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Aesthetics of Power: Why Teaching About Power Is Easier Than Learning for Power, and What Business Schools Could Do About It

IAN SUTHERLAND
IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia

JONATHAN R. GOSLING
University of Exeter Business School, U.K.

JASNA JELINEK
IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia

Power in business schools is ubiquitous. We develop individuals for powerful positions. Yet, the way we deal with power is limited by our utilitarian focus, avoiding its visceral nature. In relation to this we address two questions business schools don't ask: "What is the experiential nature of power? How are we teaching power?" We use experiential, aesthetic developments on power in the social sciences to critique the rational-utilitarian stance on power found in business schools, drawing on the work of Dewey and French philosopher Levinas to treat power as a lived phenomenon. We overview and critique approaches to teaching power in business curricula informed by our own research on Executive MBA students learning through choral conducting. Taking an appreciative-positive stance, this research showed students developing new, nonrational, nonutilitarian understandings of power. They developed nuanced learning on the feeling, relationality, and responsibility of exercising power. Coming out of this we argue for more experiential and reflexive learning methods to be applied to the phenomena of power. Finally, we shine a reflexive light on ourselves and our "power to profess," suggesting ways we can change our own practice to better prepare our students for the power they wield.

On a cool November day, in the plush surroundings of a European business school, we had a remarkable experience with a group of the school's Executive MBA students. We came face-to-face with the phenomenon of power.

This was no ordinary day of business school education. It was an experiential-learning workshop where business students explored leadership with a professional chamber choir. As part of this

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workshop—with the aim of foregrounding the current, embodied, aesthetic nature of leadership—students had the opportunity to conduct the choir. Sarah, the first MBA student volunteer, nervously took her position in front of the choir. She started with an apology: "I have never done this before, I am not a musician, please forgive my lack of ability in conducting." Then she closed her eyes. When she opened them she took a moment to look at the singers, to connect with them, and began to move her hands and arms. The choir sang. As the music unfolded, tears welled up in Sarah's eyes, trickling down over her cheeks. Soon the eyes of choir members were filled with tears. After the close of the piece and a moment to regain composure, the facilitator asked, "[W]hat are you feeling?" Sarah, still a little choked up, began to describe a sense of awe at the nature of power. She spoke of how real the experience was, how she felt connected to those she was leading, and how, face-to-face with those she led, she was humbled by an immense sense of responsibility.

At this moment, our research took an unexpected, significant turn. This workshop was a data collection point in a larger project of studying the methods, learning processes, and outcomes of arts-based management and leadership development. Part of the methodology involved observing workshops, such as this choral masterclass, and interviewing participants about their experiences. Power, as such, was not on the agenda, but it soon emerged as a key theme. Participant after participant reflected on the shift in their understanding of power, as if for the first time they experienced what it was like to have and to exercise power. The MBA students were exposed to unfiltered power dynamics. The conducting situation is unique in this regard. There is no buffer between you and the organization at work. There are no memos, e-mails, PowerPoint presentations. There are no boardrooms, executive washrooms, walls, or doors. There is no talking, just doing. You stand face-to-face with people, with one task at hand: to perform together. The power of the conductor is naked, exposed. It is fully embodied, fully felt, fully emotional.

The visceral experiences of Sarah and her colleagues gave us pause for reflection, raising two questions that we as business schools and faculty do not ask: "What is the experiential nature of power? How are we teaching power in our institutions?" Every day in our classrooms we offer students rationalized concepts, theories, and techniques implicated in wielding power over people and resources—as if its exercise is devoid of feelings and emotions. In the end we accredit graduates with the legitimacy to take up power*ful* positions. At the same time, we are preaching a gospel of responsibility. Can we really expect our students to wield power responsibly if we neglect its experiential side, its visceral nature? If we fail to help students come face-to-face with what power feels like, can we expect them to exercise power effectively and responsibly?

In the following pages we engage with these questions, joining others (Clegg, 1989, 2009; Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Stern & Barley, 1996) in critiquing the utilitarian assumptions about power in management studies and education. As a counterbalance we argue for a broadening of our power discourse by reengaging with the wider social sciences, bringing into the conversation the work of Dewey (1934) on experience, and French philosopher Levinas' work on power and the "face" (1969, 1987). After overviewing the pedagogical landscape of power in management education, we return to our masterclass participants to explore how business curricula might better prepare students for the nature of exercising power in their professional practice. Moreover, we reflect on why business schools do not do this, implicating ourselves, our "power to profess," and our reluctance to reflexively engage with this. To begin this journey we position ourselves with respect to dominant discourses on power within organizational studies and management.

POWER POSITIONING

The concept of power, argued Bertrand Russell, is as fundamental to the social sciences as energy is to physics; the desire to empower ourselves is intrinsic to human nature (1938). This is nowhere more obvious than in organizational life and the practice of management and leadership. However, although power remains a focal point in the parent disciplines of organizational studies (sociology, psychology, philosophy, etc.)—largely stemming from the work of Marx, Taylor, Weber, Parsons, and Foucault—discussions on power within management education remain dominated by an instrumentalism that significantly diverges from wider social science developments on the phenomenon.

In this section we outline our position on power. Rather than an exhaustive review of the power literature, which is beyond the scope of this article, we sharpen our argument by describing and contrasting the dominant rational, utilitarian stance toward power prevalent in management discourse with the experiential approaches to power developed in the wider social sciences. The intention is to outline the gap between how power is conceptualized in business schools versus in other social science faculties, and how a reengagement with contemporary debates on power in the social sciences can inform business curricula. To do this we draw on the felt, sensory, and emotional aspects of power prevalent in sociological and philosophical work: how it is conceptualized, experienced, and learned about. We mobilize these insights to argue for an aesthetic shift in thinking and learning about power in business schools. Here we bring into the debate notions on *experience* (Dewey, 1934) and Levinas' conceptualization of responsibility and face-to-face encounters (1969, 1987) to add a microinteractional level, foregrounded in our masterclass data, that is largely absent in the organizational studies power literature.

Orienting to Power: Resources and Structures

Power in organizational and management studies has primarily been conceptualized as a resource to be harnessed and used through pure reason and analytical rationality. *Power* is conceived of as the ability (potential or capacity) of an individual or group to exert influence over other individuals or groups for the exploitation of capital and labor (Clegg, 2009; Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006). This is derived from both resource (Weber, 1978; Parsons, 1960) and social structure viewpoints (Foucault, 1980, 1991), the combination and extension of which has been termed a neostructuralist approach (Heiskala, 2001). The key point we are driving is how organizational and management studies have treated power as existing, almost exclusively, in and through the control of resources and structures, as opposed to the lived, emotional experience of power at the microlevel of social interaction (Fleming, 2014). The nature of power in the face-to-face setting of daily organizational life is, within our business-oriented literature, woefully absent. We are not devaluing the resource-structure viewpoints, which are essential angles on power. Rather, we argue for the addition of the experiential, aesthetic side to our business school curriculum. In doing so, we focus on the face-to-face context of power. Reviewing this literature, we begin with its Weberian concerns with resources and social structures.

