an organization. Position power involves first and foremost legitimate power, which gives the holder the right to influence and control resources that can be used for rewards or punishment of others. In addition, position power gives access to information and the right to organize. Furthermore, the holder of position power can practice coercion if he or she finds it appropriate. However, position power is transferable, and if the holder no longer possesses a specific position in the organization, he or she does not have access to those resources anymore (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Yukl, 2005). In organizations, the holders of position power are superiors or managers. Because our study does not involve the management perspective, we will not take position power into further consideration.

3.4.2 Personal power

Personal power on the other hand, resides within one's personality and stems from personal characteristics and individual attributes. Personal power involves "referent power" and "expert power", both of which we find important in employee's attempt to practice upward influence. Upward influence involves that the target is more powerful than the agent unlike in downward influence attempts. This means that the agent has to rely on his or her personal power when exercising upward influence (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Yukl, 2005).

3.4.2.1 Referent power

An agent can obtain referent power from a targets desire to please him or her, based on that the target has strong feelings of affection, admiration or loyalty towards the agent. People are more often willing to do special favors for their friends, and they are also more likely to fulfill requests made by someone they really admire. Usually it is easier to gain referent power for persons who are friendly, attractive, charming and trustworthy. Therefore, personal power is often associated with charisma (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Yukl, 2005).

Strong referent power tends to increase the agent's influence over the target person even without any explicit effort by the agent to ask for this power. Referent power can, therefore, be an important source of influence over subordinates, peers and superiors. The agent can also exercise referent power through role modeling. A well-liked and admired person can easily set an example of proper and desirable behavior for his or her targets to imitate. Referent power has though some limits. If requests made by an agent are too extreme or made too frequently, the target may feel exploited and the agent's referent power reduces (Yukl, 2005).

It seems reasonable to assume that because employees do not usually possess much position power, they have to rely more on their personal power to exercise upward influence. If employees are aware of that, they can endeavor to gain more personal power and increase their referent power by being friendlier or try to appear more attractive in order to influence their superiors.

3.4.2.2 Expert power

Expert power has its resources in important knowledge and skills. Specific knowledge about certain facts, the best way to carry out a task, how to solve a consequential problem or other knowledge that could be of importance for the survival of the organization, can provide influence over subordinates, peers and superiors. Expertise is, however, only a power resource, if others in the organization are dependent on the agent for advice. The more important a problem is to a target person, the more powerful is the agent who possesses the specific knowledge to solve it (Mechanic, 1962; Yukl, 2005).

However, it is not enough for an agent to possess expertise knowledge. A target person has to recognize this expertise and perceive an agent to be a reliable source. Moreover, employee power derived from expertise is of limited extent unless the expert is difficult to replace. For expert power to be effective, the agent must really control the resources, plus that the resources have to be desired by the target (Mechanic, 1962; Yukl, 2005). Employees can endeavor to somehow increase their expertise, so that they will be more of more value to the organization, and thereby be able to gain more influence in decision making processes and work related matters.

3.4.2.3 The situation determines the power source

Considering this, we suppose that a person may be powerful in one situation and powerless in another, all depending on the context. In other words, we assume that the situation is something that determines the strength of the power source, and that different power sources decide in which ways possessed power can be exercised.

Described above are different power sources which determines if and how power may be used to practice upward influence. The following section deals with different dimensions of how power is distributed and exercised in organizations in order to empower employees.

3.5 Exercising power

Today the competitive climate in organizations demands that all employees feel powerful, in control and are willing to do what it takes to carry the organization towards competitive solutions (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Redistribution of power can occur in many ways but we have decided to examine how it can be connected to empowerment processes in organizations.

3.5.1 The four dimensions of power

According to Appelbaum et al. (1999), power is believed to be exercised in four different dimensions. How these power dimensions can be perceptible in an organization is explained below.

3.5.1.1 The first dimension of power

The first dimension involves the relationship between superiors and employees. Superiors share the power they possess by delegating resources to employees. Employees on the other hand, exercise power to acquire influence over decision-making processes from which they were debarred before (Appelbaum et al., 1999). In other words, superiors have the legitimate rights to make certain decisions and employees try to convince the supervisors which way is the best to go (Phillips, 1997). This means that in the first dimension, power is exercised both by holders of position power (superiors) and the ones who has to rely on personal power (employees).

3.5.1.2 The second dimension of power

The second dimension of power involves that employees try to secure their access to decision-making processes. Yet, ultimate control of these processes often stays with managers, who usually stake out the frames in which employees are allowed to operate (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Phillips, 1997). As organizations have downsized and become flatter to meet the demands of competitive environments, employees in some firms have been empowered with more decision-making authority (Farmer et al., 1997). This second dimension of power involves that employees use their personal power to keep the access already attained.

3.5.1.3 The third dimension of power

In the third dimension, power is legitimated through cultural and normative assumptions. This involves that organizations endeavor to legitimize their goals and convince their employees that organizational and employee interests converge (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Power can be shaped to make people accept their role in the existing order of things. This occurs either because there are no other alternatives to be seen or because the situation is so natural that no questions need to be asked (Phillips, 1997). Empowerment reduces the obligation to use more visible or coercive forms of power to make sure that organizational goals are met and to quell resistance. The stronger such unobtrusive, cultural controls are, the less likely organizational norms will be transgressed, and the more comfortable managers will feel in delegating power (Appelbaum et al., 1999). In this dimension, power is exercised by holders of position power.

3.5.1.4 The fourth dimension of power

The fourth dimension of power can be regarded as "the complexity and ambiguity of empowerment as it is experienced by those being empowered" (Appelbaum et al., 1999, page 237) The power of the organizational system, which evolves and changes over

time, has a profound effect on the ability of subordinates to practice upward influence on superiors (Phillips, 1997). Within this dimension, employees both *feel* they are empowered and *enjoy* being empowered (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Therefore, it seems that enjoy being empowered involves the abilities of exercising upward influence. Thus, power holders in the fourth dimension are employees themselves, who have to rely on their personal power to be able to practice upward influence.

The four dimensions of power demonstrate how power is exercised in organizations both by holders of position power, who exercise power within the first and third dimension, and by holders of personal power, who exercise power within the first, second and fourth dimension. Moreover, the four dimensions describe the process of empowering employees, and that leads us to the next chapter in our study, the examination of employee empowerment.

4. Employee empowerment

As mentioned before, redistribution of power is essential for employees to feel empowered and able to practice upward influence. An agent who practices upward influence has less power than a target, which means that upward influence is practiced by employees towards their superiors. Therefore, we will examine both empowerment and influence attempts from an employee's point of view.

> "I think empowerment to (this company) is actually giving employees flexibility and the room to manoeuvre, to actually do their job and to do their job to a high standard. It's about providing them with the right training, providing them with the right skills and the right tools to actually look at their job and see how they're doing their job, and are they doing their job in the best way. And giving them scope to actually make decisions and have some impact on what they're doing."

> (Interview with a Personnel Manager. Psoinos and Smithson, 2002, p 139.)

This quotation from Psoinsos and Smithson (2002) research results, tells a lot about employee empowerment, even though it stems from a manager. It is this view to empowerment that is so interesting because it reveals how managers are supposed to look at empowerment. As we discussed in our introduction, the law concerning right of participation in decision-making, or MBL, binds the organizations to actually provide the right conditions for employees to be able to have influence over organizational matters. It seems that empowerment can be one way for organizations to involve employees. Now we are going to examine how employees feel and perceive empowerment, and relate that to the ability of practicing upward influence in an organization.

4.1 The story behind

Empowerment has become a widely used term within the organizational sciences and is commonly used to refer to employee involvement initiative and self-managed work roles (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Torbiörn et al., 1996). The idea of involving employees has been prevalent in research and practice for many years (Bryman et al, 2005). In the 1960's the emphasis on employee involvement was upon job enrichment. The purpose was to motivate employees by providing them with meaningful jobs where they could have more control, make decisions and even get feedback on their performance (Wilkinson, 19f98). In the 1970's there was more interest in industrial democracy, where the emphasis was placed on employees' rights to participate. This was also when MBL was instituted to increase employee's democracy in working life (MBL-prop.1975/76). In the 1980's, new forms of involvement were developed, highlighting more participation of employees (Wilkinson, 1998). Employee empowerment, in its modern form, emerged in the late 1980's (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas &

Velthouse, 1990), and has now become a part of everyday management language (Wilkinson, 1998).

4.2 Formation of employee empowerment

By going through the literature it is obvious that organizations have a long history in trying to empower their employees and there are numbers of researches which have dealt with the matter (Appelbaum et al., 1999). However, there has been restricted emphasis in empirical research on employees' perception of empowerment. This can be considered rather surprising, because empowerment is, after all, essentially a perceptual matter. Because of the lack of employees' perspective examinations, researches have not been able to provide a complete picture of the empowerment process. The best way to measure to what extent empowerment exists within an organization is by examining individuals' perceptions of empowerment (Bryman et al., 2005). We did not, however, implement an empirical study on that matter, and therefore we have examined studies which deal with employees' perspective of empowerment.

We have noted that empowerment has been defined in many ways by different researchers. Numerous researchers have defined empowerment from the organizational or the management point of view. Fewer researchers have examined and defined empowerment as employees perceive it. From all the articles and books we have read, we have now identified the definitions of empowerment which are of relevance for our study. We will now take a closer look at these definitions.

4.2.1 Definitions of empowerment

In the 1980's when empowerment had recently emerged, the term was commonly defined as delegation of authority and resource sharing (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Conger and Kanungo (1988) were not comfortable with this definition. They maintain that empowering is rather an *enabling* process than a *delegating* one, and point out that the Oxford English dictionary defines the verb empower as "to enable". Conger and Kanungo (1988) argue that enabling involves motivating employees by producing conditions for the increase of personal efficacy. The researchers further state that empowerment can be viewed in two different ways; as a relational construct and as a motivational construct (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Thomas & Velthouse (1990) developed further Conger & Kanungo's work. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) view employee empowerment as a multidimensional construct, referring to the role of managers who empower their employees, and a motivational construct, which refers to the psychological state of employees resulting from being empowered by their supervisor. According to Thomas and Velthouse's ideas, the motivational construct involves four task assignments or dimensions of intrinsic motivation: impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). In other words, these dimensions describe subjective factors which motivate employees to carry out a task.

