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## Social/Network Power:

### Applying Social Capital Concept to Explain the Behavioral Tendency of Individuals in Granting Favors within the Organizational Context

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#### **Abstract:**

*The concept of Social Capital started from the domain of sociology and was transferred to broader application in other social sciences, such as economics and politics. It has also migrated from the inter-individual to the inter-societal level of society. This study returns to the original context of Social Capital by applying it to explain the behavioral tendency of individuals within the organizational context. The concept of Social/Network Power borrows the concept of Social Capital to explain how someone can access the power of other person, both formal and personal-based, by accessing its power base through social network. The independent variables used in this study are length of relationship, valence of relationship, existence of past favors, existence of potential favors, source of power and gender. This study uses the quasi-experimental method of policy capturing to determine whether social networks enables individuals to access the power base of other person, both formal and personal. This study uses 33 volunteers that were given 48 different scenarios, which yields 1583 unique cases for analysis. The result shows that all independent variable, except gender, has significant influence toward the behavioral tendency of individuals in granting favors by lending their power base, both formal and personal. However, using log linear model, the analysis shows that the effect of past favors toward the tendency to grant favors are moderated by the source of power. Owed favors have greater effect toward influencing the tendency to lend personal power base than formal power base to pay for those favors.*

**Keywords:** Power, Social Capital, Individual Behavior

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#### **Summary:**

##### **Background**

Power and politics plays major and interesting roles in organizational dynamics. Politics, as defined as the acquisition and use of power, determines the shifts of resources and influence decision that affects the entire organization, either for better or for worse. Meanwhile the scope of literature about sources of power in organizational context is severely limited. Majority of research in sources of power has depended on the classification of power by French and Raven (1959). It is necessary to explore possible sources of power in organizational context that have not been explored in the classical classification of power by French and Raven.

##### **Research Statement:**

Social Capital is a source of organizational power, in which people with social capital can elicit holders of power as defined by French and Raven to lend their source of power.

**Objectives:**

The objective of this research is to explore the concept of social capital in the organizational context as a source of power in order to broaden the classification of power by French and Raven.

**Methodology:**

The methodology used in this research is quasi experimentation, using Policy Capturing method to collect data. The primary data analysis is done with logistic regression, to analyze the effect of each variable, with log linear modeling as secondary data analysis, to analyze the moderation effect of the source of power to the favors owed.

**Result:**

In situation where the all of the situational variable is absent (constant), there are only 20.13% probability that a request to access a powerbase be granted. The maximum probability of the request to be granted -when all positive variables are included- is 97.97%, while the minimum probability -when only the negative variable is included- is 2.48%. People with long standing relationship have 2.53 times more probability to be granted a favor than people with relatively new relationship. People with positive relationship have 3.20 times more probability to be granted a favor than people with no positive relationship. People with negative relationship have 0.10 times lesser probability to be granted a favor than people with no negative relationship. People with past favors due have 2.22 times more probability to be granted a favor than people with no past favors. People with the potential to repay favors have 1.65 times more probability to be granted a favor than people without potentials. When the favor asked is concerning personal power, it has 4.90 times more probability to be granted than favors regarding formal power. Even though gender is found to be not significant, the result showed that males have a slight tendency to grant favors more, with 1.331 times or 6.73% more probability to grant favors than females do.

The probability to grant requests from individuals with past favors due, when the request asked is concerning the use of personal power, is 1.87 times greater than individuals without past favors. The probability to grant requests from individuals with past favors due, when the request asked is concerning the use of formal power, is only 1.58 times greater than individuals without past favors due. The probability to grant request concerning personal power, when the person who asked have past favors due, is 3.10 times greater than request concerning formal power. The probability to grant request concerning personal power, when the person who asked did not have past favors due, is only 2.62 times greater than request concerning formal power.

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**A. Background and Literature Review****Power in Organization**

Power and politics plays some major and interesting roles in organizational dynamics. Politics, as defined as the acquisition and use of power, determines the shifts of resources and influence decision that affects the entire organization, either for better or for worse.

Understanding the dynamics of power would benefit organizations by giving insight on how to harness it as well as how to control the players involved in the pursuit of it. Thus, quite a number of researchers have tried to develop theories that explain various dynamics of power and politics. The concept of power has always been inseparable from the behavior of individuals, especially within the organizational context. Effective leaders must understand the sources of

power and the proper tactics required in using it to his benefit. It can be said that power is inseparable from leadership.

Max Weber, in his book that was translated to English in 1962, "*Basic Concepts in Sociology*" defined power as the opportunity within a social relationship that enables one to obtain anything he desires even if there is resistance. Meanwhile, the most commonly used definition of power in the field of political science is as the capacity to influence the behavior of other people, both with and without any resistance.