The Weberian resource viewpoint holds that power, as the ability or capacity to influence the actions of others, issues from the control of social and material resources (land, capital, respect, knowledge, etc.). So conceptualized, power exists in social relationships: "the behavior of a plurality of actors insofar as, in its meaningful content, the action of each takes account of that of the others . . ." (Weber, 1978: 26), and is the "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out [their] own will . . ." (Weber, 1978: 53). However, as Parsons (1960) argued, this is not a purely distributive affair between a powerful individual and those who submit. With a collectivist turn, agents may band together—as in managers over employees, or supervisory boards over executive directors—to aggregate their power over others. Yet, as Foucault (1980, 1991) noted, the existence of power is not a zero sum game related to control over resources. His insights show that power also comes through social structures or networks of relations; power is not one-sided, and because of its integration with knowledge, constitutes the human subject in specific relations characterized by unequal power. The classic example is that of the guard and the prisoner. While we may understand, from a resource point of view, the guard has power over the prisoner, the guard's power is defined by the prisoner; without the prisoner the guard has no power. The intersection of both can be seen in the corporate world and the variability of bargaining power—and consequently compensation—of CEOs. Although thought of as a rational, resource-based calculation, it has just as much to do with structural-relational aspects such as labor market conditions, company or industry culture, norms of governance and personal relationships with board members (Pandher & Currie, 2012).

This organizational conceptualization of power is focused on structure, formal authority derived from hierarchical positions, resources, control over information, decision making, labor, capital, and so on (Dahl, 1957; French & Raven, 1959; Somech & Drach-Zahany, 2002; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). Within management studies, this has become the conventional stance, one that stresses "the relative bargaining strengths of different actors" depending on the resources they control and the social structures in which they operate (Clegg, 2009: 36). Widely referenced and used work such as Pfeffer (1981), operationalizes this stance through the creation and maintenance of dependency relations, how managers wield power not just from their positions but from their control of the access to, and allocation of, resources. Going further, Kotter (1985) developed a repertoire of power-wielding tools, looking beyond the formal authority (derived from structures and resources) to the "unofficial" power that can be harnessed throughout an organization. This "unofficial" power has been considered through the lens of social capital: the resources available to individuals and groups through our social networks and how we coordinate those resources (Bourdieu, 1986). As appropriated by organizational theory, social capital instrumentalizes the value of the relationships we have, focusing on the skills individuals and groups develop to access these resources for individual, group, and organizational goals (Aquino & Serva, 2005; Baker, 2000; Burt, 1997; Leana & Van Buren, 1999). Across this literature, very little attention is paid to the subjective moments of social interaction—literally the face-to-face moments—in which power happens.

So conceptualized, the way business schools teach power is defined by an instrumental rationality (Heidegger, 1977), subsumed to goals of efficiency and order. This arises from our focus on authority structures, resource control, social capital, and the unofficial power plays of organizations. It is largely a context-independent, conceptual discourse around how power is wielded, and how it can be wielded more effectively in corporate interests. Where power is an explicit topic in business education, it tends to reaffirm this stance. Emblematic is the work of Bolman and Deal (1979a, 1979b) who divide this into four perspectives: (1.) human resource, (2.) structural, (3.) political, and (4.) symbolic. Each perspective centers on how power emerges from resource allocation and is dependent on organizational structures, both official (hierarchical) and unofficial (social capital).

Yet, as we know ourselves from our lived experience, and as Sarah experienced with the choir, power is more than resource allocation and structures. Power is a lived social phenomenon. As Stern and Barley (1996) and Hinings and Greenwood (2002) point out, we have come to forget (or ignore) the wider social phenomena and consequences of organizations and their implications in power, prestige, control, and domination. This collective forgetting has occurred apace with our retreat into the buffered zone of the business school. The physical removal of the discipline from the halls of our parent disciplines has facilitated a more economically oriented focus to what we do. We have reformed our sociological questions, such as "who controls and the consequences of that control," toward instrumental questions like "how to understand and thus design efficient and effective organizations" for economic gain (Hinings & Greenwood, 2002: 413). Perhaps if we step out of our business-school corridors more often, we would find more subtle, lived accounts of power developing in other faculties.

The Face-to-Face Nature of Power: An Aesthetic Experiential Turn

In these other halls the study of power, particularly within the sociology of emotions, has taken an experiential shift, considering how power is felt, sensed, and perceived. Kemper's (1978, 2006) status-power theory views power as the prime structural experiences of social life through which emotions are aroused. In his theory the interplay between power expectations (what we anticipate our power will be) and what we experience our power as being (having, gaining, or losing it) is fundamental to emotional experience across social settings.

This postpositivist, experiential, less utilitarian, and less resource-focused approach to power has been gaining currency within organization studies. Fineman's well-known *Understanding Emotion at Work* (2003) in particular has challenged the conventional rational concepts of power as focused on resources and utility. Fineman balances the rational orientation with the irrational, emotional nature of organizational life, including the emotional life of decision making and leadership, drilling down to the level of daily human interaction. Another example is Shorris' *Scenes from Corporate Life* (1992), an engagement with the darker side of power, particularly feelings of powerlessness. While emotionality and power are inexorably linked and fully present in organizational life, our attention to such dynamics, a wider aesthetic discourse about power in relation to authority and leadership, is slow to develop.

Gradually, within leadership studies, interest is growing in the aesthetics of leadership. While leadership is not reducible to power, the aesthetic focus implies the felt, sensory, and emotional nature of power and how leadership is exercised through "sense perceptions that go beyond rational, objective, communication" (Bathurst, Jackson, & Statler, 2010: 311). Ladkin (2008), in unpacking the musical leadership of Bobby McFerrin, found a sense of power in his actions, but described it as "more than effectiveness going on. There was a quality of engagement which I experienced as 'nourishing'" (p. 32). She describes how McFerrin embodied a way of leading "which was inclusive, accepting, and creating of a safe environment" (p. 33). Brigstocke (2013), researching the activities of late 19th century Parisian artists, proposed a framework for considering the aesthetics of authority through amplitude (intensifying of experience); gravity (the weight of authority figures); and distance (a sense of mystery). We mobilize these concepts, particularly amplitude and gravity, as a valuable aesthetic framework in our analysis of the EMBA student experiences discussed later.