Thomas and Velthouse's findings got others researchers attention, and in 1995, Spreitzer implemented a research to measure and validate employee empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). She built her research on Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) ideas, except that she renamed two of their dimensions: meaningfulness became meaning and choice became self-determination. Spreitzer's (1995) findings indicate that the four dimensions of motivation are key elements in the empowerment process. Spreitzer assumes that individuals can have the ability to both shape and influence their work activities, and she defines empowerment as the degree to "which an individual wishes and feels able to shape his or her work role and context" (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1444). It seems that these four dimensions are of great importance when examining the relations between empowerment and upward influence attempts. We will explain these four dimensions of motivation later on.

In 1996, a few Swedish researchers presented their view of empowerment as employees' relation to their work (Torbiörn et al., 1996). They argue that empowering employees involves self-managed work roles, and specify some prerequisites needed for employees to perform their job. According to the researchers, self-managed work requires first and foremost personal influence, but also access to necessary resources to carry out the work (Torbiörn et al., 1996).

Koh & Lee (2001) argue that it is impossible to define empowerment without looking at it from two different sides. On one hand they view empowerment as supervisors' behavior when empowering their employees. On the other hand, Koh and Lee view empowerment as employees' state of mind after actually being empowered by their supervisor (Koh & Lee, 2001). To define empowerment, Koh and Lee combined those two aspects and came up with the explanation that empowerment is "the psychological state of a subordinate perceiving four dimensions of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact, which is affected by empowering behaviors of the supervisor" (Koh & Lee, 2001, p. 686). This means that if an employee is to feel empowered, the behavior of his or her supervisor has to be considered as well.

4.2.2 Two aspects of empowerment

After examining the definitions of empowerment, we see that researchers have identified two key aspects of empowerment. The two aspects seem to be developed from Conger and Kanungo's work (1988), in addition to Thomas and Velthouse's work (1990).

The former aspect involves *organizational empowerment*, also named multi-dimensional perspective. This aspect considers a supervisor's behavior as the cause of empowerment and has been related to top-down polities in organizations. It is the responsibility of organizations and managers to guide employees, delegate responsibility and share information (Bryman et al, 2005; Cole et al., 2003; Koh & Lee, 2001; Spreitzer, 1995).

The latter aspect involves *employee empowerment* or intrinsic motivational dimensions. This aspect considers the individual perception of empowerment and has been related to bottom-up polities in organizations (Bryman et al., 2005; Cole et al., 2003; Koh & Lee,

2001; Spreitzer, 1995). Because this aspect emphasizes employees' experience and perceptions of empowerment and our study deals with employees' upward influence attempts, we will from now on focus on employee empowerment. We begin by clarifying the dimensions of experience, identified by Torbiörn et al. in 1996, and how they are of importance to our study.

4.3 Dimensions of experience

If employees are to be empowered, particular prerequisites have to be fulfilled. It is not enough that the management decides to redistribute power; the organization is also required to provide certain conditions for that to happen. Then employees' perception of their work settings has to be considered, along with their performance (Torbiörn et al., 1996). Torbiörn et al. (1996) further argue that if performance is to be good, the organization has to believe in employees' subjective judgments, competence and initiative (Torbiörn et al., 1996).

4.3.1 Subjective prerequisites

Like we have mentioned before, Torbiörn et al. (1996) maintain that empowering employees implies self-managed work roles and good performance. However, if an employee is to be able to perform, certain subjective prerequisites have to be fulfilled. According to the researchers, these subjective prerequisites for performance may be seen as dimensions of experience, where some performance is expected from the individual. In this case, the performance is actually carrying out the job (Torbiörn et al., 1996). Now we will closer examine what these subjective prerequisites for performance involve.

Torbiörn *et al*. (1996) argue that in traditional job design, or top-down situations in organizations, the prerequisites for employee's performance focus on what he or she *may* and *should* do. In modern work situation, where jobs are no longer easy to define or standardize, the organizational environment is more like bottom-up. Under those circumstances, employee's performance requires more than *may* and *should*. It requires that an employee *can* or is able to carry out his or her job. Further, an employee must have the *will* to do it. Last but not least, performance requires that an employee *knows* what to do. To summarize, where performance was before a subject of what an individual *should* do and was *allowed* to do, modern work roles depend more on what an individual *can*, *wants* and *knows* (Torbiörn et al., 1996).

4.3.2 Objective conditions

To be effective, the subjective conditions then have to be met with *objective conditions*. That means that an organization is required to provide certain conditions or circumstances so that an employee can perform his work at all. It depends a lot on the organizational culture or structure, along with the individual's position within the organization, whether those objective conditions are provided or not (Torbiörn et al.,

1996). These objective conditions Torbiörn et al. (1996) identified are responsibility, authority, competence, information and incentive.

Responsibility stands for an organization's demands. An employee has to be responsible and do what he or she *should* do or is expected to do. *Authority* refers to that an organization gives an employee the right to do what he or she is *allowed* to do. *Competence* stands for development. An employee gets the opportunity to develop his or her competence in consistence with his or her work role. *Information* means that an employee gets access to all information so that he or she knows how to carry out the work. And at last, *incentive* stands for inspiration. An employee is inspired by the organizations so that he or she is willing to do the job (Torbiörn et al., 1996).

4.3.3 Relations between subjective prerequisites and objective conditions

Torbiörn's et al. (1996) theory involves that if performance is to be good; all of these conditions must support each other and be sufficiently met. If one or several conditions are not met or do not support each other, the quality or the amount of an employee's performance is considered to suffer. For instance, if an employee has responsibility but not the authority or competence, he or she can not carry out his or her task as preferred (Torbiörn et al., 1996). If those desired circumstances are to be achieved, an organization need to have a strategic overview of the objective conditions, their interaction and their impact on employees.

Figure 1 reveals the desired relations between the subjective and objective conditions for performance, in addition to desired relations within each set of subjective and objective conditions. The model is intended to point out relevant aspects to support self-management and emphasize the need for an extended, coordinated perspective (Torbiörn et al., 1996). This means that an organization must afford the opportunity for flexibility and freedom at its lower levels; that is, empower its employees.

Now we will closer examine the interrelations between the objective and subjective conditions.
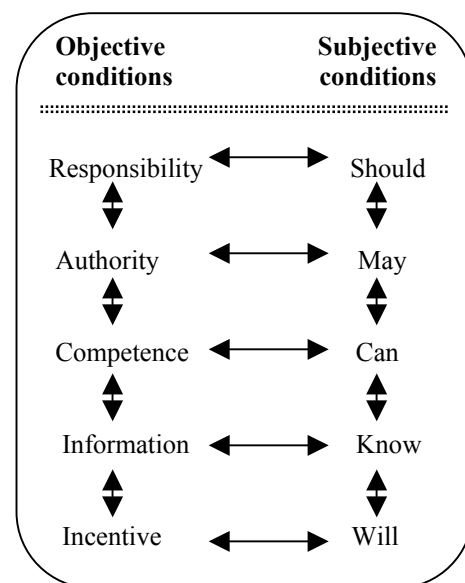
Figure 1. Objective and subjective conditions for performance (Torbiörn et al., 1996).

If employees are provided with *responsibility* at work, they feel that they *should* perform their tasks. If they are provided with *authority*, they sense that they *may* perform the tasks. If employees get the opportunity to develop their *competence* in consistence with their work role, they feel that they really *can* perform their job. If employees are provided with all the necessary *information* to carry out their work tasks,

they get the feeling that they *know* the best way to perform. At last, if an organization *inspires* its employees (the *incentive* factor) they get the feeling that they actually *will* perform their job. Considering this, the interactions between subjective and objective prerequisites might play an important role in employees' perception of empowerment.

If we examine the interrelations between the subjective and the objective conditions for performing a task, but instead we put them in relation to upward influence attempts and empowerment in modern work roles (bottom-up situations), some connections can be made. All of the objective conditions for an influence attempt are to be provided by the organization. For an employee to engage in an influence attempt, the subjective conditions also have to be met. Empowerment requires that all of these conditions are fulfilled by delegating tasks that require *responsibility*, *authority*, *competence*, *information* and *incentive*. If put in relation to upward influence, an organization needs to make sure that employees perceives that they *should*, *may*, *can*, *know* and *will* exercise upward influence if empowerment is to be working.

4.4 Dimensions of motivation

We have so far discussed the dimensions of experience, which refers to subjective and objective conditions for performance and abilities to use upward influence. Our next step is therefore to examine employees' perception of how motivated they are to perform. We will further point out how this motivation can potentially result in upward influence attempts. To be able to do this, we will take a look at the motivational dimensions of empowerment, using Spreitzer's (1995) denomination.

The motivational dimensions of empowerment represent four different subjective components which motivate an employee to carry out a work task. For the best result, an employee has to perceive these components, or believe that he or she possesses them. The dimensions and the relations between them are demonstrated in *Figure 2*.

4.4.1 Impact

Impact is the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative or operating work outcomes. By that, impact refers to the behaviour that makes a difference when accomplishing the purpose, and produces the intended effects that employees will have on their environment. The feeling is the belief that one's behaviour can have an impact and the belief that one can perform the relevant behaviour properly. Employees believe they actually do have influence in their work and feel that others listen to their ideas (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). It has been argued that impact extends the notion that individuals have some control over their own jobs which results in that they can be able to have some influence over larger organizational matters (Appelbaum et al., 1999).