In accordance with definitions above, Stephen Robbins (2007) in his book "Organizational Behavior" gave the definition of *power* as the capacity possessed by someone to influence the behavior of others to act according to his desire. Robbins (2007) also described the classification of power by French and Raven (1959) that classifies power according to its source, which is formal and personal power. Formal power is power that is derived from the formal position within an organization. The sources of formal power are the capacity to coerce by threats of punishments (coercive power), the capacity to promise rewards (reward power), and the legitimate formal authority of the structural position (legitimate power) held by individuals.

Personal power is power that is derived from the personal characteristic of an individual. The sources of personal power are the expertise (expert power) and the desirable traits that induce identification (reference power) owned by individuals. Robbins explains that those types of power (*coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, and referent*) all come from the dependency of a client to the resources held by a patron. Greater dependency of a client to a patron creates greater power of the patron to the client. The extent of the dependency is based on the extent of importance, scarcity and non-substitutability of the resources owned by the patron.

### ***Social Capital***

Social capital is a trendy phrase nowadays in the circle of social scientists and practitioners. This phrase is first used in the field of sociology in the individual scope of view, but then spreads to other field of science with wider scope of view. Portes (2000) explored the usage of this phrase and stated that Bourdieu (1985) is the first one who used this phrase in his paper to explain his opinion that one purpose of individuals in building relationships with other individuals is to obtain future benefits. Meanwhile, Putnam (1993) expanded the concept of individually-owned social capital as defined by Bordieu into community-owned social capital used with bigger scope of applications.

This expansion of application from the individual scope into bigger societal role often caused disambiguation among researcher. In order to avoid

disambiguation, this paper limits the definition of social capital to its individual scope of application only.

Cornwell and Cornwell (2008) summarized previous researches concerning *Social Capital* (Burt 1992; Coleman 1988; Granovetter 1973; Lin 1999; Portes 1998) and conclude that the core of *Social Capital* Theory proposes that individuals can access resources owned by others through social connections or relationships with the owners.

Social capital is the social structure and relationship that enables individuals to access certain resources owned by other people. It is different than personal resources that is possessed and used by solely individuals, in which the usage of social capital incorporates interpersonal relationship and social dynamics of its user. Cornwell and Cornwell (2008) summarize at least three benefits of social capital at the individual level identified in previous researches, which is: (1) access to information, (2) social control, and (3) social support and solidarity (Coleman 1988; Sandefur and Laumann 1998).

### ***Social/Network Power***

Based on the discussions above, because the source of power is the dependency to a certain resources and resources can be accessed with certain social structure and relationships with the owner of the resources, thus it can be concluded by basic logic that someone can access the power base of other people through social relationship. The concept of *Social/Network Power* can be defined as the power that comes from the capacity to access the powerbase of others, aside of the power base -either formal or personal, through social relationships.

The concept of *Social/Network Power* emphasizes that as someone with social capital can access the resources of others through social relationship, social capital can be converted into power through the access to the power base of other people, either formal or personal. Thus, in order to observe how social/network power affects the behavior of others, we have to see it from the point of view of the owner of the powerbase. People with Social/Network Power would have better chance of success in asking a person with power to lend his or her powerbase. This is why observing the factor influencing the decision of individuals whether to grant a favor or not is relevant in measuring the effect of social/network power.

Social/network power comes from the social capital owned by individuals. Therefore, factors that build social capital would also build individual social/network power. The first factor used is the length of relationship. This factor is relevant in determining the trust upon a relationship is built. McAllister (1995) quotes the finding of Zucker (1986), Cook & Wall (1980) and Granovetter (1985) that one factor influencing inter-individual trust is the frequency and consistency of past successful interaction between individuals. This is because the personal

nature of interaction that makes it possible for people to keep track record of past behaviors of each other.

The second factor is the valence of the relationship or whether the individual sees the relationship with the other individual as a positive, negative or neutral relationship. Positive valence would signal a relationship with strong trust, while negative valence would signal a relationship with strong distrust. Neutral valence would mean the relationship has neither strong trust nor distrust. Valence of the relationship would influence the social capital since people could keep track of their behavior to each other and would behave consistently based on the principle of *fairness* and *reciprocity* (Lindskold, 1978; Stack, 1988 in McAllister, 1995).

The third and fourth variable concerns the principle of reciprocity generally prevalent within eastern culture. Abdulkadiroğlu & Bagwell (2005) discovered that individuals would only exhibit trust and facilitates cooperation if such behavior is seen as a favor that must be reciprocated, both instantly or deferred.