As acts of influencing the actions of others, notions of amplitude, gravity, sense perceptions, and nourishment highlight power as more subtle, more aesthetic, ultimately more visceral than how management education and our dehydrated language (Adler, 2010), has traditionally approached the phenomenon. These explorations speak to the felt, sensory, emotional aspects of what is going on—what the experience of power is in the moment.

A leitmotif running through the aesthetic approaches to authority, leadership, and power is the experiential moment. Here we join this conversation, arguing that in deepening student understanding of power, we need to bring its visceral nature into relief, just as was experienced by Sarah and her MBA classmates standing exposed in front of the choir. Engaging the work of Dewey (1934) and Levinas (1969, 1987), we suggest that the relational face-to-face space—the nexus of interacting individuals and contexts that form power relationships—is essential to a more human and embodied understanding of power for our students.

Dewey's work on experience has much to add to organizational and management studies. As he held, experiences are "those situations and episodes that we spontaneously refer to as being 'real experience' . . . It may have been something of tremendous importance . . . or it may have been something that in comparison was slight" (Dewey, 1934: 205). What Dewey refers to are retroactively unified series of moments that call and capture our attention, standing out against the continuous nature of all experience. They are relational spaces populated with interacting social actors, furnished with material objects, around which experience is oriented. As a process of influencing the actions of others, power is such a phenomenon; it is more than a matter of effectively exploiting labor and capital. Those moments when a politician delivers a rallying speech, when a manager confronts employees in performance reviews, or when a secretary gently calms a nervous executive before a board meeting, are power manifest in lived experience. They are relational, full of feeling, sensing, and emotion. They are real experiences where we come face-to-face in and with each other through power; in processual terms, we are "powering" (Chia, 2003).

The work of French philosopher Levinas provides fertile soil for exploring these power*ful* experiences. Levinas approached notions of power, responsibility, and ultimately ethics by considering the moments when the self is confronted with alterity—when we come face-to-face with "the other" (1969, 1987). Levinas argued our "habitual economy" is based upon *avidité* (greed), that our general orientation to the world and each other is transactional, focused on possibility and power, and seeking to absorb or control the other. Though expressed in different language, he critiques the utilitarian positivism implicit in business schools' preoccupation with "how to understand and thus design efficient and effective organizations" (Hinings & Greenwood, 2002: 413); a question focused on seeing, naming, and recognizing that which we can measure in the service of optimizing resources through the exercising of power.

Yet it does not have to be so dehumanized; Levinas identifies the transformational potential of experience. As he argues, in situations or episodes where we *really* connect with the other, we go beyond seeing, naming, and recognizing the other (the boss, the employee, the executive, the janitor) and subordinate ourselves to each other. This is not subordination as in submission, but rather in moving beyond the greed of our transactional habitual economy, to experiencing the "face" of the other. As he writes, "my orientation toward the other can lose the avidité of the gaze only by turning into generosity, incapable of approaching the other with empty hands" (1969: 50). In these moments we operate not out of transaction but out of responsibility to the other. Lingis, translator of Levinas' work, has expressed this succinctly: "To face someone is both to perceive him and to answer to him" (Levinas, 1987: xxx). Too much of organizational theory and management studies, particularly with regards to power, simply operates on the side of perceiving, not answering to "the other."

Such a transformation in our understanding and exercising of power is not just a cognitive process, it is "a crossing of sensory attributes," implying "a break in phenomenality" (Robbins, 1991: 137).

To come to a deep understanding of power, and to transform one's understanding and practice of it, requires a commitment to sensory experience, metaphorically crossing a sensory Rubicon. It is to develop an aesthetic counterbalance to our utilitarian notions of power. We do so by coming face-to-face with the experiences of power, understanding what they feel like as lived moments.

"To come to a deep understanding of power, and to transform one's understanding and practice of it, requires a commitment to sensory experience, metaphorically crossing a sensory Rubicon."

To now we have raised a question that business schools don't ask: "What is the experiential nature of power as a phenomenon in the world?" This comes from a recognition that power is more than a rational, calculative transaction between individuals and groups through resource allocation and organizational structures. It is something felt and sensed. It is emotional. It is visceral. When enacted responsibly, it is also a sense of not just perceiving, but answering to it. In facing the other responsibly we go beyond perceiving her, to answering her.

In what follows we build on these themes, focusing on our second question business schools don't ask: "How are we teaching power?"

POWER IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Despite the ubiquity of power in organizations, the practice of management and leadership, and its utilitarian manifestation in the organization studies literature, surprisingly little attention to power is given in our management education literature. We are not the first to notice this:

> "those engaged in the academic discipline of management have frequently ignored power or use sophisticated linguistic devices to avoid naming it as such. Yet power is deeply implicated in both the content and conduct of management education. . ." (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003: 91)

In a deft review of 20th century history, social science theory, and the development of "management science," Clegg and Ross-Smith (2003) argue business school curricula flow from the hegemonic position of a North American power agenda. This agenda has promoted rational, functional, and administrative business skills—for example, the global proliferation of the MBA—in the service of increasing productivity for maximizing profit. Power fits into this project as a rational tool to get things done (Kotter, 1985), added to the toolbox through a few assigned readings, case studies, and in-class sessions. In what follows, we overview this pedagogical landscape through two lenses: the rational approach to "thinking on power," versus a more aesthetically inclined "learning about power." In the space of learning about power, we present ways that this may be done through experiential learning and service learning.

Thinking on Power vs. Learning About Power

In a short, early review on "Resources for Teaching about Power in Organizations" Bolman and Deal (1979a) divide the debate into two categories: (1.) thinking on power, and (2.) teaching about power. The former refers to theorizing and modeling the structures and processes by which power is exercised. The latter refers to the subjective apprehension of insight drawn from recognizing and articulating one's experiences of power relations. For our purposes, specifically to challenge the power exercised by faculty in relation to students, we express this as a distinction between *teaching* about power versus *learning* about power. We conceive this as a continuum, marked by the pedagogic intention of instructors to address power more (or less) as a topic toward which one can remain objective and disinterested. When put into play in the management classroom, teaching and learning about power has been done primarily through a combination of theory, case studies, and laboratory-like simulations. Here we briefly describe two examples.

Teaching About Power: Retaining Cognitive Control

In an article titled "Power and the Changing Environment" Barbuto (2000) describes an in class exercise from an undergraduate organizational behavior and management theory course. The exercise, a case of a golf cart manufacturing company, is used to develop the concept of power differentials through assessing how individuals in different functional areas (e.g., advertising, finance, accounting) would likely be affected by varying environmental changes (e.g., technological change, legal or political change, global expansion). With reference to organizational theory—particularly Kreitner's environmental change drivers (1995) and Dubin's work on organizational power dynamics (1958)—students assess the relative levels of power and influence of individuals and groups (defined by functional position or area) in this company with respect to significant environmental changes. As Barbuto reports, students respond positively to this activity as an exercise of theory–practice integration and an opportunity to explore complexity and ambiguity of a business scenario. Quoting one student:

> The exercise was a lot of fun because I like problems like this, sort of like brain-teasers . . . my group couldn't agree which members were most important . . . but I guess it isn't so much about the choice as it is the reasons for them (Barbuto, 2000: 295).