If individuals feel empowered and sense a great degree of impact, they actually believe that they can have influence over work activities and work outcomes. Moreover, they might believe that they can practice upward influence, that is, participate in decision-

making processes which are of their concern, get all the information needed, access to necessary resources and so on. They might even try to influence the supervisor to favor them in any way. This is where personal power also comes into the picture. If employees feel a great sense of personal power along with the feeling of impact, they can practice upward influence with great achievement. Which tactics they use to exercise such upward influence are matters of which we will come back to later. However, we concur with Appelbaum et al. (1999) that this feeling of impact can not only result in having some influence over one's own job and work situation, but also in having influence in the organization as well.

4.4.2 Competence

Competence, or self-efficacy, is an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform task activities skilfully when trying. Competence can be seen as the mastery of an employee's behaviour. The feeling of competence involves the perception that one is doing a good quality work on a task. Employees are confident about their ability to do their work well; they know they can perform. High self-efficacy can result in initiating behaviours, high effort and persistence when facing obstacles (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Employees feel they are competent and are therefore confident enough to take initiative and moreover, capable of being persistent when they face some trouble in their work situation. It seems feasible to assume that competence can be related to the personal power source of "expertise" where an employee possesses important knowledge and skills which are of importance for the organization. If an organization is dependent on an employee's knowledge, he or she can use this dependency to exert upward influence. We can also look at competence in another way. If one knows one can perform and that one is good at it, one might more confidently try to influence someone higher in the hierarchy in order to find more ways of increasing one's competence. Such ways could be assigning to competence development courses. By increasing the competence, an employee becomes more skilled and experienced, and can thereby be of more importance to the organization.

4.4.3 Meaning

Meaning is the value of a work goal or purpose, but has to be judged in relation to the individual's own ideals or standards. Meaning involves an employee's intrinsic caring about a given task. The feeling of meaning is that one is on a valuable mission, a path that is worth one's time and energy. Employees feel that their work is important to them and they care about what they are doing. High levels of meaning can result in commitment, involvement, concentration and more energy at work (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

It appears to be of great importance for employees that their work means something to them. Without a doubt, a meaningful job leads to more job satisfaction and hopefully a happier employee who is willing to do what it takes to carry out his or her tasks. To *do what it takes* might involve that an employee attempts to influence superiors or decision

making processes in order to be able to do something which might make his or her job even more meaningful. An employee needs to feel that it is worth taking the risk in exercising upward influence, and believe that the influence attempt will have positive outcomes for him or her.

4.4.4 Self-determination

Self-determination, or choice, refers to an individual's sense of having a choice in initiating and regulating his or her actions. Self-determination reflects autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviours and processes. Choice is the opportunity one feels to select tasks that make sense, and carry them out in ways which seems appropriate. The feeling is being able to use one's own judgement and act on one's own understanding of the task; being free to choose how to do the work (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

It seems feasible to assume that if employees feel a high degree of self-determination, they are able to work without close supervision all of the time. Moreover, we assume that self-determined employees would exercise upward influence in order to choose the best way of carrying out the tasks. For instance, if a supervisor would normally do things another way, an employee can try to influence the supervisor and get permission to do things the way he or she feel is the best for carrying out the tasks.

4.4.5 Interactions between the dimensions

According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), the higher an employee scores in each of these dimensions, the greater he or she perceives empowerment. Spreitzer (1995) came to the conclusions that the four dimensions were in fact all internally related and that the lack of any dimension would subdue, though not completely eliminate, the comprehensive extent of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). This can be seen as similar to Torbiörn's et al. (1996) conclusions that if one or several conditions in the dimensions of experience are not met or do not support each other, the quality or the amount of employees' performance is considered to suffer (Torbiörn et al. 1996). Thus, it is the interactions between the dimensions of motivation that affects how employees perceive empowerment.

In *Figure 2* we demonstrate how we see these four different dimensions of motivation to interact with each other.
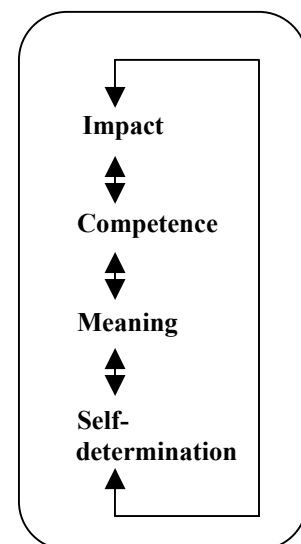

Figure 2. The dimensions of motivation, according to Spreitzer (1995).

4.5 Relations between the two dimensions

The two different dimensions of experience and motivation are related matters, and are both important factors in employee empowerment. The dimensions of experience stress that certain organizational conditions, along with particular subjective prerequisites, leads to the fact that employees are able to perform. The dimensions of motivation involve employees' beliefs and perceptions of the work situation and how motivated they are to perform. If we put these two dimensions in context, it appears that their relations can result in employee empowerment, as demonstrated in *Figure 3*.

| Part one. | Part two. | Part three. |
| Dimensions of experience (Torbiörn et al., 1996) | Dimensions of motivation (Spreitzer,1995). | Employee empowerment. |
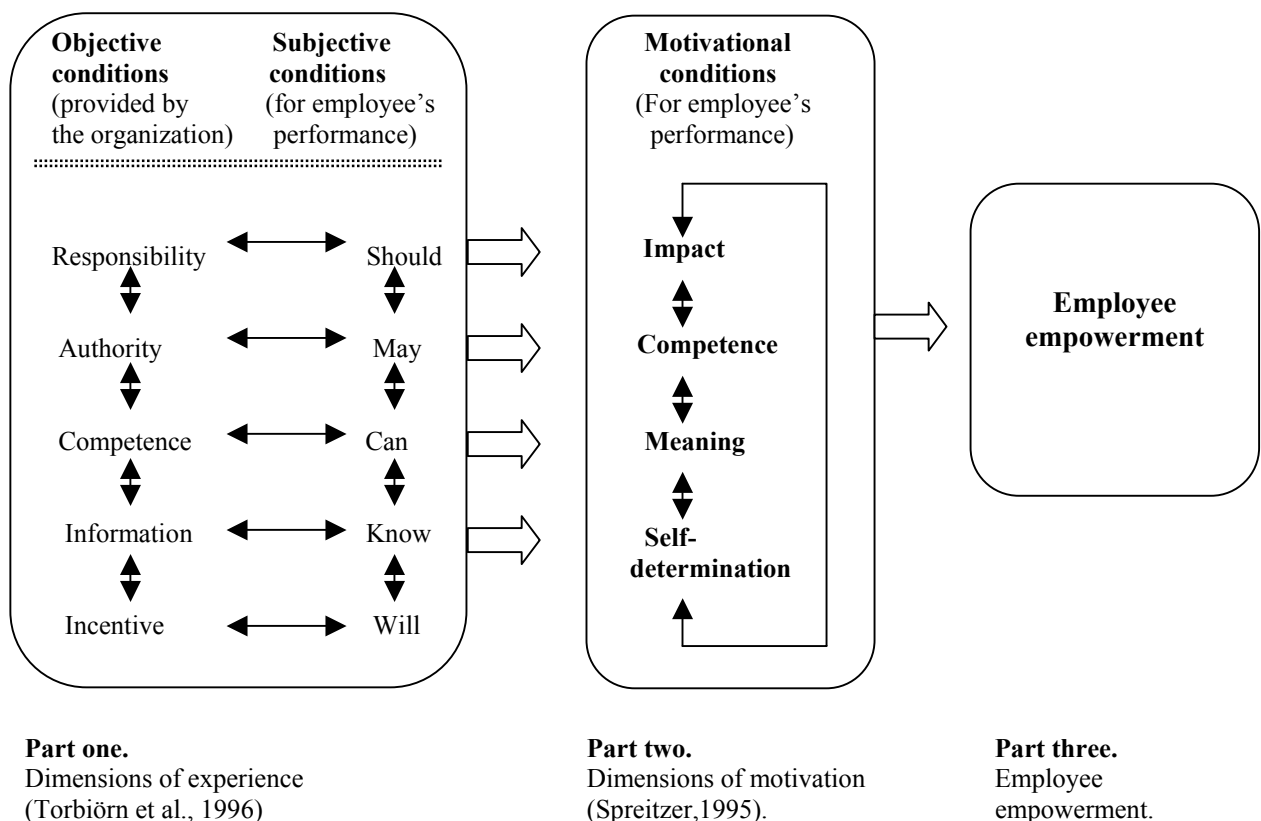
Figure 3. Relations between the dimensions of experience and dimensions of motivation.

For this to happen, the organization has to provide the desirable, objective conditions for employees to be able to perform. This can be seen in part one in the model above. The organization has certain demands (*responsibility*) which results in that employees feel they *should* perform the task. Employees are also provided with some *authority,* which results in that they actually *may* perform the task. In addition, the organization provides conditions so that employees are *competent* enough, so they really *can* perform the task. Employees also have access to the appropriate *information* so they *know* how to perform a task. Finally, the organization does what has to be done to inspire (*incentive*) employees, so they actually have the *will* to perform their tasks.

If all those conditions, both objective and subjective, are fulfilled and met with each other, we assume that employees are able to go to the next step towards employee

empowerment. We demonstrate this by the four arrows headed from part one towards part two in the model. Each arrow represents objective and subjective conditions which, if met, lead to employees' perception of each and every dimension of motivation. By that we mean that it depends on to which degree objective and subjective conditions are met, to what extend employees feel they are motivated. As a result, employees now can be situated within the dimensions of motivation, and we take a look closer at part two in the model.

