

Power can have many facets. (forms). Throughout this module, we'll be examining what factors contribute to the power that an individual or a group has within society. You'll also explore how 'power dynamics' work in your school & community.

Intro to 'Power & Decision Making'

What are the big themes we'll explore?

But we don't just think locally. We also have to consider power on **National**, **European**, and **Global** levels. We need to examine the institutions that hold Political and Economic power. Often, **how** decisions are made has a big impact on **what** decisions are made!!

To which Key Thinkers does this term apply?

Thomas Hobbes and the ideas of Sovereignty, Social Contract, and Philosophical Absolutism.

John Locke and the ideas of Liberalism, Rights, Toleration, and Constitutionalism.

Robert Nozick and the ideas of Libertarianism, the Minimal State, Taxation, and Utopias.

Sylvia Walby and the ideas of Gender, Feminism, and Public & Private Patriarchy.

Karl Marx and the ideas of Social Class, Class Struggle, Social Conflict Theory, and Communism.

Kathleen Lynch combating neoliberalism, affective inequality, and Social Justice.

With so many 'Key Thinkers' involved in this process, you get to examine this issue from many different perspectives.

At each stage try and link your **Personal** experiences, with the **Local & National** perspective, and the **Global** patterns. That way, you will be able to build a 'quiver full of arrows' that you can draw out and use in an exam scenario!

Before we dive in, however, we might just briefly consider one way of looking at power that touches on many of the elements we'll be discussing in more depth throughout the course – **Max Weber** and the **Three-Component Theory of stratification**, also known as **Weberian Stratification**. Weber thought that there were three major areas that determined where you fit in society's pecking order:

Can you identify ways in which **Wealth**, **Prestige**, and **Power** help determine one's position in society?

Wealth: Your 'Economic Situation'. Includes **property** such as buildings, lands, farms, houses, factories and as well as other assets.

Prestige: Your 'Status Situation'. This is the respect with which a person or status position is regarded by others. May be dependent on intellectual or physical qualities.

Power: The ability of people or groups to achieve their goals despite opposition from others. All power is **relational** between the "Parties" involved in exercising the power.

Consider the statement: "Stratification is universal, but variable." How does this apply to your communities?

You might also want to consider different **types of power**, but remember that Power is NEVER Neutral. Not exercising your power when you have the ability to do so is to endorse the Status Quo. i.e. If Amazon CEO, Jeff Bezos, has a net worth of \$165 Billion, which could save millions of lives every year and limit both human hunger and human suffering and he chooses not to do so, what does that say about him? Think about these other types of power:

1. Power To

Define and give an example of each of the following ways of exercising power

5. Power to Empower

2. Power Over

3. Power With

4. Power Within

Some Possible Essay Questions on “Power & Decision Making” (drawn from the Subject Specifications)
With each title decide which ‘Key Thinkers’, concepts, and Institutions are most relevant.

1. **“Evaluate the extent to which some groups are, or are not, under-represented in decision-making processes in schools and whether decision-making processes in schools are appropriate.”** [Your answer should include examples and evidence to support your position. You should also refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

These are also possible Q (f) in the DBQ section

2. **“Describe the process of decision-making at national level in relation to policies that impacts upon young people.”** [Your answer should include examples and evidence to support your position. You should also refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

3. **“Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches for selecting an executive.”** [Your answer should include examples from both democratic and non-democratic states and evidence to support your position. You should also refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

4. **“Critically evaluate the view that, in capitalism, social class is an important way of categorising who has and who has not got power.”** [Your answer should include examples and evidence to support your position. You should also refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

5. **“Critically evaluate the view that, in a patriarchy, gender is an important way of categorising who has and who has not got power.”** [Your answer should include examples and evidence to support your position. You should refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

Notes that these two essays are closely linked, but have a different geographic focus – one is just Ireland, the other has no limitation.

6. **“Critically evaluate the view that modern Irish society is a patriarchy.”** [Your answer should cite specific examples from the **Irish context** and provide evidence to support your position. You should also refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

7. **“Evaluate the effectiveness of the Irish system of elections in representing the will of all the Irish people.”** [Your answer should deal with **two or more** different types of elections in which Irish citizens vote. You should refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

Note the difference here between an **“electoral”** and **“governmental”** system. i.e. how you get power, and what you do with it!

8. **“Evaluate how effective the Irish system of government is in representing the will of all the Irish people.”** [Your answer should include examples and evidence to support your position. You should refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

Hobbes ☐ Locke ☐ Nozick ☐
 Marx ☐ Walby ☐ Lynch ☐

Or look at these examples from the first two Leaving Cert exams: Identify the “Command Words” in each question and summarize how you would approach the Question.

2019 – Higher Level Section C – Questions 3 (a) & (b)

Question 3(a)

(100 marks)



As we celebrate 100 years of Dáil Éireann, discuss whether the Irish electoral system is in need of reform.

[Your answer should include examples and evidence to support your position. You should also refer to the views of at least two theorists you have studied, one of whom must be named on your course.]

OR

Question 3(b)

(100 marks)

Where does the right to a peaceful protest begin and end in a democratic society?

[Your answer should include contemporary examples and evidence from a local and/or global context to support your argument. You should also refer to the ideas of at least two theorists, one of whom must be named on your course.]

2018 – Higher Level Section C – Questions 3 (a)

Question 3

(100 marks)

During his campaign for leadership of Fine Gael, May 2017, Leo Varadkar sent this tweet.



In the context of the serious social issues facing Irish society today, evaluate whether a new social contract is needed in this country.

[Your answer should be supported by examples and evidence and make reference to at least two named theorists you have studied.]

'19 Q 3(a) – Key Thinkers:

Key Terms:

Possible Case Studies to Include:

Relevant Data Sources:

'19 Q 3(b) – Key Thinkers:

Key Terms:

Possible Case Studies to Include:

Relevant Data Sources:

'18 Q 3(a) – Key Thinkers:

Key Terms:

Possible Case Studies to Include:

Relevant Data Sources: