Q-

*What Role does counter power play in the power relationship? Give an example. How do cultural differences impact silent authority and upward appeal?*

J.Pfeffer defines power as “the capacity of a person, team, department or organization to influence others.” **Power is the potential to change others’ attitude or behavior.**

Power may be:

- An act of one person (realized potentiality) or
- Potentiality or capacity of one person

**Aim** - In order to influence the behavior of a other person to act in accordance with the organizational requirements or the wishes of the person who has the power.

Generally it is seen that the subordinate depends on his superior for some favours in work allotment, work schedules, job security, transfers, promotions, information etc. Therefore the superior has power over his subordinate and can control his behavior.

Thus, the basic prerequisite of power is that one person believes he/she is dependent on other for something of value. Superiors also depend on subordinates for some information, and to aim at higher productivity etc. Thus in this case the subordinates hold the power and control the behavior of the superior. In a way we can say that both superiors and subordinates are **depended** on each other.

Dependency relationships are an inherent part of all organizational activities and in all forms of organizational structures and companies including the sole trading firm.

**Counter Power** – In a relationship, two parties are involved – one being dependent and the other being independent. Here, the independent party has Power while the dependent party has Counter Power.

The power of the dependent party to maintain the relationship is termed as **Counter Power**. For example, as indicated earlier, the superior has the power to control the subordinate’s goal of promotion and the subordinate has the counter power to control the superior’s goal of higher productivity (based on which the superior’s bonus or increment is decided). The presence of
Counter power with the subordinate ensures that the superiors use the power judiciously. Counter power acts as the factor that helps to maintain the relationship.

We can further explain the concept of Counter Power with the help of following e.g:-

Politician:- In a democratic country like ours, a politician is elected on the basis of the votes he receives. If he gets elected he is bound to listen to what the subordinates require.

Giving a real life example of this scenario, our Human Resource Minister Mr. Arjun Singh had the power to dictate a Quota system in educational institutions, which ultimately led to dire consequences on the entire educational fraternity or the people at large. On the other hand, people of the country possess Counter power to remove him from the ministry in the coming elections.

We can also see the existence of power- counter power relation in the relations between a student and a teacher. The teacher, being the independent party, has the power to give marks to the students. Because of this the teacher can control the behavior of the students in the class. Students, being the dependent party in this relationship possess Counter power. Students can collectively give a bad feedback about the teacher to the head of the institution. This might ultimately lead to checking the effectiveness of the teacher. So the teacher in spite of being the independent party in the relationship has to keep the dependent party happy. Power is direct control based on the formal authority, whereas counter power is subtle and hidden.
One of the similar kinds of example we saw in “Perfect Pizzeria” case (taken up in the class). In this case, the manager had the power to recruit and remove the employees working in the pizza shop. While on the other hand employees used their counter power by not achieving their targets, as the manager bonus and increment was totally dependent on them.

Cultural differences play an important role in determining the influencing tactics used by the people in the organization. To analyze these differences we need to understand what the cultural differences are. Greet Hofstede, an experienced Dutch expert on National and Organizational cultures, has defined culture as “The software of the mind”. He conducted a survey on the basis of which he stated that there are predominantly 5 cultural dimensions on the basis of which cultures can be differentiated. This model forms the Global framework for assessing cultures.

1. Power Distance – It is the national culture attribute describing the extent to which a society accepts that power is distributed unequally in institutions and organizations.

2. Individualism Vs Collectivism – A national cultural attribute describing the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than a member of a group. Low individualism indicates collectivism.
3. Quantity of Life Vs Quality of Life – Quantity of Life indicates the degree to which values like assertiveness, acquisition of money and material goods, competition exists in a culture. Quality of life emphasizes on relationships and concern for others.

4. Uncertainty Avoidance – The degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations and how they react towards it.

5. Long Term orientation Vs Short Term Orientation – Long term orientation emphasizes on the future, thrift and persistence levels of a culture, whereas short term orientation emphasizes on the past, present, respect for tradition and fulfillment of social obligations.

Each and every country differs in terms of the above mentioned cultural dimensions. Because of these certain types of behaviours can be observed in particular cultures which are absent in other. Influencing tactics (any behavior that actually attempts to alter someone’s attitudes or behavior) is one such factor that differs from one culture to another. Employees of a culture use specific influencing tactics to gain power which best fits the cultural dimensions they are working in.

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<th>Factors</th>
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<td>• High Power Distribution</td>
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<td>2. Individualism Vs Collectivism</td>
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<td>3. Quantity of Life Vs Quality of Life</td>
<td>• Value for Money</td>
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<td>4. Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
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On the basis of the classifications we can say that there is a strong correlation between the cultural differences and the behaviours exhibited by the employees of an organization. Silent authority and Upward appeal are types of Influence Tactics. Now we can analyze how cultural differences impact influence tactics like Silent Authority and Upward appeal.
1. **Silent Authority** – Situation where a person complies with request of authority without any form of overt influence. This can be interpreted in two ways:-

   a) Saying yes to the superior to keep him happy, although you may or may not agree with him. Accepting everything that the Boss states to remain in his good books. This arises due to requester’s legitimate power as well as the target person’s role expectations. It is an influence tactic used to gain power or improving the chance of gaining power (Promotions etc) by following the policy of “Yes Minister”

   b) A person gains authority due to his job characteristics and work efficiency, and not through formal means. For eg:- Prevalent in MNCs which are spread across the globe where the Chairman cannot be present everywhere, so the CFO or the Head-HR gains top authority in the country of operation similar to that of a Chairman in the country he/she is operating.

2. **Upward Appeal** – It is a form of coalition in which someone has higher authority or expertise which may involve a formal alliance or only a perception of support. Eg:- “I am sure that Boss will like my idea!”

   It is a tactic used to gain power by assuming and giving others the perception that you have the support of the high authority in order to influence other people’s behavior towards you. Eg:- Person A says that he has the boss by his side and he will never disapprove of the idea, thus influencing others in the group to accept and go ahead with his idea.

Now let’s analyze how cultural differences impact the Silent Authority and Upward Appeal:-

1. **Power Distance** – If there is high power distance i.e. the power is unequally distributed influencing tactics like Silent Authority and Upward Appeal

2. **Individualism Vs Collectivism** – If there is Individualism in a culture then the chances of having silent authority or upward appeal is very low. Here individuals work alone and there is no requirement on their part to influence others. Whereas in case of Collectivism, there is existence of groups because of which the chances of
influencing through Silent authority or Upward appeal in order to shine more than the peers is high.

3. Quantity of Life Vs Quality of Life – In cultures where there quantity of life is more predominant, Silent Authority and Upward appeal will be less because people are in the run to satisfy their needs, they have no time for others hence cannot be easily influenced. In cultures where quality of life is more predominant, Silent authority and Upward Appeal are more prevalent because people value relations and chances of them getting influenced in such relations are very high. Eg: In India we tend to give more respect, authority to older people in spite of the fact that they might be placed below us in the organization hierarchy and may not command any formal means of authority.

4. Uncertainty Avoidance – In case of structured orientation, the hierarchy is clearly defined and the roles are specific to the jobs assigned. In such a culture where there is more structure and less of uncertainty, any form of influence will not work. Whereas in case of unstructured orientation, there is role conflict, ambiguity because of which chances of employees taking advantage of this to influence and to gain power are high.

5. Long Term Vs Short Term Orientation – Long Term Orientation aims at focusing on future whereas the short term orientation focuses on the past and present. Hence the chances of influence in the present scenario will be more than when it is regarding the future.

Hence we can conclude that the Cultural differences play a very important role in determining whether an organization will have influencing tactics in its working.