Like we said, if all the conditions in part one are fulfilled and met with each other, it can lead to that employees feel they have *impact*. According to Spreitzer (1995), the feeling of impact results in higher involvement in decision-making and persistence when facing difficulties. The fulfilled conditions might also lead to that employees feel they have *competence*. Spreitzer (1995) maintains that the feeling of competence can result in persistence when employees are facing challenging situations. The fulfilled conditions might also result in that employees feel that their work has some *meaning* for them. Spreitzer (1995) stated that meaning results in high commitment and higher degree of energy. At last, these fulfilled conditions might lead to *self-determination*, but Spreitzer (1995) maintained that self-determination results in learning, interest in activity and toughness when facing tribulation.

For everything to be at its best, all the conditions in part one has to be fulfilled so employees are able to perform, along with that they score high in each component in part two so they are motivated to perform. If these conditions go together, we assume that employees perceive they are actually empowered. And that leads us towards the feeling of being empowered and thereby able to exert upward influence.

4.6 Feeling empowered and able to exert upward influence

Appelbaum et al. (1999) maintain that empowerment is to be looked at as a picture of the idea that employees have about their role in their work place (Appelbaum et al., 1999). According to both Spreitzer (1995) and Thomas and Velthouse (1990), employees who feel they are empowered show more motivated behavior than they who do not feel empowered. They believe they are autonomous and have impact, they are likely to be creative and take initiative; they show concentration and feel less constrained than others. Empowered employees can work in the absence of close supervision and believe they are autonomous and have impact. Furthermore, they are likely to be creative and take initiative; they show concentration and feel less constrained than others. Overall, they demonstrate flexibility in controlling their own accomplishments at work and expect success in their work outcome (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

4.6.1 Employees' perceptions

Appelbaum et al. (1999) argue that empowerment calls for a considerable increase in employees' influence at the work place (Appelbaum et al., 1999). To increase their impact and influence, employees ought to be able to participate and involve themselves in decision-making, because decision-making in the work context entails that employees actually do have influence in the organization (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Koh & Lee, 2001). Appelbaum et al. (1999) maintain that employees have to decide by themselves if they choose to be empowered or not. Management is required to create the circumstances for empowerment to happen, but it is up to employees if and how they will take advantage of these circumstances. To be able to feel empowered, employees have to perceive that they have freedom and discretion; they have to be confident about their capabilities and feel that they have some influence over their work situation. Last but not least, they have to feel personally connected to the organization (Appelbaum et al., 1999).

Bryman et al. (2005) found evidence regarding that managers might influence employee's perceptions of empowerment. Employees perceive empowerment in many ways, and that fact highlights the need for managers to recognize employees as individuals who have different needs and longings. In addition, Bryman et al.'s (2005) findings indicate that there can be a gap between management rhetoric about empowerment and how employees perceive and experience empowerment. Employees at all levels can tell the difference between actually being empowered and not being empowered at all (Bryman et al. 2005). The relationship between managers and employees is therefore crucial in this matter (Henkin & Moye, 2006).

Henkin and Moye (2006) studied the relations between employee empowerment and interpersonal relations with their managers. The research built on Spreitzer's (1996) motivational dimensions of empowerment. Henkin and Moye's findings indicate strong relations between employees' empowerment and interactions with their managers. Employees may perceive more competence if their superiors show confidence in them, support them and give them access to necessary resources. Employees with high degree of *self-determination* often sense that they have freedom and liberty to determine how they carry out their tasks. Employees may sense they have considerable *impact* and control over what happens at their workplace if they have superiors who value and accept their decisions and actions. Employee may find his work more *meaningful* if it is important to him or her and fits between the work requirements and his or her values, beliefs and behavior (Henkin & Moye, 2006).

It appears that employees' will to exert upward influence, is to a certain extent dependent on their own will to engage themselves. Since it does require some effort on employees' behalf, the exercise of upward influence indicates that they have some kind of interest in changing their conditions in the organizational environment. Although there is an interest in exerting upward influence among employees, the process can be either facilitated or counteracted by the organization. According to Porter et al. (1981), the degree of upward influence practiced in an organization is dependent on the actual, formal attitude towards employee power (Porter et al., 1981). It appears that empowerment is one organizational way of providing employees with the right tools to

be able to exert upward influence. Similarly, it seems that if employees feel they are empowered, they also feel that they have the capability of practicing upward influence.

4.6.2 Organizational conditions

The organization is required to provide the right circumstances or conditions so that employees can be and feel empowered (Torbiörn et al., 1996) and willing and able to exert upward influence (Porter et al., 1981). Therefore, we assume that the organization plays a big role when it comes to employees' feeling of being empowered and able to exert upward influence. This seems to depend on, among other things, the organizational culture and norms, which are partly shaped by management. In addition, it also depends on the nature of the organization, like if it is hierarchic or flat.

According to Porter et al. (1981), organizational culture determines what is considered as right and wrong behavior among those who work for an organization (Porter et al., 1981). Organizational norms indicate to which degree organizations are willing to actually allow employees to exert upward influence. The usage of upward influence depends on organizations' attitude towards upward ascendancy and what possible consequences such behavior may bring for an agent (Porter et al., 1981).

Appelbaum et al. (1999) argue that the information provided in an organization is an essential factor in facilitating employee's power of initiative and engagement. An organization has to give employees the information needed about the organization's mission and employees own performance. Without it, certain employees are not willing to extend themselves to take responsibility or be creative. If employees know where the organization is headed, they are more likely to feel capable of taking initiative in getting there, and if they get to understand how well they are performing, they are better able to act on taking decisions and improving their performance (Appelbaum et al., 1999).

4.6.3 Summing up…

Until now, our main focus has been on examining employee empowerment and how it can be implemented and perceived. We have also examined power and power redistribution, and pointed out some potential relations between power, empowerment and upward influence attempts. Considering this, we have come to the conclusion that redistribution of power and the right organizational conditions to empower their employees lead to employees feel they are capable of performing and also motivated to perform. This results in that employees perceive they are empowered and feel they have the capability of practicing upward influence.

However, we have not yet been able to review what upward influence really is about, or further, which ways there are for employees to actually exercise upward influence. Therefore, upward influence attempts are the subject matters in our next chapter.

5. Upward influence attempts

Influence attempts can be considered a central aspect of organizations, and involve agents' efforts to get things done their way (Lueger et al., 2005). This could be seen as a process where an agent tries to produce behavioral or psychological changes in a target person. Such behavioral change can involve values, beliefs or attitude (Porter et al., 1981; Porter et al., 2003).

Influence attempts can be accomplished in different directions, categorized as upward, downward or lateral (Lueger et al., 2005). *Upward influence* can be described as "attempts to influence someone higher in the formal hierarchy of authority in the organization" (Porter et al., 2003, page 110. This means that upward influence is only exercised in relations where the target is more powerful than the source. According to Porter et al. (2003), the main difference between upward and downward influence is the resources available for the agent to exert power. In most cases employees have not got the formal authority, or position power, to exercise influence. Yet, employees can exercise upward influence by using their own social base of power (Porter et al., 2003).

This means that in most of the cases subordinates have to rely on their personal power like expertise, charisma or ability to persuade or even manipulate, in order to be able to influence their superiors. However, if employees also feel empowered, they are more likely to use positive aspects of personal power, like referent power and expertise, instead of persuasion or manipulation. Therefore, upward influence can both be exercised towards organizational reasons, like pushing the organization towards a more competitive position on the market, but also towards personal reasons, as career development or a desire for a higher position.

The type of behavior employees use to influence their superiors can be called *upward influence tactics*. There are several influence tactics to be found (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1990) and an agent can either use one separate influence tactic at a time, or combine two or more tactics to influence a target (Yukl & Falbe, 1990). When exerting upward influence tactics, employees can use different ways. We choose to call the different ways, of which influence tactics are used, *influence strategies*. By that we mean that influence strategies refer to in what manner the influence tactics are carried out, and in what purpose.

5.1 Upward influence strategies

Upward influence tactics can be carried out in different manners. According to Farmer et al. (1997), influence tactics appear to be used in interdependent ways, suggesting some sort of strategic use of influence behavior. Considering this, it appears to be appropriate to talk about *influence strategies* when referring to the ways that employees choose for using influence tactics.

In our literature review, we have found five different upward influence strategies, or ways of using influence tactics, which seem to be of an importance for employees when

exerting upward influence. Three of these strategies were identified, by among others, Farmer et al. (1997), who maintain that employees can use three different strategies to exercise upward influence: *the hard way, the soft way* and *the rational way*. The other two strategies were proposed by Porter et al (1981), who argue that employees can use two different strategies in upward influence attempts; *informational strategies* and *sanctions*.

When examining similarities and differences between these strategies, we consider the different dimensions of their usage. Based on this, a distinction can be made between Farmer's et al. (1997) and Porter's et al. (1981) strategies. Farmer's et al. (1997) strategies refer to *how* employees exert upward influence, while Porter's et al. (1981) strategies refer to *what* employees do to exert influence. Therefore, the strategies can be placed into two different dimensions; the *how*-dimension and the *what*-dimension, which both can interact with each other.

After we had discovered these different dimensions of upward influence strategies, we began to examine the upward influence tactics. We made a two-dimensional model of the upward influence strategies, and decided to group the different tactics (which we will present in the next section) and place them in our model. That is, find out which tactics belong to the how-dimension and which tactics belong to the what-dimensions, and see if there were some connections between.

During that job, we found that all the upward influence tactics could be placed within the dimension of *how*-strategies, that is, each and every tactic could be used either in the hard way, the soft way or the rational way. However, we discovered there were some tactics that did not fit into the existing dimension of *what*- strategies, that is, the tactics did not fit within the informational way or the sanctions way. When we took a closer look on the tactics not sorted, we noticed they were all related in a way; personal motivation. Then we decided to employ the detected connection and add a third category in the dimension of *what*, and named it "personal strategies". The model on upward influence strategies and upward influence tactics is demonstrated in *Figure 4*.

We will now begin by presenting the dimensions of influence strategies. After that we describe the upward influence tactics which researchers have identified and have reached the most attention up to now.