As a subject of inquiry, power remains at the level of a "brain-teaser," a problem to be solved through reason alone, albeit stimulated by the felt experience of group and intergroup dynamics.

Learning About Power: Allowing a Little Experience in

Allowing a little more experience in the room, Van Buren and Hood (2010) discuss how they led Executive MBA students to "'understand the constructs of social capital, social networks, power, and influence" providing an "academic perspective on these topics" (665–666).

Beginning with the concepts of psychological capital and individual agency, they move to social networks at work and how power flows from them. Importantly, they place emphasis on race and gender in social capital, and highlight diversity in contemporary organizations. During the first of five classes (each lasting 5 hours), students focus on psychological concepts (e.g., self-efficacy, resiliency) and analyze their relations to these concepts. Students then go through a power simulation, a modified version of the Power Lab (discussed below), where the class is divided into three groups (top, middle, and bottom) to which resources (one dollar from each student) are distributed unequally (the top-group receiving two thirds, the middle-group one third, and the bottom-group nothing). How this exercise plays out is then brought into discussion and reflection. During the second class students study their individual results of a social network survey. They reflect on their positions within their social networks (e.g., density of the networks and how central they are) and what characterizes the ties within their networks (e.g., how strong connections are, how inter- or intra-organizational they are). In the third session students look to the organizational networks of their work environments, analyzing them for insights into intergroup connections, information sharing, and so on. The goal is to identify structural holes (Burt, 1992) in their organizations. In the fourth session the EMBA students address and discuss diversity around race and gender as well as explore introversion and extroversion, both conceptually and in relation to themselves. They also discuss ways to develop social networks and their ability to exert influence at work. During the final session students present term papers. As Van Buren and Hood note:

> Throughout the course, students have an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences, learn about theory related to power and influence, and use papers and class exercises to build analytical skills . . . [they] think about their relationships with others in their organizations and how those relationships could change in ways that would benefit themselves and their organizations (2010: 665).

Although both these examples describe a teaching about power, they derive from "thinking on" power. They are examples of providing an "academic perspective on these topics" (Van Buren & Hood, 2010: 666) in which the phenomenon of power is approached more as a cognitive challenge, a brainteaser to be solved, than a lived phenomenon in the world. They are conceptually driven and focused on how to develop and leverage power for oneself and organizational interests. It is an approach emerging from the habitual, transactional orientation to the world described by Levinas. Although, as in the Van Buren and Hood example, they let a little experience in by having students analyze their social and professional contexts, and while they discuss and reflect on issues of diversity (how certain individuals and groups are more or less likely to "have" power, and the need to be aware of inequalities), any face-to-face experience of power is tightly controlled through conceptually driven simulations.

However, there are ways of valuing theoretical or conceptual approaches to power which indeed provide useful ways of structuring our thinking on power and informing how we act, while balancing them with a Dewian respect for *real* experience and the contextually driven, face-to-face realities of power. In the following section we present ways this may happen through experiential learning and service learning.

Experience, Context, and the Aesthetics of Face

The failure to be aware of and able to deal with the impacts of our power relations in real situations is evident. There is a need for "managers to be critically aware of the impact of their management practice on their own character and on the lives of those they work with" (Hibbert, 2013: 804). A poignant example is that of the South Canyon fire of 1996. Research into the exercise of power—leadership actions and decision making—found failure stemmed from the unpreparedness of team leadership to adequately wield and respond to power within group dynamics emerging through stressful situations. The result was the tragic deaths of 14 people. In the aftermath, the U.S. Fire Service developed a more robust program for leadership training that balanced thinking-on-power classroom work, with learning-about-power experiential aesthetic work (Useem, Cook, & Sutton, 2005). Despite such cases, the experiential side of the coin remains significantly underdeveloped.

A natural way of redressing this is to engage more effectively with experiential learning, the pedagogical approach applied to the phenomenon of power used in the "leadership masterclass" discussed below. As a reflective process of transforming experience into new knowing through an adaptive process from perception to behavior through cognition (Kolb 1984), experiential learning has been gaining traction in management, leadership, and executive education over the last 2 decades (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Mainemelis, Boyatzis, & Kolb, 2002; Vince, 1996; Weick, 2007). While its value in developing tacit knowledge (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2007), more reflective (Roglio & Light, 2009), and effectively analytical, worldly, collaborative, and action-oriented managers (Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002) has been discussed in a variety of contexts (Turnbull, Case, Edwards, & Simpson, 2011), experiential learning is far less often applied to power. Yet, there are instances in the literature that speak to its value. For example, Schor, Sims, and Dennehy (1996) describe how they use personal storytelling—the sharing of experience from faculty and students—and self-reflection exercises to bring students into learning on power and diversity. In their work, the participants' experience is brought into the learning space and reflected upon to develop new knowing. Another widely known form of experiential learning in power is the Power Lab. Both well-known and controversial, it is an experience that goes beyond brain-teasers and leveraging resources and relations to optimize power; it foregrounds the experiential, aesthetic nature of power.

Although not conceptually created as experiential learning, the Power Lab is an immersive experiential system, originally created to explore systemic societal power issues, predominantly racism and inequality. Rather than abstract or conceptual discussion on cases or scenarios, it is a simulation in which a group is segregated into "haves" and "have nots." This is usually done by dividing the group into a three-class system: elites (who control the majority of the resources), the middles (who manage the elite's resources), and immigrants (who have nothing). In its original conception, the program runs over 3 days, focusing on what it *feels* like to have or not have power. As Oshry describes:

> [W]e have divided ourselves into the Haves and Have Nots. The Have Nots have been stripped of their money, car keys, credit cards, and other personal belongings and have been assigned to rather primitive living quarters . . .
>
> The Power Lab is not a role play in which participants break at 5 p.m. for cocktails and dinner; it is a total-immersion experience (1999: 4–5).

From this brief introductory account one can sense the nature of power, that it is more than a theoretical calculation of influence. It is a contested construct, a fully felt, sensory and emotional phenomenon.

The Power Lab concept has been adapted to different learning environments. To contrast those discussed above, we briefly present examples foregrounding learning about power, in addition to thinking on power.

> Events included loud and fervent argument . . . Authority was resisted and also complied with. Frustration and anger and mistrust grew . . .

