

Power

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Power is the combination of decision-taking authority and control over resources. This includes the ability to threaten, coerce or impose sanctions. Power is indivisible — either one keeps the power or gives it to someone else.

Power leads to the ability to grant decision taking authority and responsibility to others and to hold others accountable.

Authority

Authority is the granted permission from a superior power to take decisions. Decision taking authority can be abused to seize power, i.e. gain control over resources.

Alternatively, authority can also result from built trust that comes from demonstrated competence or experience in making or recommending good decisions.

Responsibility

Responsibility is the obligation to care, maintain, or develop something.

Responsibility naturally results from ownership. Alternatively, responsibility can be assigned by a higher power for something or for doing something.

Responsibility can be reduced by limiting the possible activities to be carried out.

Accountability

Accountability is the implicit threat by a higher power to a person that he or she may be called upon at any time to justify his or her conduct, actions or decisions and the achievement of his or her goals.

When a person is given responsibility by a higher power, this responsibility is usually accompanied by accountability.