5.1.1 The dimension of *how*

The how-dimension of influence strategies can be described as reflecting the nature of the influence attempt. We compare this to *how* the influence tactic is actually carried out. As mentioned before, Farmer et al. (1997) distinguishes between hard, soft and rational strategies whose distinctive features we will now bring order into.

5.1.1.1 Hard strategies

Hard strategies may be described as those where the influence agent perceives that he or she controls meaningful reinforcements for a target. Hard strategies are often carried out through the possession of direct control of rewards and punishments or through

manipulative threats. Yet, the ability to legally distribute measures of obedience is generally associated with legitimate or coercive power, of which employees usually possess little. Influence in forms of pressure is more applicable and useful to employees in that case. Tactics of assertiveness are other examples of hard strategies (Farmer et al., 1997).

Apart from the fact that employees usually do not possess positional power, hard strategies often involve behavior which is not considered appropriate for an employee in an organization. This is why we assume that hard strategies are not likely to appear in upward influence attempts exerted in an organizational context.

5.1.1.2 Soft strategies

Soft strategies are less aggressive by their nature and instead they rely on psychologically manipulative means. A soft strategy reveals agents' perception that they do not control target acquiescence. Instead, an agent is trying to make a target voluntarily carry out the request by using tactics of, for example, ingratiation or exchange (Farmer et al., 1997).

According to our opinion, soft strategies can be related to impression management, where employees have to rely on their personal charisma to be able to gain power. Based on the part regarding impression management, soft strategies are most likely to appear in upward influence attempts.

5.1.1.3 Rational strategies

Rational strategies intend to evoke some kind of instrumental reasoning in a target. The goal is to offer a target some kind of desirable outcome in exchange for the requested appeal. Often subordinates attempt to use a rational strategy through the tactical use of reason or logic (Farmer et al., 1997).

5.1.1.4 The more likely strategies in upward influence

The way we see it, both rational and soft strategies are more likely than hard strategies to appear in upward influence attempts. It is more effective for an employee to appeal to his or her superior's feeling of loyalty or to try to convince a superior by providing good arguments, than starting to use threats or pressure. Besides, the latter is often considered inappropriate behavior in an organization.

When relating the how-dimension of influence strategies to the four dimensions of power studied by Appelbaum et al. (1999), it seems that these strategies are all performed in the second dimension of power. This is based on the fact that it is in this dimension employees try to obtain access to certain decision–making processes. Thereby, they use different influence strategies to practise upward influence.

5.1.2 The dimension of *what*

The what-dimension draws attention to the means that an agent tries to derive advantage from. By this we mean *what* an agent actually does to influence a target. Porter et al. (1981) distinguished between influence strategies that can be carried out either in an informational way, by providing information, or through sanctions, by using tangible actions (Porter et al., 1981).

5.1.2.1 Sanctions strategies

Sanctions can be carried out either in a positive way by rewarding or in a negative way by punishing. Due to the fact that the source is less powerful than a target in an upward influence attempt, the positive sanctions that can be carried out by an agent are of limited extent. The only thing an agent can offer as a reward is his own performance. But, since good performance is an expected part of everyday work and behavior, it can hardly serve as a reward in a prolongation. Therefore, negative sanctions are more common in upward influence attempts. However, negative sanctions are often accompanied by normative restrictions in the organization. As a result, negative sanctions are often carried out in silence (Porter et al., 1981). That can be done, for example, by opposing the organization in different ways that can not be easily tracked back to an agent. The spreading of false rumours or not paying attention to what is of importance for the organization are two examples of this kind of behaviour.

5.1.2.2 Informational strategies

Informational strategies involve that employees give out certain information. Informational strategies consist of different kinds of persuasion and manipulation. Persuasion means providing the right information in order to convince someone to do something in another way. Since an agent's intentions are open as well as the method, the response will be based directly on a target's evaluation of and the source of the message. This means that if received negatively, the influence attempt may bring negative costs for an agent. Because of this, Porter *et al.* (1981) mean that the utilization of persuasion as an upward influence tactic would be low. The difference between persuasion and manipulative persuasion is an agent's sincerity about the motive. When using manipulative persuasion strategies, employees give wrong, or not true, information in order to manipulate a target to act on their request. The target is aware that an influence attempt has taken place but an agent may try to conceal his or her true objective. Manipulation implies concealing both the intent of an agent and the fact that an influence attempt is taking place (Por

5.1.2.3 Personal strategies

Personal strategies draw attention to ways in which an agent tries to appeal to a target's intrinsic morality and what is considered right or wrong by a target. This is done through an agent's own personality which can be directed to a target in both explicit and implicit ways. This cannot be done through tactics of information or sanctions, suggesting that a personal strategy is aimed at a deeper level in a target person. Discovered influence tactics such as *personal appeals* or *ingratiation* (which we will

describe in the next section), indicate that this personal category does exist and is also to be adapted to our two-dimensional model on upward influence strategies, demonstrated in *Figure 4.*

5.1.2.4 Two-dimensional model on upward influence strategies

Like mentioned before, we have developed a model which presents the different strategies used in upward influence attempts. Horizontally are the strategies which imply *what* one does to exert upward influence. Perpendicularly are the strategies which imply *how* one exerts upward influence. The empty boxes are later to be filled with appropriate upward influence tactics, which we will present in our next section.

What one does to make it happen ———▶ / *How* one does it ↓	**Personal strategies** (Motivating with one's own personality, implicitly or explicitly)	**Informational Strategies** (Providing right or wrong information)	**Sanctions Strategies** (Offering reward or punishment)
Hard strategies			
Soft strategies			
Rational strategies			

Figure 4. A two-dimensional model on upward influence strategies.

Consequently, there are several ways for employees to exercise upward influence. In the following section we will describe the specific influence tactics that can be used within each category of strategies. We start our presentation by reviewing research on upward influence tactics.

5.2 Upward influence tactics and their relations with upward influence strategies.

Compared to downward influence, upward influence has not reached a lot of attention in research until lately (Porter et al., 2003). Organizational changes in consequence of increasing specialization and organizational growth have made upward influence more important than in past times (Farmer et al., 1997; Porter et al., 2003; Wells & Kipnis, 2001). Since the constitution of MBL in 1976, it appears to have been more emphasis on this matter.

Researchers have performed several studies to examine which tactics are used by employees to gain upward influence (Farmer et al., 1997; Kipnis & Wilkinson., 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). The study made by Kipnis et al. in 1980 has received the most attention in research on upward influence tactics (Farmer et al., 1997; Wayne et al., 1997; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). In Kipnis's et al. (1980) study, a number of different upward-influence tactics were identified. The different tactics identified by Kipnis et al. are; *rationality, ingratiation, assertiveness, coalition, upward appeal, exchange of benefits, sanctions and blocking* (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1980).

Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) made a replicated Kipnis et al. (1980) study (Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990). They found support for six of the influence tactics identified by Kipnis et al. (1980) and modified them into *rationality, exchange, assertiveness, coalition, ingratiation* and *upward appeal* (Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990). In 1990, Yukl and Falbe also made a replication and extension on the Kipnis et al. (1980) study. Yukl and Falbe identified two new items; *inspirational appeals* and *consultation* (Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

In a study made by Yukl et al. in 1991, nine separate tactics were supported; *rational persuasion, exchange, pressure, ingratiation* and *coalition, consultation, inspirational appeals, personal appeals* and *legitimating*. In the study upward appeals and coalition tactics were combined into a single scale simply named coalition since respondents were not able to differentiate the two tactics. In 1992, Yukl and Tracey found evidence that provided additional support of the nine tactics (Yukl & Tracey, 1992). In addition, in 2005, Yukl et al. found again support for the nine tactics already revealed, but they also found support for two new influence tactics; *collaboration* and *appraising* (Yukl et al., 2005).

Based on this, we have found eleven different upward influence tactics by examining the literature on implanted research. Even though those identifications are over fifteen years old, some resent studies have been made by Higgins et al. (2003) and Yukl et al. (2005) and their results support and confirm that those upward influence tactics are still valid (Higgins et al., 2003; Yukl et al., 2005). Therefore, we will now continue by describing those tactics a little further. However, our attention is not to validate the different tactics, we just describe them as they are defined by their authors.

5.3 The upward influence tactics

Now we are going to examine the eleven upward influence tactics we have found by reviewing the literature. We will both describe them and analyze them in relation to our two-dimensional model on upward influence strategies. We begin by demonstrating our model, in which we have already put the tactics, so that will be easier for the reader to realize how we see the relations.

What one does → *How* one does it ↓	**Personal strategies** (Motivating with one's own personality, implicitly or explicitly)	**Informational Strategies** (Providing right or wrong information)	**Sanctions Strategies** (Offering reward or punishment)
Hard strategies			Pressure
Soft strategies	Personal appeals Inspirational appeals Ingratiation	Consultation Appraising	Exchange Collaboration
Rational strategies	Coalition	Rational persuasion Appraising	Legitimating

Figure 5. Relations between influence strategies and influence tactics.

5.3.1 Personal tactics

Personal appeals as an influence tactic can be put as an agent appeal to a target's feelings of loyalty and kindness to influence a target to do something unusual or extra. (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

Inspirational appeals means that an agent makes an emotional request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to a target's values and ideals, or by increasing a target's confidence that he or she can do what is expected (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

Ingratiation as an influence tactic involves that an agent seeks to get a target in a good mood or to think favorable of him or her before asking a target to do something. The agent attempts to increase target cooperation by increasing a target's feelings of positive regard toward him or her (Kipnis et al., 1980;Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

When analyzing the three mentioned tactics in relation to the different influence strategies, we found them to be related. They are all tactics where employees have to rely on personal attributes and their power of attraction toward their superior. Consequently, we put these three tactics in the category consisting of personal strategies in our strategy scheme. Further, the tactics can all be considered to be part of soft strategies, relying on an agents' ability to plead to obtain more power. Accordingly, we put the tactics in the box containing or soft, personal strategies.