The fifth variable is the source of power (powerbase) that is being accessed. Powerbase can be classified into two groups, either formal or personal source of power, as explained previously. In general, the social access to formal-based power is more limited and regulated by organizational norms and rules compared to the social access to personal-based power. Thus this variable acts as moderating variable between the previous variables and the dependent variable.

## **B. Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research is designed as a *quasi experimental* research using the *policy capturing* method. Kline and Sulsky (1995) elaborated that the main question in researches using policy capturing is "What decision would individuals take with the available information?"

This method is executed by exhibiting a series of scenarios to each research subject, in which each scenario is based on a combination of information cues derived from the independent variables used in the research, and then measuring their response to each scenario. Waller and Novack (1995) describes their decision to use policy capturing by quoting several previous researches that explains that in individual decision making, there is usually not enough time to consider all the detailed information and implications regarding the decision. Meanwhile, psychological studies shows that 70% of variations in human judgement can be explained by a linear model called *judgmental structure*. This judgmental structure is built by observing the available information cues. Policy capturing is used to capture the judgmental structure of individuals.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the purpose of this approach is to understand the individual judgmental structure in making decisions, by observing the relationships between various information cues used with the final decision made in each scenario.

### **Selection of Subjects**

This research involved 40 subjects participating in the data collection. However, only data from 33 subjects are used in the data analysis because 7 subjects did not pass the manipulation check.

Since the research design for this research is quasi experimental, thus there is no requirement for the sampling process to be probabilistic. All subjects recruited for this research is participating voluntarily.

Subjects are recruited using non-probabilistic sampling from a single homogenous group. The group selected as the subject for this research is college students that have experience (past or present) as officers in an organization.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection is conducted for one week between 19th and 25th of April 2009. Data collection is conducted by giving respondents a set of questionnaire consisting of 48 different scenarios, 6 respondent identification items, and 4 manipulation check items. Displayed below is the list of variables and the dimensions used in this research.

Table B.1 Dimension of Variables Used

Variables		Coding	Dimension
Code	Name		
X1	Length of Relationship	1	Old
		0	Recent
X2a	Positive Valence	1	Existing
		0	Non Existing
X2b	Negative Valence	1	Existing
		0	Non Existing
X3	Favors Owed	1	Existing
		0	Non Existing
X4	Potential Favors	1	Existing
		0	Non Existing
X5	Source of Power	1	Personal
		0	Formal

## C. Data Analysis

### Descriptive Data Analysis

In order to understand the data obtained before running the inferential statistics, we use descriptive statistics to capture the relationship between variables. The descriptive statistics used is cross tabulation. The results of the cross tabulations between each independent situational variable to the participant's final decision, are shown in Appendix B.

### Logistic Regression Analysis

This research uses two different data analysis method. The first method is the logistic regression method that is used to see the general decision structure by measuring the effect of each manipulated independent variable to the response probability of individual respondent for each scenario. Here is the result of the data analysis with Logistic Regression method using SPSS 15.0

#### Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases(a)		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	1583	100.0
	Missing Cases	0	.0
	Total	1583	100.0

a If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

#### Step 0: Model only consist of constant:

##### Classification Table (a,b)

Observed		Predicted			
		Comply	Yes	Percentage Correct	
Step 0	Comply	No	0	707	.0
		Yes	0	876	100.0
Overall Percentage					55.3

a Constant is included in the model.

b The cut value is .500

#### Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 0	Constant	.214	.051	17.973	1	.000	1.239

Thus the model's predictive capability, with just the constant, is only 55.3% with a value that significantly does not equal zero.

**Step 1: Enter Method, All Independent Variables Included:  
Classification Table(a)**

			Predicted		Percentage Correct
			COMPLY		
Step 1	Observed		No	Yes	
		COMPLY	No		508
	Yes		151	725	82.8
Overall Percentage					77.9

a. The cut value is .500

Overall, the proposed model predicted 77.9% of the decisions correctly. Even though this value is not the same as  $R^2$ ; this value can be used as some measure for the model's prediction power. Besides that, in comparison with the "step 0" model, this model has greater prediction power.

**Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients**

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	691.289	7	.000
	Block	691.289	7	.000
	Model	691.289	7	.000

**Model Summary**

Step	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke R
	R Square	Square
1	.354	.474

The R square of the proposed model is 0.354 (Cox&Snell) and 0.474 (Nagelkerke). This means that the predictors used in the model can predict between 35.4% to 47.4% of the variability of response to a request.