These are observations from Jelinek's (1979: 51) account of a power simulation held at an Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference. Run as a mini Power Lab, participants were divided into three groups (executives, middle, and lower). Collected capital, 2 dollars from each participant, was unequally divided among them. Despite starting with humor and some skepticism, once engrossed in this real experience, the collected organizational behavior experts found themselves in heated situations. When recognizing power face-to-face, the experience of power produced not the conceptual nature of resources or structural relations, but the experience of what power *feels* like: shouting, resistance, frustration, anger, mistrust.

Similar outcomes emerge from Kern's (2000) work with undergraduate and MBA students, where she uses a modified version of this simulation. Kern combines the power dynamics of a hierarchical system (Bolman & Deal 1979b) with a manufacturing simulation following Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany (1982). Again divided into uppers, middles, and lowers, the students form a company that manufactures plaques and are tasked with creating unique slogans, manufacturing the products, and preparing them for shipping. The exercise is divided into three phases: planning, manufacturing, and debriefing. Although Kern allows events to unfold without interference, she describes some recurring patterns. For example, in the planning phase:

> *Uppers*: "The uppers typically become emotionally detached from the ongoing experience of the middles and lowers . . . Inclined to view the other groups as resources at their disposal [they] fail to consider the possibility that the other groups may resist."
>
> *Middles*: "The middles tend to be most concerned with the organization's effectiveness . . . [they] typically discover that the lowers are not eager to cooperate with them . . . [they] expend the most energy . . . and are typically the most frustrated."
>
> *Lowers*: "The lowers tend to be demoralized initially, which they cope with through humor . . . Their depression is quickly channeled into anger at the middles and/or uppers . . . Once revved up by their anger, the lowers discover power in their powerlessness. They realize that by not buying into the organization's goals they are afforded the freedom to negotiate with the other groups for what they want" (Kern, 2000: 257–258).

As these students learn about the structural-relational aspects of power within hierarchical organizations and how power can be enacted and resisted through resource control, they also experience this as a visceral affair. In debrief discussions students spoke of intergroup feelings of resentment and distrust as well as intragroup feelings of solidarity. Remarkably, even those with structural power experience this in a somewhat negative way. They became "emotionally detached" and found they had very little ability to constructively engage with middle and lowers. The latter groups in turn experience themselves as subject to power except where they are able to resist those above them.

Another experiential learning approach to the phenomenon of power is through service learning. Here students are provided opportunities for meaningful community service which, through critical thinking and reflective exercises, is mobilized to emphasize personal responsibility. Studies considering service learning find the methodology particularly valuable in influencing the practice of business ethics and reinforcing the importance of community and civic engagement (Brower, 2011; Kenworthy-U'Ren & Peterson, 2005; Salimbene, Buono, Lafarge, & Nurick, 2005; Vega, 2007). Bies (1988), describes how he mobilized this out-of-the-business school approach to address powerlessness. He provided the opportunity for MBA students to better understand power by leaving the academic ivory tower and engaging with disadvantaged or disenfranchised groups (e.g., the homeless, immigrants, AIDS sufferers) in the local community. A key outcome for the students was the humanizing of the phenomena of power and powerlessness as experiences concomitant with certain positions in society:

> Apart from the academic lessons learned . . . this project can have a deep and longer lasting impact on students . . . after completing the course, some of my students made commitments to work in homeless shelters and tutor minority children and, importantly, they followed through on such commitments . . . the project can provoke some students to reflect on who they are as people and their relationship to the world (Bies, 1988: 74).

Throughout these examples of *learning about power* the common thread is a balancing of conceptual and experiential opportunities. In really learning power, students benefit from experiences of power, to come face-to-face with it. When they do so, power becomes "real." It does not languish as a conceptual framework of resources and structures; it becomes aestheticized, experienced as a living phenomenon in the world. Significantly, as Bies (1988) has argued, real experiences of power can provoke students to question their roles and relationships to the broader world and positively impact their future actions.

Below we return to Sarah, her colleagues, and the conducting masterclass. Here we discuss the aesthetic nature of power and how, when coming face-to-face with it, students have profound learning experiences challenging not only their understanding of power, but also their future exercising of it.

AESTHETICS OF POWER FOR LEARNING: LEADERSHIP MASTERCLASSES

Above we referred to pedagogical approaches to power based on simulations, story telling, and service learning through community projects. In relationship to this literature on power in business school education, we have suggested experiential learning—learning through the transformation of experience into new forms of knowing—as a pedagogical means of moving power beyond the realm of rational, utilitarian ends into the more experiential, phenomenological space. Here we make a shift to our own pedagogical data on power, which derived from an intentionally experiential-learning environment of bringing Executive MBA students and a professional chamber choir together to explore leadership. We refer to this workshop as a "leadership masterclass."

As introduced at the outset, the episode we draw upon, held at an internationally recognized and accredited European business school, was one in which Executive MBA students engaged in a workshop with a professional choir to explore the dynamics of organizational life and leading in real time. During the workshop MBA students observed how work gets done in a choral organization and engaged in group discussions about the roles of management and leadership. The student-participants sat among the singers and were encouraged into an observational practice of the real-time, shared, social-interactional aspects of organizational life and leadership (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010; Raelin, 2011), particularly emotional, relational dynamics as opposed to purely rational or technical dynamics (Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008). Most of the daylong workshop was devoted to giving individual students the opportunity to conduct the choir themselves (none of the students had prior experience in choral conducting). As students volunteered to conduct, the facilitator, an experienced leadership expert and professional conductor, followed a masterclass format of providing in-the-moment feedback on their leadership practice. This was done conversationally and also involved constructive criticism from choir members and their resident conductor. This provided reflective space for students to engage with their experiences of observing and conducting the choir as an opportunity to facilitate the transformation of those experiences into new leadership knowing.

In what follows we discuss insights drawn from our observations during the masterclass (captured through video and field notes) and open-ended interviews with these participants. During the interviews we asked participants to reflect on and describe their experiences. A first round of interviews with 12 of the participants was conducted within 24 hours of the masterclass. Approximately 6 months later, follow-up interviews with 10 of these students were completed.

The analysis followed a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008), iteratively building categories from initial codes developed from multiple readings of interview transcripts and reflecting back on observational field notes and video footage. From our observations of Sarah and her fellow students during the workshop and analysis of the interview data, this event proved to be significant in their leadership development, particularly regarding power. We conceptualize our findings through the notion of *real* experience (feeling power), the relationality of power (face-to-face), and how this led students to reflect on the *realness* of power—the implications of exercising power in their own professional activities and the sense of responsibility that comes with this. In doing so we spice the analysis with Dewey's (1934) work on experience, Levinas' work on power and the "face" (1969, 1987), and Brigstocke's (2013) aesthetics of power framework (amplitude, gravity, and distance) discussed above.

Feeling Power: The Experience

> "It was absolutely amazing! . . . They were in front of me, so I was literally surrounded by the music. Having in charge that kind of power, gives a very sensational responsibility. It gives you a completely different way of thinking and

feeling . . . I felt in a way overwhelmed by the presence of the choir. I felt ok, so, this is for real" (Clara).