Coalition tactics involve that an agent enlists the aid or approval of other people to influence a target to do what an agent wants (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

We also view the coalition tactics to be belonging to the category of personal strategies. This is due to the fact that to be able to form coalitions, employees have to make sure that they send out the right signals to entice other persons to go the same way. Because of its persuading nature, we put this tactic in the box of rational, personal strategies

5.3.2 Informational tactics

Consultation means that an agent seeks a target's participation in planning an activity, strategy or change in which a target's support and assistance is desired. Consultation may increase commitment when a target develops a more favorable attitude towards the task than he or she did before, and feels a sense of ownership for it as a result of participation in planning it (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

Appraising tactics involve that an agent explains why a request or proposal is likely to benefit a target person as an individual. Possible benefits include a larger pay increase, faster career advancement, and opportunities to learn new skills that will be useful in the future. The use of appraising is more likely to be successful if an agent understands a

target's personal needs and how a request or proposal may be relevant for satisfying those needs (Yukl et al., 2005).

We decided to classify the two tactics of consultation and appraising as informational strategies. We base this choice on the informational aspect of consultation and appraising. Consultation and appraising means discussing issues and interchanging information that can be of value for the other person, therefore they are informational to their nature. Because of the fact that the two strategies are built on a targets' voluntary will to participate in an informational interchange and the likely outcome can bee seen as beneficial for employees and superiors, consultation and appraising have to be considered as soft strategies. As a result, we put the tactics of consultation and appraising in the box that includes soft, informational strategies.

Rational persuasion as an influence tactic stands for that an agent uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade a target that a proposal or request is practicable and likely to result in positive outcomes and obtained objectives. Rational persuasion is most likely to be effective when an agent and target share a common task objective. Examples of rational persuasion include a detailed explanation of the reasons why a request or proposed change is important, and presentation of concrete evidence that the proposal is possible. Use of rational persuasion is suitable when a target shares an agent's desired outcome, but does not understand how a request or proposal is relevant for attaining these objectives. Explanations about the significance and practicability of a request or proposal are more likely to be accepted when an agent has task-relevant expertise and is perceived to be a reliable and trustworthy source of information (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl et al, 2005; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

Since the tactic of rational persuasion, together with the tactics of consultation and appraising, involves an informational aspect of power, we also placed this tactic in the category of informational strategies. However, unlike in the tactics of consultation, the tactic of rational persuasion is rather exchangeable than interchangeable from an informational point of view. By this we mean that employees rather have to provide the right arguments than have an interchange in opinions with their superior. The same thing goes for the tactic of appraising. This is why the tactics of rational persuasion and appraising are to be placed in the box containing rational, informational strategies.

5.3.3 Sanction tactics

In *pressure tactics*, an agent uses demands, threats, or intimidation to convince a target to comply with a request or to support a proposal (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

The tactics of pressure implies that an agent tries to get a hold on a target to be able to use this in order to get what he or she wants. The agent can extort a target to get the desired outcome by holding resources that an agent wants or needs. This is why we put the tactic of pressure in the box of hard, sanction strategies.

Exchange involves that an agent makes an explicit or implicit promise that a target will receive rewards or concrete benefits, if a target accommodates to a request or supports a proposal. The agent may also remind a target of a prior favor to be reciprocated. Use of exchange requires agent's control over rewards desired by a target person. Research indicates that an agent is most likely to use exchange when a target is reluctant to do what an agent wants without additional enticements (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl et al., 2005; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

With *collaboration*, an agent offers to make it easier or less costly for a target person to carry out the request. Collaboration may include offering to provide relevant resources, offering to provide assistance in carrying out a requested task, and offering to help avoid barriers that would prevent a target person from performing a task successfully. Some forms of collaboration involve agent's control of resources, but not all. An offer to provide assistance only requires a willingness by an agent to allocate some time and effort. It is often easier to find ways to help a target person accomplish a requested task than to find desirable rewards that can be used as a stimulus for doing the task. Using collaboration may increase a target's positive perception of an agent (Yukl et al., 2005).

Exchange tactics and collaboration tactics involve an agent voluntarily sacrificing something or helping a target in different ways to be able to obtain something in return. This way of providing assistance in exchange for influence can be considered as rewards, thereby indicating these tactics are to be put in the box of sanction strategies. Also, the fact that this is an implicit way of getting what one wants, indicates that tactics of exchange and collaboration can be considered as soft strategies.

Legitimating tactics involve that an agent seeks to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority to make it or by verifying that it is consistent with organizational policies, rules or traditions. Legitimating tactics may induce a target to comply with a request if a target is convinced the request is within an agent's scope of authority and is consistent with organizational rules and policies (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

We put the tactics of legitimating in the box of rational, sanction strategies. This is due to the fact that legitimating involves that an agent tries to convince a target that he or she has the legal right to make some decisions. The convincing can be done by providing a target with either positive or negative sanctions. It is also done by an agent using argument of why he or she has the right to decide.

5.3.4 Positive and negative tactics

When analyzing the different influence strategies and categorizing the tactics, we noticed we sometimes could make a distinction between *positive* and *negative tactics*, if put in an organizational context. It appears that some tactics might have a more beneficial outcome to the organization and the actors involved, than others. For example, tactics that are based on co-operation and comprehension are in favour both of organizations and employees in that sense that they are contributing to better

communication between management and employees. Examples on positive tactics are, according to us, collaboration, consultation and appraising.

Some tactics might though be destructive to the organization. Upward influence tactics can be negative in an organization when they do not combine to increased collaboration between management and employees, but is based on oppression or coalitions towards the target. Further, negative tactics involve behaviour which is not revealed in its true nature. It seems reasonable to assume that the use of negative tactics in an organization can contribute to a deteriorated relationship between management and employees. Examples of negative tactics are pressure, coalition and ingratiation.

5.4 Choosing and using influence tactics

Like we have already mentioned, impression management and political tactics are most common in upward influence attempts. That depends on the fact that in upward influence attempts, a target is more powerful than an agent. This means that an agent does not usually possess positional power and therefore, has to rely on his or her personal power to exert upward influence.

When it comes to actually choosing an upward influence tactic, research has shown that the goals of an influence attempt may be powerful determinants of which influence tactic is chosen (Farmer et al., 1997; Higgins et al., 2003; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Furthermore, the effectiveness of a tactic will depend on the purpose and the context in which it is used (Higgins et al., 2003; Yukl, 2005). According to Somech & Drach-Zahavy (2002), both an agent's power and a target's power affects which particular influence strategy or tactic an agent chooses to use (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2002).

In addition, individual factors can play an important role in this matter (Porter et al., 1981). In spite of the fact that two individuals are in the same potential influence situation, they may choose two different tactics to use. This is due to the fact that everybody possesses different personal characteristics that influence the way they act. The expectancies we have on a certain outcome in an influence situation affects whether we will make an influence attempt or not. If, for example, an employee has managed to get a rise in wages every time he or she has negotiated with the boss, he or she is more likely to try to get a rise in pay also the next time (Porter et al., 1981). The individual's expectancies regarding the efficacy of engaging in influence will be at least in part determined by what has gone before (Lueger et al., 2005; Porter et al., 1981).

There are also some factors considering target selection that need to be taken into consideration. Choosing a target is dependent on a targets access to different resources. An employee who is planning to engage in political activities tries to select a target that has control over or possesses something that employees need or want. A superior who do not have power over the wanted item, is not of interest as a target (Porter et al., 1981). The target has to possess sufficient power to accomplish the outcome desired by the source and at a minimal cost to the political actor. Also, the relationship between an

agent and a target are of importance, both when choosing a target and when choosing an influence tactic (Porter et al., 1981).

Research regarding upward influence indicates that the effectiveness of different influence tactics varies and that subordinates use upward influence tactics in their attempts to receive desired outcomes, such as positive performance ratings, promotions or salary increases (Wayne et al., 1997). Individuals typically use upward influence tactics in combinations when trying to gain compliance from individuals at higher levels in the organizations (Farmer et al., 1997; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

The organizational norms and culture can also affect which influence tactics that are considered appropriate and which are not. This of course depends on in what situation the influence attempt is accomplished (Farmer et al., 1997; Porter et al., 1981). Hard upward influence tactics are not frequently used within organizations since verbal aggressiveness and taking matters over the boss' head are not considered as suitable behavior in that context (Farmer et al., 1997).

When influence is directed upward, rational forms of influence are especially likely to occur. Fewer costs for employees than when using an assertive strategy makes rational forms of influence more usable in an organization (Farmer et al., 1997; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Influence research has found that rational forms of influence are used far more often than any others, and are in fact used almost universally in organizations, in all directions and at all levels (Farmer et al., 1997).

To sum up, it is the opportunity that an individual has to engage in upward influence, that actually has the greatest impact on employees' selection of influence tactics (Farmer et al., 1997; Porter et al., 1981).