**Variables in the Equation**

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	Length of Relationship	.928	.132	49.452	1	.000	2.528
	Positive Valence	1.165	.159	53.345	1	.000	3.205
	Negative Valence	-2.294	.163	198.892	1	.000	.101
	Favors Owed	.798	.131	37.126	1	.000	2.222
	Potential Favors	.500	.130	14.879	1	.000	1.648
	Source of Power	1.590	.139	130.692	1	.000	4.903
	Gender	.271	.129	4.406	1	.036	1.311
	Constant	-1.377	.179	58.901	1	.000	.252

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: lama, pandpos, pandneg, favorowe, potentfav, source, gender.



The analysis above shows that all independent situational variables possess significant effect in explaining the individual decision in granting a favor. Therefore, we obtain the following equation:

Ln(Y)=-1.377+0.928X <sub>1</sub> +1.165X <sub>2a</sub> -2.294X <sub>2b</sub> +0.798X <sub>3</sub> +0.5X <sub>4</sub> +1.59X <sub>5</sub> +0.271X <sub>6</sub>								
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.036

We would also obtain from the information regarding the Exp(B) that in situation where the all of the situational variable is absent (constant), people have more tendency to refuse the request since there are only 20.13% probability that the request be granted. The maximum probability of a request to be granted -when all positive variables are included- is 97.97%, while the minimum probability – when only the negative variable is included- is 2.48%.

If each variable is calculated individually, people with long standing relationship have 2.528 times more probability to be granted a favor than people with relatively new relationship and the probability of the favor approved increased by 18.83% if asked by people with longstanding relationship.

Meanwhile, people with positive relationship have 3.205 times more probability to be granted a favor than people with no positive relationship. On the contrary, people with negative relationship have 0.101 times less probability to be granted a favor than people with no negative relationship.

Regarding the reciprocity of favors, people with past favors due have 2.222 times more probability to be granted a favor than people with no past favors. In addition, people with the potential to repay favors have 1.648 times more probability to be granted a favor than people without potentials.

When the favor asked is concerning personal power, it has 4.903 times more probability to be granted than favors regarding formal power. Regarding gender, even though this variable is considered not significant, the result showed that males have a slight tendency to grant favors more, with 1.331 times or 6.73% more probability to grant favors than females do.

### Log linear Model Analysis

The second method of analysis is the log linear model used in order to see the interaction effect between gender and the source of power to the other situational variable used in this research. Displayed below is the result of the log linear model analysis using Microsoft Excel. The interaction effect analyzed in this case is only the interaction between Favors Owed and Source of Power in affecting the Decision to Grant Favor. The Contingency and Marginal table for the Log linear model analysis is shown in appendix C.

<b>Fitted Value</b>			<b>Model</b>						
<b>Source</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Favor</b>	(S,A,F)	(SA,F)	(AF,S)	<b>(AF,AS)</b>	(SAF)		
Personal	Yes	Yes	219.00	268.17	243.35	<b>297.98</b>	295	295.5	
		No	218.72	267.83	194.38	<b>238.02</b>	241	241.5	
	No	Yes	176.75	127.58	152.40	<b>110.01</b>	101	101.5	
		No	176.53	127.42	200.87	<b>144.99</b>	154	154.5	
Formal	Yes	Yes	219.28	170.11	243.65	<b>189.02</b>	192	192.5	
		No	219.00	169.89	194.62	<b>150.98</b>	148	148.5	
	No	Yes	176.97	226.14	152.60	<b>194.99</b>	204	204.5	
		No	176.75	225.86	201.13	<b>257.01</b>	248	248.5	
		G <sup>2</sup>	126.4	26.5	102.1	<b>2.2092</b>	0		
		df	4	3	2	<b>1</b>	0		
		p-value	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	<b>0.1372</b>			

Based on the fitted value result in the above, only the (AF,AS) model is calculated because it is the only significant model while the other models has p-value of less than 0.05. Since the (AF,AS) model is significant, this means that there are interaction effect between favors owed and source of power in influencing the decision for granting a favor request.

<b>Estimated Odds Ratio</b>	<b>Conditional Association</b>		<b>Marginal Association</b>	
<b>Model</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>FA</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>FA</b>
(S,A,F)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
(SA,F)	2.79	1.00	2.79	
(AF,S)	1.00	1.65		1.65
<b>(AF, AS)</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1.65</b>
<b>(SAF) Level 1</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1.65</b>
<b>(SAF) Level 2</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>1.58</b>		

The analysis will only concern the (AF,AS) model since it is the only model significant. Thus, based on the estimated odds ratio table for the (AF,AS) model above, it can be concluded that:

1. The probability to grant requests from individuals with past favors due, when the request asked is concerning the use of personal power, is 1.87 times greater than individuals without past favors.
2. The probability to grant requests from individuals with past favors due, when the request asked is concerning the use of formal power, is only 1.58 times greater than individuals without past favors due.