The first sense you get from Clara's reflection is the impact of the experience she had. This was, as Brigstocke (2013) would conclude, an amplifying, intense experience of power. It was "absolutely amazing! . . . in a way overwhelmed"—it was *real* and it was *positive*. This sense of amazement, for her and her coparticipants, came from the *sensation* of power, experiencing it face-to-face, fully embodied, fully aesthetic. Having a feeling of what power is like, brought to the fore as a focus of learning, propelled many students to wonder on the relationship of power and responsibility. It gave them "a completely different way of thinking and feeling."

"The experience was made through the connections I think . . . It was because I saw, heard, yeah I felt like there was something more going on . . . more than just giving direction, controlling or, um, managing . . . it was, I mean cases are great, but this was real. There were real people in front of me and I felt the experience of my role, the power of it" (Chris).

In what Chris describes, this realness of experience came from seeing the faces of the organization, not just an abstract notion of the organization. The power relationship was made real when it was humanized. It had a sense of gravity (Brigstocke, 2013). When given face (Levinas, 1969) and reflected upon in real time, power and authority gained a certain weight. There is a suggestion in his response that although "cases are great," and although they give a semblance of organizational realities, they are not really real. They do not contain the same gravitas or weight when presented propositionally. As actors on a page, the characters remain in the realm of the imagination; they do not demand an answer. This connectedness, what we refer to below as relationality, was foregrounded by many of our participants as the source of the feeling of power, of the "real experience" (Dewey, 1934).

Relationality: Face-to-Face

"I think that there was not one single person I did not feel I was connected to. And, I think that made me emotional, as well. Each one of them was watching me with big, open, positive eyes and there is not one single one of them that we did not watch look at each other in eyes. And, I think that's important" (Olga).

Olga's reflections, like Chris' above, describe how these experiences of power flowed from the emotional feeling of being connected to others. This was the source of the amplitude. This connection was described in a number of ways from the physical, such as eye contact, to the metaphysical, such as strings, bubbles, energy, and spirit:

"It was like there were little strings between us" (Carl).

"And . . . It was like a bubble then. I was in this bubble with all these people with eye contact, communicating, feeling the energy" (Katarina).

"I connected . . . And belonged. And something which connects to the spirit. To beliefs" (Matthew).

While such descriptions relate to Brigstocke's construct of distance—the sense of the mystery of power—from our perspective, the positive nature of power emerged when the distance disappeared through connectivity. The sense of, as Levinas would put it, seeing the face of the other, transformed their experience of the power dynamic. The student-conductors described a real connection with the others in which they went from seeing, naming, and recognizing the actors involved in a power relationship—the conductor versus the singers, or the manager versus the employees—to being in a "bubble," looking each other in the eye, communicating without words and feeling a shared "energy." This "crossing of sensory attributes" (Robbins, 1991: 137) made a break in the phenomenality of their understanding of power in management practice.

"So, what is the usual model? Usual model is an autocratic model. So, you as a CEO of the company, you say to your colleagues . . . 'You must do this and this'. . . or if you are polite you will say 'Can you do this and this'. . . now what I learned is you can serve your colleague in the company and that way they will get more . . . Because, this model of serving has a deep meaning, very deep spiritual meaning . . ." (Mark).

Mark described the transformation that can happen when students are provided the opportunity to experience power in the moment. He begins with "the usual model," the transactional, utilitarian tact. However, he moves beyond this to reconceptualize power as service. To paraphrase Levinas, when Mark meaningfully orientated toward the other, the greed of the gaze was turned into generosity, "incapable of approaching the other with empty hands" (1969: 50).

In a follow-up interview with Mark, he described how this experience stayed with him:

> For example, my bad habit was that I . . . how can I say this . . . too tight with people . . . I used too much power, to control the situation. Now, it is different. Now, I just want a clear understanding of the task . . . and then I just simply leave the people . . . And, if they need anything, I always try to help them.

Back in his work environment, Mark translated the experience into practice. He recognized that his approach to power was too "tight," too controlling, too rational and utilitarian. Now he seeks shared understanding of the work at hand, then leaves people to it, but is present to help, to serve.

These sentiments were echoed by another in a follow-up interview:

> "sometimes, it is imagined that leaders have to lead and have to direct and have to control and control . . . Well, it doesn't work this way, in life it doesn't work that way and this exercise with the choir really points this out.
>
> I mean, the main connection is that this exercise really reminds you how important it is to remind yourself on a daily basis what leadership is really about . . . it is not ordering, screaming, yelling, wanting people to do precisely what you want them to do, but it is really listening, and getting the right mix" (Chris).

This sense of helping, serving, and listening is a redefinition of the utility of power. It is not that power is exercised without instrumental ends—Mark and Chris are still focused on getting things done—but its nature has changed. The practice is more than calculative leveraging of social capital and resources. Power is exercised by helping, serving, and listening to others. Power has taken on a positive character. Additionally, these learning outcomes appear to have real impact on management practice, affecting both understanding and behavior. Sutherland (2013) refers to such continuing reverberations of insights from arts-based educational methods as "memories with momentum." For many of our informants, this momentum came from a new realization of the interplay between power and responsibility.

Responsibility: The *Realness* of Power

> "The exercise was really revealing to me . . . um . . . because I never thought that the conductor has such a big role in conducting the choir . . . like I didn't realize how much, um, responsibility managers have with power and the leadership . . . And with my own experience, it was really revealing" (Christine).

Christine's surprise at the level of responsibility of conductors, consequently translated into management, is telling. While business schools may spend time discussing management as bound up with influence and responsibility, this message seems to go unlearned. Yet here, when participants stood in front of a group of singers the relationship of power and responsibility emerges from the connections between student-conductors and the singers:

> "And the power you, you feel while conducting and at the same time the responsibility you have . . . it's, I mean, exactly as in leadership and as in, in the business world. So it matches absolutely 100 per cent . . . First of all, the connection you find, as I said, is the responsibility, is the . . . the power, is . . . um, the experience you get" (Iva).

"While business schools may spend time discussing management as bound up with influence and responsibility, this message seems to go unlearned."

The experience of connecting brought Iva—like Clara above—a visceral, aesthetic knowing of the nature of responsibility. This does not come from a discourse on responsible leadership, corporate social responsibility, diversity, or sustainability; it comes from the face-to-face encounter with the felt, sensory, emotional nature of power-in-action, and reflection on it. Through this the gravity of power becomes *real*, an experience that can be reflected upon and learned from. Equally important, it is an experience of the fullness of responsibility, further distinguishing this from the Power Lab and similar experiences, in which there is more often a sense that no one quite knows what they are responsible for, and especially that "the uppers" in the Power Lab, or "the management" or "consultants" in a group relations conference are not able to unite responsibility for the task with responsibility for the people.