6. Conclusions

Now we have reached the end of our examination on the three topics described above. It seems that all these concepts are related and rely upon each other. We begin by demonstrating a model, *Figure 6*, to explain our findings. In the model we have put together all the models we have already presented, in order to explain the relations between power redistribution, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts.
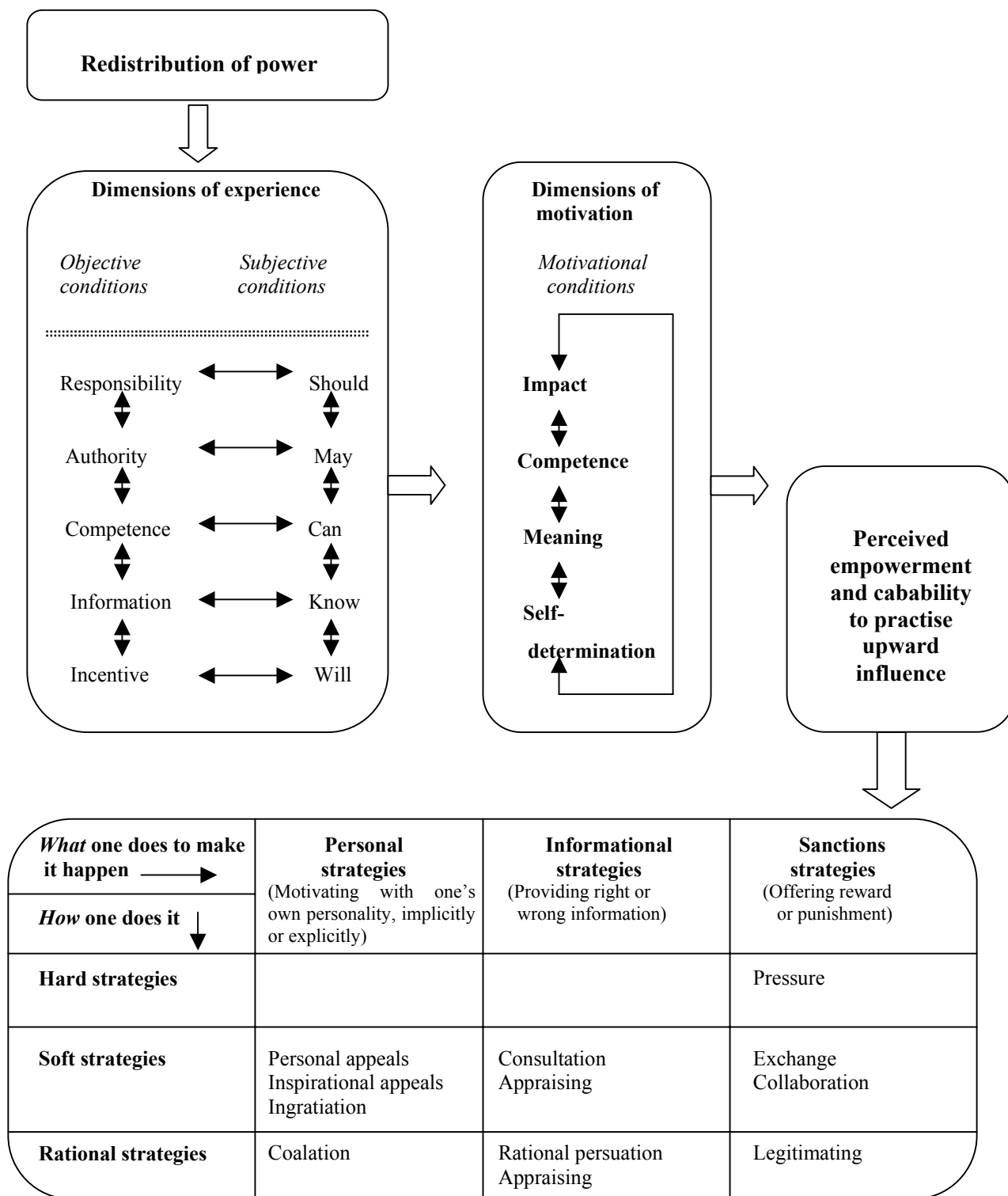
Redistribution of power

Dimensions of experience

Objective conditions *Subjective conditions*

Responsibility ↔ Should

Authority ↔ May

Competence ↔ Can

Information ↔ Know

Incentive ↔ Will

Dimensions of motivation

Motivational conditions

Impact

Competence

Meaning

Self-determination

Perceived empowerment and cabability to practise upward influence

What one does to make it happen ⟶ *How* one does it ↓	**Personal strategies** (Motivating with one's own personality, implicitly or explicitly)	**Informational strategies** (Providing right or wrong information)	**Sanctions strategies** (Offering reward or punishment)
Hard strategies			Pressure
Soft strategies	Personal appeals Inspirational appeals Ingratiation	Consultation Appraising	Exchange Collaboration
Rational strategies	Coalation	Rational persuasion Appraising	Legitimating

Figure 6. Model on the relations between redistribution of power, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts.

We have found that the redistribution of power is organizational or managerial matters. In other words, the organization decides to involve employees in decision-making processes, or to empower them. This implies that the organization has to provide the right objective conditions which have to be met by certain subjective conditions with employees, so they feel able to perform. Moreover, those conditions for performance also seem to be conditions for employees to exert upward influence.

It appears that if employees feel that they are able to perform and able to exert upward influence, it will lead to that they perceive how motivated they are to actually perform. If employees sense a high degree of motivation, they actually feel they are empowered. Furthermore, if they feel they are empowered, we assume that they also sense they have the capabilitity to exert upward influence in order to be able to perform even better in their work. Our model also indicates that to what extent employees perceive empowerment, will determine what kind of influence tactics employees will use in upward influence attempts.

7. Discussion

There are several reasons of why employees exert upward influence in organizations. We find the most common reasons to be either in favor of the organization, in order to help making the organization to be more effective or competitive, or in the favor of employees themselves, in order to help with their own carrier development or to make their job more meaningful.

7.1 Employee involvement, MBL and organizational change

Organizations are required to act in accordance to existing law. If we put this discussion in relation to the law concerning the right to participate in decision-making processes, or MBL, it seems that this law is intended to favor employees in different ways by forcing the organization to involve them in organizational matters that can be of interest or importance for them. MBL requires that management involve employees in decision making processes. The results from our research indicate that it is feasible to believe that MBL needs to be applied in organizations every day.

The competitive and ever changing business environment demands that organizations are capable of adjusting to every new situation. As a result, organizations need to make the most of the knowledge stored with their employees. If organizational change is to be successful, it is important that employees feel they are a part of the change and able to have influence over their work situation. That is, it is important that they are actually empowered. Therefore, we think empowerment can be seen as an answer to the implementation of MBL and to organizational change. If MBL is applied successfully in organizations, it would possibly make it easier for employees to have some influence over the constant change and development. This would both benefit employees, who sense they have more control and are therefore not threatened by the change, along with organizations, who are more likely to survive in the ever changing business situation.

7.2 Empowered employees are more likely to exert upward influence in positive ways

It seems reasonable to assume that it depends on the management's understanding, knowledge and attitudes whether or not organizations are able to implement MBL and provide the right conditions for employees to feel empowered and be a part of decision-making processes. If the desired conditions are provided, we think that employees are likely to use positive strategies and tactics to exert upward influence. Soft or rational strategies as collaboration, consultation and appraising tactics can for example be seen as positive ways in this context. The empowerment process involves that employees perceive they are able to use upward influence in cooperation with the management. This involves that all influence-channels are open from the bottom to the top and that employees and management act in harmony. This also benefits the organization,

because it has to rely on its employees' involvement and performance to be able to survive in the modern environment which continuously changes. The feeling of being empowered and capable of exerting upward influence can also result in more commitment and job satisfaction; the feeling that the job actually is meaningful. We think that if the organization provides the right circumstances for employees to be and feel empowered, they are more likely to exert upward influence in positive ways, which will benefit both themselves and the organization.

However, if organizations do not provide the right conditions, we think employees might feel powerless and insecure, and are therefore more likely to exert upward influence in negative ways. As an example, if an employee sees his or her perceived power in jeopardy, he or she might put in some effort to sabotage the organizational system in various ways in order to maintain some power. This will probably be the case if empowerment is not implemented correctly or if upward influence attempts are somehow opposed by the management. This means that employees are not allowed to exert upward influence, and therefore, they do not have the opportunity to work together with the management. Therefore it is possible that they do not feel committed to the organization and their job means not much to them. As a result, there are risks that employees see no other choices than to be manipulative and use negative influence tactics in forms of pressure, ingratiation and coalition to be able to exert upward influence at all.

7.3 Autonomous work roles and right conditions for employee involvement

In our introduction, we presented a research article we once read in Dagens Nyheter. This article deals with the issue that too much freedom, responsibility and autonomous work-roles can make employees stressed and sick. We choose to look at this from another angle. If employees feel stressed and work-loaded because of too much freedom and responsibility, we assume that they do not actually feel empowered and do not sense that they have the capability to have some influence over their work situation. They do not sense they are motivated, and the subjective and objective conditions for empowerment have not been met.

This implies, to refer to the model by Torbiörn et al. (1996), that if the objective and the subjective conditions of empowerment are not met, employees may perceive they *should* perform a task but they are not *able* to perform it, which in the end leads to more stress and unhealthy employees. In addition, when employees feel unable to influence a particular decision, they can get frustrated because they feel they know a better way to do things, but because of their position they are unable to make the decision they believe is the best course of action.

It is not enough for organizations to provide their employees only with responsibility and freedom, and not provide them with other necessary conditions like information and access to resources which are necessary for them to carry out the work tasks. This could result in that employees have to work more and harder to obtain the right information and try to get access to necessary resources. This takes a lot of their valuable time and

makes them more stressed because they are not sure if they are doing the right thing. In the end, they can be forced to exert upward influence in negative ways in order to get what they need to perform their work.

If MBL are successfully implemented in organizations and employees are actually empowered, this would reduce the obligation for employees to use manipulative or negative tactics in order to be able to exert upward influence. Yet, research has shown that negative tactics are still used in a lot of organizations.

This indicates that employee involvement and participation is not just something that can be established by law. The initiative and responsibility to actually involve employees in decision-making, rests on the organizations themselves. Bottom-up, rather than top-down, management can make it possible for employees to participate in decision-making processes. Although employee involvement is stipulated by law (MBL), it is unclear how much progress has been made. Obviously, some change has occurred, since MBL was established. The idea of empowerment appears to be significant in this context. However, much improvement is needed.