3. The probability to grant request concerning personal power, when the person who asked have past favors due, is 3.10 times greater than request concerning formal power.
4. The probability to grant request concerning personal power, when the person who asked did not have past favors due, is only 2.62 times greater than request concerning formal power.
5. In total, the interaction effect between personal and favors due caused request from individuals with favors due and concerning personal power have 1.18 times greater probability to be granted.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Regarding the findings, there are several important implications to note. The first one is that social/network power has greater effect on personal-based power has than formal-based. The use of formal power has more strict rules and regulation as well as social and ethical norms that might limit the actions of individuals with formal power. Personal-based power is less regulated and individuals can use theirs freely with less limitation from social and ethical norms.

The second implication is that negative relationship has greater impact than positive relationship. This finding is generally consistent with the tendency of humans to give greater reaction to negative actions than positive actions.

The third implication is that the reciprocation of favors, both past and future, plays important roles in influencing the decision. Even though this interplay of favors is still moderated by the source of power concerned, it is still significant even in favor requests concerning formal power that is limited by rules and regulations.

The last implication is that gender differences have only slight influence in regarding the effect of social/network power. Of course, the gender of the requester is not supplied in the scenario, thus the effect gender interaction in this case is still open for further investigation.

From the results above, it is most likely that social/network power can significantly explain the tendency of individuals to grant favors regarding their powerbase. However, it is imperative to note the limitation of this research in which policy capturing is a quasi experimental approach. Experimental and quasi experimental approaches tend to focus on high internal validity in sacrifice of external validity. With so many external factors controlled, it is possible that there are other important factors that is not analyzed in this research. One important factors not included in this research is the effect of culture and values. This study is conducted within oriental culture environment that scored high on collectivism. A replication in low collectivism culture environment might yield different result, thus it is interesting to contrast the difference between these cultures.

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## Appendix A: Sample Question

n	
If someone you are acquainted (from way back /recently), with (positive/no particular/negative) view of the person, while you (owed/did not owed) favors and he (have/does not have) potential in repaying favors in the future, asks you of something outside your job description that uses your (personal capacity/organizational authority), will you grant his request?	
Yes	No

## Appendix B: Descriptive Cross tabulation

**Table C.1 Cross tabulation between Length of Relationship and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Length of Relationship	Recently	410	381	791		
	Old	297	495	792	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	32.8958	0.0000

**Table C.2 Cross tabulation between Positive Valence and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Positive Valence	NO	612	443	1055		
	YES	95	433	528	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	227.9996	0.0000

**Table C.3 Cross tabulation between Negative Valence and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Negative Valence	NO	289	766	1055		
	YES	418	110	528	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	381.6414	0.0000

**Table C.4 Cross tabulation between Favors Owed and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Favors Owed	NO	402	389	791		
	YES	305	487	792	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	24.2712	0.0000

**Table C.5 Cross tabulation between Potential Favors and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Potential Favors	NO	384	408	792		
	YES	323	468	791	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	9.3720	0.0022

**Table C.6 Cross tabulation between Source of Power and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Source of Power	Formal	452	340	792		
	Personal	255	536	791	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	98.7458	0.0000

**Table C.7 Cross tabulation between Gender and Decision to Comply**

		Comply		Total Response		
		NO	YES			
Gender	Female	359	408	767		
	Male	348	468	816	<b>Chi Square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Total		707	876	1583	2.7666	0.0962

**Appendix C: Log linear Model Analysis****Table C.8 Contingency Table for 3 Variables (Source-Agree-Favor)**

Source	Agree	Favor		Total
		Yes	No	
Personal	Yes	295	241	536
	No	101	154	255
Formal	Yes	192	148	340
	No	204	248	452
<b>Total</b>		792	791	1583

**Table C.9 Marginal Table (Source-Favor)**

Source	Favor		Total
	Yes	No	
Personal	396	395	791
Formal	396	396	792
<b>Total</b>	792	791	1583

**Table C.10 Marginal Table (Agree-Favor)**

Agree	Favor		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	487	389	876
No	305	402	707
<b>Total</b>	792	791	1583

**Table C.11 Marginal Table (Agree-Source)**

Agree	Source		Total
	Personal	Formal	
Yes	536	340	876
No	255	452	707
<b>Total</b>	791	792	1583