What we have described here builds on the works of Oshry (1999), Jelinek (1979), Kern (2000), Schor, Sims, and Dennehy (1996) and Bies (1988) that speak to the importance of learning about power by coming face-to-face with its aesthetic nature in lived experience. The accounts of our participants show the significance of such experiences, their amplitude, and how they can be transformational in the conceptualizing, understanding, and future enacting of power. What we have built here is opportunity and framework for helping students have these experiences. The first step is creating a *real* experience in which the felt, sensory, and emotional aspects of power are front and center. This arises from seeing the face of the other, the relationality of not just perceiving the other, but of answering. Power can be experienced as a mode of connecting and affirming, rather than objectifying and alienating. Emerging from such realness of the relational aesthetic nature of power are transformative insights into the responsibility of having and exercising power, which is power's gravity.

Furthermore, the conducting masterclass differs from the Power Lab in providing an experience of *effective* power. As Taylor (2013) points out, members of an ensemble such as a choir or theater troupe desist from status games to function, and thus collaborate in the leadership offered by the conductor. Because the choir is an organization in which the members take up specific roles and seek to literally "sing from the same hymn-sheet," they exemplify a unitary form of organization (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) in which power is not inherently problematic. On the other hand, perfect unanimity of purpose and process is not always achieved in choirs, orchestras, or theater groups. When it is, it is the result of collaborative self-discipline, and this may account for some of the feelings of gratitude expressed by Sarah and her peers.

One final aspect of this framework is notable: the centrality of reflection in the experiential-learning process.

Without *reflection*, by which we refer to critical reflexivity, the transformation of learning about power would not occur. Reflection and critical reflexivity have become key points of debate in the management learning literature (Cunliffe, 2002; Gray, 2007; Hibbert, 2013; Reynolds, 1998). It is not our remit to review or enter this debate here, but rather to refer to it as substantiation for our argument. Critical reflexivity is a process of "complexifying thinking or experience by exposing contradictions, doubts, dilemmas and possibilities" (Cunliffe, 2002: 38) and reassessing "one's orientation to perceiving, believing and acting" (Gray, 2007: 497). This practice constitutes "the transformational bridge between experience and learning" (Sutherland, 2013: 28). Without it Chris would not be reminding himself that leadership is not about "ordering, screaming, yelling, wanting people to do precisely what you want" but rather about "listening, and getting the right mix." Nor would Mark recognize his habits of being "too tight," using "too much power, to control the situation" and reconceptualize power as service. This bridge was afforded these students during the workshop because the facilitator engaged in reflective dialogue with them. Moreover, we as researchers provided further reflective opportunities by conducting the interviews.

Within management education, and especially with regards to power, we must make critical reflexivity central to learning processes. Having at this juncture just engaged with a practice implication, we pause to summarize our argument before furthering our viewpoints on practice.

SUMMARY

Let us return to where we began, that cool November day and the tears trickling down Sarah's face. In her discussions with the facilitator, and in our following interview with her, she described how the tears flowed from a sense of humility, humility in the face of the human-ness of power. Put another way, she was overwhelmed by the possibility of power to do good. Would Sarah have come to this realization had she only been exposed to traditional business school power approaches? Probably not.

Above we have discussed two such traditional approaches: one that understands power exercised through (or embedded in) organizational structures and processes; another that exposes interpersonal and group relations of power and dependency in a temporary organization. We have joined others who critique the utilitarian assumptions of the former, and considered differences between experiential approaches in the latter.

To work our way back toward the wider implications of power, we have argued for an aesthetic shift in our approach to understanding and learning about power. Taking inspiration from our research participants, Dewey's work on experience, and Levinas' approach to power, responsibility, and the face-to-face encounter, we have argued for a balance of *thinking on power* with *learning about power*. This is a balance between rational-conceptual and experiential-aesthetic pedagogies.

Working with observational and interview data from a choral conducting leadership masterclass, we have built a framework for the experiential-aesthetic side of the coin. This framework affords the opportunity for learning about power by bringing students into experiences of feeling power through relational face-to-face encounters where they can explore the enactment of power in real time through critical reflection and reflexivity. Although we do not argue the choral conducting format is the only available or best format, it is a unique place to strip away the rationalized trappings of power and expose power dynamics in face-to-face encounters. The essence is giving participants the naked experience of being in a powerful role and then helping them work through that and engage in critical reflexivity on it.

Ultimately, we came to these insights by engaging in two questions business schools do not ask: "What is the experiential nature of power? How are we teaching power?" While we have explored these questions in depth above, here we raise a third, subsequent question, a question that brings the implications for practice into relief: "Why do we not already teach our students the allure and habits of power?"

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

We have described several ways of evoking feelings associated with power, from the deeply immersive "power labs" to our more artistically crafted conducting masterclass. All offer models for curriculum-based activities that can be integrated into business school programs. There is, however, one blindingly obvious question we have not addressed: "What about the experiences of power in the business school itself?"

As discussed above, attempts have been made over the years to enable business students to study their own experience of power. Several of these, like the Power Lab, derive from the working conference design pioneered by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR) since the 1950s (Aram, Baxter, & Nutkevitch, 2012), and the T-groups developed by Kurt Lewin and the National Training Labs. The latter, founded in 1947, established training in self-awareness, including unconscious aspects of experience, such as feelings that are repressed, and thus, not directly recognizable. The method of learning is to critically examine personal and group experiences as they occur "in the here and now." Awareness is itself a function of the psychological dynamics of the situation—not something that is gained and stored once and for all. T-groups are offered in several business schools in the United States as a means to enhance personal sensitivity and self-awareness, but they are not a means for addressing institutional dispensations of power.

The TIHR conferences adopt a similar method to focus more specifically on experiences of power, authority, and dependency in institutional settings. Each conference is established as a temporary organization with the task of studying the exercise of power within that organization. The roles and behaviors of the staff are an important aspect that is explicitly open to scrutiny. While staff maintain responsibility for the direction, facilitation, and administration of the organization, their experiences of taking these roles is "evidence" for the work of the organization, as are the here-and-now experiences of all participants (Aram, Baxter, & Nutkevitch, 2012). In the Power Lab described above, the staff gives up the privilege of inscrutability, for the same reasons.

These methods have decades of established practice, substantial theoretical underpinnings, and a strong empirical research base. Some are used in executive education in well-known business schools, especially on company-specific programs where there is support from the client. Yet, with few exceptions, they have not secured long-term incorporation into formal business school programs (although Ron Heifetz's "Leadership on the Line" has persisted at the Kennedy School of Government, rather than the business school, at Harvard University; Heifetz, 2014).