7.4 Conclusions

We have come to the conclusions that if an organization provides the right circumstances for employees to feel empowered it will lead to that they are more capable of exerting upward influence in positive ways, leaving employees more satisfied with work. This will benefit the organization towards its way to more competitive position, because employees perceive they are autonomous, self-determined and in control of their own, meaningful work situation. That makes it easier for employees to help their organization to reach the goal, by making their own decisions and working out quick solutions on the spot, without close supervision.

And this is what it is all about; involving employees.

7.4.1 Practical application

Our work can be useful for increasing and developing management knowledge and attitudes towards implementation of MBL and involvement of employees. We examined two different topics, employee empowerment and upward influence attempts, which have not, as far as we know, been examined in relation to each other. Based on our findings, we developed an easily comprehensible model which suggests the desired conditions for management to involve employees, all the way from power redistribution, through empowerment, to the capability of using upward influence.

7.4.2 Future research:

We find it to be of great relevance to examine how management can successfully implement MBL and what is required in organizations so that the right conditions are provided for employees to use positive strategies to exercise power and influence.

Reference

Appelbaum, Steven H., Hébert, Danielle, & Leroux, Sylvie. (1999). Empowerment: power, culture and leadership – a strategy or fad for the millennium? *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Volume: 11, Issue: 7, Pages: 233-254.

Bell, Judith. (2000). *Introduktion till forsknings metodik.* Tredje upplagan. Lund, Studentlitteratur.

Bruins Jan. (1999). Social power and influence tactics: A theoretical introduction. *Journal of Social Issues*. Volume: 55, Issue: 1, Pages: 7-14.

Bryman, Alan. (2004). *Social Research Methods*. Second Edition. New York, Oxford University Press Inc.

Bryman, Alan; Dainty, Andrew; Greasley, Kay; Price, Andrew; Soetanto, Robby; King, Nicola. (2005). Employee perceptions of empowerment. *Employee Relations*. Volume**: 27,** Issue**: 4, Pages: 354-368.

Cole, Steven G.; Diaz, Wendy Michelle & Matthews, Russell A. (2003). Organizational empowerment scale. *Personnel Review*. Volume: 32, Issue: 3, Pages: 297-318.

Conger Jay A., & Kanungo Rabindra N. (1988). The Empowerment Process: Integrating Theory And Practice. *The Academy of Management Review***. Volume: , Issue: 3, Pages: 471-483.

Falbe, Cecilia M. & Yukl, Gary. (1992). Consequences for managers of using single influence tactics and combinations of tactics. *The Academy of Management Journal*. Volume: 35, Issue: 3, Pages: 638-652.

Farmer, Steven M; Maslyn, John M.; Fedor, Donald B. & Goodman, Jodi S. (1997). *Putting upward influence strategies in context*. Journal of organizational behaviour. Volume: 18, Issue: 1, Pages: 17-42.

Göransson, Håkan & Nordlöf, Claes. (2004). *Arbetslagstiftning. Lagar och andra författningar som de lyder 1 juli 2004*. (31:st ed). Stockholm. Norstedts juridik AB.

Henkin, Alan B .& Moye, Melinda J.(2006). Exploring associations between employee empowerment and interpersonal trust in managers. *Journal of Management Development*. Volume: 25, Issue: 2, Pages: 101-117.

Higgins, Chad; Judge, Timothy A & Ferris, Gerald R. (2003). Influence tactics and work outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Volume: 24, Issue: 1, Pages: 89-106.

Kipnis, David; Schmidt, Stuart M. & Wilkinson, Ian. (1980). Intraorganizational influence tactics: explorations in getting one's way. *Journal of Applied Psychology.* Volume: 65, Issue: 4, Pages: 440-452.

Kipnis, David & Schmidt, Stuart M. (1988). Upward-influence styles: Relationships with performance evaluations, salary and stress. *Administrative science quarterly.* Volume**:** 33, Issue: 4, Pages**:** 528-543.

Koh, Joon, & Lee, Mushin. (2001). Is empowerment really a new concept? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management.* Volume: 12, Issue: 4, Pages 684–695.

Larsson, Staffan. (1994). *Om kvalitetskriterier i kvalitativa studier.* In: Starrin, Bengt & Svensson, Per-Gunnar. (red.). (1994). *Kvalitativ metod och vetenskapsteori.* Lund. Studentlitteratur.

Lindén, Jitka; Westlander, Gunnela & Karlsson, Gunnar. (1999)*. Kvalitativa metoder i arbetslivsforskning. 24 Forskare visar hur och varför.* Uppsala, Rådet för arbetslivsforskning och författarna.

Lueger, Manfred; Sandner, Karl; Meyer, Renate & Hammerschmid, Gerhard. (2005). *Contextualizing Influence Activities: An Objective Hermeneutical Approach.* Volume: 25, Issue: 8, Pages: 1145-1168.

Mechanic, David. (1962). Sources of power of lower participants in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly.* In: Porter, Lyman W.;Angle, Harold L. & Allen, Robert W. (2003). *Organizational influence processes.* Second edition. New York, M.E Sharpe.

Mertens, Donna M. (1998)*. Research Methods in Education and Psychology. Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications Inc.

Pardo del Val, Manuela & Martínez Fuentes, Clara. (2003). Resistance to change: a literature review and empirical study. *Management Decision.* Volume: 41, Issue: 2, Pages: 148-155.

Phillips, Nelson. (1997). Bringing the organization back in: a comment on conceptualizations of power in upward influence research. *Journal of organizational behavior.* Volume: 18, Issue: 1, Pages: 43-47.

Porter, Lyman W.; Allen, Robert W. & Angle, Harold L. (1981). The politics of upward influence in organizations. In: Porter, Lyman W.;Angle, Harold L. & Allen, Robert W. (2003). *Organizational influence processes.* Second edition. New York, M.E Sharpe.

Porter, Lyman W.;Angle, Harold L. & Allen, Robert W. (2003). *Organizational influence processes.* Second edition. New York, M.E Sharpe.

Psoinos, Anna, & Smithson, Steve. (2002). Employee empowerment in manufacturing: a study of organisations in the UK. *New Technology, Work and Employment.* Volume**:** 17**,** Issue**:** 2, Pages**:** 132-48.

Schriesheim, C. A., & Hinkin, T. R. (1990). Influence tactics used by subordinates: a theoretical and empirical analysis and refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson subscales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Volume: 75, Issue: 3, Pages: 246–257.

Somech, Anit & Drach-Zahavy, Anat. (2002). Relative power and influence strategy: The effects of agent-target organizational power on superiors' choices of influence strategies. *Journal of Organizational Behavior.* Volume: 23, Issue: 2, Pages: 167-179.

Spreitzer, Gretchen. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: dimensions, measurements and validation. *The Academy of Management Journ*al. Volume: 38, Issue: 5, Pages: 1442-1465.

Starrin, Bengt. (1994). Om distinktionen kvalitativ-kvantitativ is social forskning. In: Starrin, Bengt & Svensson, Per-Gunnar. (red.). (1994). *Kvalitativ metod och vetenskapsteori*. Lund. Studentlitteratur.

Starrin, Bengt & Svensson, Per-Gunnar. (red.). (1994). *Kvalitativ metod och vetenskapsteori*. Lund. Studentlitteratur.

Strannegård, Lars & Ernsjö Rappe, Tinni. (2003). För mycket frihet gör anställda sjuka. *Dagens Nyheter*. 19. januari 2003.

Svensson, Lennart. (2004). *Pedagogiska uppsatser. Pedagogik ämnet*. Lund. Pedagogiska institutionen, Lunds universitet.

Torbiörn, Ingemar; Pettersson, Pär & Arvonen, Jouko. (1996). *Psychological prerequisites for performance, self-management and empowerment in modern work-life.* Stockholm, the University of Stockholm.

Walhjalt, Bo. (1999). Vetenskaplig kvalitet – närvaro och frånvaro. In: Lindén, Jitka; Westlander, Gunnela & Karlsson, Gunnar. (1999). *Kvalitativa metoder i arbetslivsforskning. 24 Forskare visar hur och varför*. Uppsala, Rådet för arbetslivsforskning och författarna.

Wayne, Sandy J.; Liden, Robert C.; Graf, Isabel K. & Ferris, Gerald R. (1997). The role of upward influence tactics in human resource decisions. *Personnel psychology.* Volume: 50, Issue: 4, Pages: 979-1006.

Wells, Carole V. & Kipnis, David. (2001). Trust, dependency and control in the contemporary organization. *Journal of Business and Psychology*. Volume: 15, Issue: 4, Pages: 593-603.

Wilkinson, Adrian. (1998). Empowerment: theory and practice. *Personnel Review*. Volume: 27, Issue: 1, Pages: 40-56.

Yukl Gary. (2005). *Leadership in organizations*. Sixth Edition. New York, Pearson = Education.

Yukl, Gary; Chavez, Carolyn & Seifert, Charles.F. (2005). Assessing the construct validity and utility of two new influence tactics. *Journal of organizational behavior*. Volume: 26, Issue: 6, Pages: 705-725.

Yukl, Gary & Falbe, Cecilia M. (1990). Influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward and lateral influence attempts. *Journal of applied psychology*. Volume: 75, Issue: 2, Pages: 132-140.

Yukl, Gary, & Falbe, Cecilia M. (1991). Importance of Different Power Sources in Downward and Lateral Relations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Volume: 76, Issue: 3, Pages: 416-423.

Yukl, Gary & Tracey, Bruce. (1992). Consequences of influence tactics used with subordinates, peers, and the boss. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Volume: 77, Issue: 4, Pages: 525–535.

Government bills:

Prop. 1975/76:105 I Arbetsrättsreform: Lag om medbestämmande i arbetslivet.

Internet sources:

Thomson Fakta – Westlaw Sverige. 2006-05-23. Webadress:
http://www.westlaw.se/pls/onl_se/!ilseintk.request?funktion=lg&produkt=&normid=&prodid=614

a