We suggest a number of reasons for this. First are bureaucratic reasons: sustained experiential workshops require rooms and "timetabling" in ways that don't fit with the standard provisions. Second, few business school academics are trained and competent in these methods. Third, awareness is notoriously hard to assess and grade, and there is precious little time for activities that are not instrumentally related to grading. But these are not sufficient alone to explain why business schools generally don't question the experiences of power within them; and there are tremendous educational opportunities in doing so.

Becoming a student—especially for people who have considerable autonomy in other aspects of their lives, such as the Executive MBA students discussed above—is an exercise in subjection and conformity (ritually enacted by referring to student identification numbers, selective access to certain areas of campus, attendance registers, etc.). This is quite functional. If one is to learn from others, it makes sense to admit one's dependency on them and the institution that provides the learning. But this process is seldom explicitly referred to as an experience of power precisely because it is so obviously functional. Discovering one's readiness to conform to a regime can be a surprising recognition of collusion in practices that ostracize those who deviate from the norms. This and many other aspects of being a member of a business school, even in a student role, are potential opportunities to learn about embodied feelings of power. Pursuing these opportunities, however, would mean turning a reflexive gaze onto ourselves as faculty, as well as the ways that we enjoy (or perhaps suffer) our power in various relations.

While the more intense and immersive approaches described here are hard to incorporate and sustain in a standard curriculum and timetable, activities such as the conducting masterclass are eminently doable. The review presented here refers to how the learning has impacted on participants' working roles; a next step would be to consider the effects on power relations in the classroom and in the power relation of the institution itself. Although all experiential approaches address experiences of power and authority in the here-and-now of the events and imply a crossover into day-to-day life in other more permanent institutions, they are not explicit examinations of power in the host institutions. So are we ready to encourage students to feel their relations to power, to demand that we do the same, and to act on those insights in our teaching and learning relations?

We are accustomed to having power over our students, and for the most part comfortable in this unremarked equilibrium. We can stand and profess, or lead case-study participants down the proverbial garden path, making sure they trip over carefully placed stones. We seldom examine their experiences of fear or excitement, or ours of power and provocation, although these aspects of the class might be the most transferable to working life. Indeed, the ability of university life to generate these feelings might be one of its chief attractions, especially for staff. The pleasures of conducting a class may be analogous to those of the choirmaster. While traditional experiential-learning methods evoke the complex negative experiences of power, impotence, and dependency, we believe the conducting masterclass evokes instead some of the pleasures of power that are possible in a collaborative unitary enterprise. Making that analogy might be a significant outcome from the masterclass we describe, and open the standard teaching classroom to an appreciation of its power aesthetics: the pleasures that accrue to both teacher and students through the functional aspects of power, as well as the anger and frustration arising from its excess, negligence, or abuse. This might make it more palatable to students and more readily converted to a question of faculty: "What are the pleasures we derive from our power?" Surprisingly, this is a seldom-asked question, although many in authority might admit that it is power, more than money, that they enjoy. As one vice-chancellor put it:

> It can go to your head, this job, and there is an aphrodisiac quality—I don't mean literally—about being close to power, to politics . . . (Professor Sir Steve Smith, vice-chancellor of University of Exeter, quoted in Gill, 2014).

In his work on creating more reflective, critical management education, Hibbert (2013) argues:

> The power of the educator need not just be considered as 'power over' students but 'power to' achieve educational aims or 'power for' students to achieve their own aims (p. 810).

Our inquiry suggests the aesthetic pleasures of "power over" may help to explain why more egalitarian arrangements are so rare. But there is every reason why business schools should offer experiences of empowerment as we have described. Because getting and having power appears to be an almost ubiquitous motivation in organizational and political life, business schools should surely give their students at least a taste; some will grow up to become connoisseurs!

This focus on the pleasures of power, in response to questioning the experiences of power in the business school itself, is intended to shine a critical light on ourselves. Implicit in our argument is that we the faculty and institutions of business schools have constructed particular ways in which our students understand and consequently wield power. More than that, we model it for our students on a day-to-day basis. The trappings of organizations that rationalize power and dull its visceral nature, all find their counterparts in the academic world. Our titles, offices, classrooms, and grading schemes structurally and resourcefully construct and maintain our power. Our executive students, private consulting, and advising activities give us privileged positions of power and influence in public- and private-sector life. If we are honest with ourselves, many of us would agree with Sir Steve Smith's admonition that it can go to our heads. The point is that the power and privilege of a business school academic, couched in our narratives of instrumental utilitarianism, blind many of us to the aesthetic side of power. Perhaps we are too content with the pleasures of power rationalized.

If we take the reflexive step and come face-to-face with our own practice and the limitations of it, we can begin a journey of enrichment. Summarizing our arguments above and extending the implications for practice, this means five things:

1. Recognizing and critically examining our rational-utilitarian stance on power.
2. Expanding our power discourse by crossing the disciplinary divides to our social science colleagues in other faculties.
3. Adding "learning about power" through experiential learning to our traditional methods of "thinking on power."
4. Creating reflexive opportunities for our students to explore their experiences, including those with us.

The fifth is that maybe we could ourselves stand with Sarah in front of a choir and experience the naked, visceral side of power. Maybe, just maybe, this would give us "a completely different way of thinking and feeling" (Clara), where we would feel "something more going on . . . more than just giving direction, controlling or . . . managing" (Chris), something which "connects to the spirit" (Matthew). We might, like Sarah, find ourselves humbled in the face of the "human-ness" of power. If so, we might find ourselves compelled to change, and to experience the pleasure of our power as not just based in the structures and resources of our traditions and institutions, but in the joy of empowering students to responsibly develop and transform, to wield power not just for effectiveness, but with a view to its humanity.

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Ian Sutherland is associate dean for Research and associate professor of Leadership at IEDC-Bled School of Management. His work is focused on leadership development and leadership-as-practice. An expert in the business-arts nexus, Sutherland has given lectures, presentations, and workshops in more than 30 countries and has published widely on leadership development and practice in academic and practitioner outlets. He is coauthor of the book, *Key Concepts in Leadership* (SAGE, 2012).

Jonathan R. Gosling is Emeritus Professor of Leadership at the University of Exeter U.K. and a visiting scholar at Renmin University, Beijing, and Bled School of Management, Slovenia. His work on the aesthetics of power includes a book on Napoleon Bonaparte; another on supply-chain improvements in China; and articles on academics in leadership. Gosling is a cofounder of the One Planet MBA and runs a faculty and executive development program. embaroundtables.org

Jasna Jelinek is a PhD student at the IEDC–Bled School of Management, Faculty for Postgraduate Studies where she is focused on investigating the use of arts-based methods for management and leadership development. Jelinek is working in an international company within the home improvement industry.