Power and Politics

Power

The **rational model of organizations** considers effectiveness and behavior as being driven by objective, measureable, and formal processes

The **political model of organizations** recognizes that effectiveness and organizational behavior is driven by people with competing interests who are using informal social processes to achieve goals

Power

Power is a measure of person's ability to influence the attitudes and behaviors of other individuals; it is based in a dyadic (two-person) relationship

Influence is the actual process of affecting attitudes or behaviors

Power

Managers in organizations typically have **authority**, which is the formal right to influence a subordinate

Authority only influences subordinate behavior if the request falls in the **zone of indifference** (i.e., it is perceived as legitimate)

Bases of Power

There are five forms of interpersonal power used in organizations:

Reward power is based on an influencer's control over rewards desired by a target; employee must see a clear and strong link to the reward

Coercive power is based on an influencer's control over punishments; target must believe conformity will *avoid* punishment

Bases of Power

Legitimate power is based on position and mutual agreement that an influencer can affect/dictate the behavior of a target; narrow range that is specifically defined

Expert power is based on the perception of an influencer's knowledge and effectiveness in a particular domain; such expertise must be important to target -

resides in the individual

Bases of Power

Referent power is based on interpersonal attraction and feelings of identity with an influencer; targets will seek to behave and perceive in similar ways to influencers and may not realize the existence of referent power – charisma is in a form of referent power – resides in the individual

Information power is based on access to and control over the presentation of useful information; actor's framing of information can influence/bias recipient's interpretation

ACTIVITY

Bases of Power

Reward, coercive, and legitimate power tend to result in: Compliance

Referent power tends to result in:

Organizational effectiveness, internal change - commitment

Expert power tends to result in:

Optimal Performance, staisfaction, learning

Bases of Power

Dependence

"Power is a property of the social relation, not the actor" -R. M. Emerson (1962)

Power is:

+ Positively related to a target's motivational investment in goals over which an influencer controls fulfillment (e.g., pay, knowledge, self-esteem, belongingness, etc.)

– Negatively related to the availability of goal fulfillment outside of the target-influencer relationship

Dependence

When power relations are imbalanced favoring the influencer, the target may resist and engage in one of two modes:

1. **Cost reduction**, where the target makes it easier for him/herself to conform to the influencer (typically by changing their values on relevant entities)
2. **Balancing operations**, the target seeks to reduce dependence on the influencer (e.g., disengage from the goal, find alternatives, coalitions, etc.)

Power and Ethics

Power can be used ethically when influencers are sensitive to employees' concerns and communicate well

Power-related behavior is ethical if it:

Benefits people inside and outside the firm

Respects the rights of all parties

Treats all parties equitably and fairly

Power and Ethics

Reward Power	Verify compliance. Make feasible, reasonable requests. Make only ethical requests. Offer rewards desired by subordinates. Offer only credible rewards.
Coercive power	Inform subordinates of rules and penalties. Warn before punishing. Administer punishment consistently and uniformly. Understand the situation before acting. Maintain credibility. Fit punishment to the infraction. Punish in private.

Power and Ethics

Legitimate power	Be cordial and polite. Be confident. Be clear and follow up to verify understanding. Make sure request is appropriate. Explain reasons for request. Follow proper channels. Exercise power consistently. Enforce compliance. Be sensitive to subordinates' concerns.
Referent power	Treat subordinates fairly. Defend subordinates' interests. Be sensitive to subordinates' needs and feelings. Select subordinates similar to oneself. Engage in role modeling.
Expert power	Maintain credibility. Act confident and decisive. Keep informed. Recognize employee concerns. Avoid threatening subordinates' self-esteem.

Power

Please review the "Power Sharing and Empowerment" section on your own

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics is the use of power and social influence to obtain desired outcomes in organizations

The "rules" of politics in any organization are informal (they arise organically), often unspoken, and learned either through indirect/vicarious experience or directly from those with political power

Political Behavior

Political behavior is any action not sanctioned by the organization that is taken to influence others in order to meet one's personal goals

Political behavior can be:

Defensive (reactive) or assertive (proactive)

Tactical (short-term) or strategic (long-term) mostly reputation building

Political Behavior

Political behavior typically consists of either:

1. **Influence tactics**, which are a direct means of influencing other, by altering their behavior and thoughts, and gaining power

2. **Impression management tactics**, which are an indirect means of influencing others and gaining power by creating a desired image of oneself in the minds of others, which then alters their behavior

Political Behavior

Influence behaviors include:

TACTICS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Pressure	The person uses demands, threats, or intimidation to convince you to comply with a request or to support a proposal.	If you don't do this, you're fired. You have until 5:00 to change your mind, or I'm going without you.
Upward appeals	The person seeks to persuade you that the request is approved by higher management or appeals to higher management for assistance in gaining your compliance with the request.	I'm reporting you to my boss. My boss supports this idea.
Exchange	The person makes an explicit or implicit promise that you will receive rewards or tangible benefits if you comply with a request or support a proposal or reminds you of a prior favor to be reciprocated.	You owe me a favor. I'll take you to lunch if you'll support me on this.
Coalition	The person seeks the aid of others to persuade you to do something or uses the support of others as an argument for you to agree also.	All the other supervisors agree with me. I'll ask you in front of the whole committee.
Ingratiation	The person seeks to get you in a good mood or to think favorably of him or her before asking you to do something.	Only you can do this job right. I can always count on you, so I have another request.
Rational persuasion	The person uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade you that a proposal or request is viable and likely to result in the attainment of task objectives.	This new procedure will save us $150,000 in overhead. It makes sense to hire John; he has the most experience.

Political Behavior

Inspirational appeals	The person makes an emotional request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to your values and ideals or by increasing your confidence that you can do it.	Being environmentally conscious is the right thing. Getting that account will be tough, but I know you can do it.
Consultation	The person seeks your participation in making a decision or planning how to implement a proposed policy, strategy, or change.	This new attendance plan is controversial. How can we make it more acceptable? What do you think we can do to make our workers less fearful of the new robots on the production line?

The most common reasons for tactic usage on:

Subordinates: change behavior, assign tasks

Peers: request help

Superiors: request approval or resources, obtain personal benefits

Political Behavior

The most effective influence tactics for each outcome are:

Commitment to a task: inspirational appeal, consultation, rational persuasion

Compliance: exchange, ingratiation
Resistance: Pressure, upward appeal, coalition

Political Behavior

Impression management tactics each elicit a specific appearance or image:

- ➢ **Ingratiation**: appear likeable, attractive most effective
- ➢ **Self-promotion**: appear competent, expert

Exemplification: appear loyal, conscientious, dependable, reliable most effective

- ➢ **Intimidation**: appear aggressive, powerful, dangerous
- ➢ **Supplication**: appear weak, compliant

Political Behavior

The key to successful influence or impression management is to appear sincere and genuine in one's actions or requests

Influence targets will be more likely to suspect ulterior or self-interested motives when   the influence/impression behavior is not consistent with social norms or not appropriate for the goal

ACTIVITY

Political Behavior

Successful political behavior (influence tactics, impression management) is linked to many positive outcomes for the individual engaging in it, such as:

- Higher performance evaluation ratings
- Higher pay
- Greater assessments of promotability
- Heightened overall career success
- Improved leader-follower relations

Political Behavior

The arising of politics depends on three situational characteristics that affect an employee's work:

1.   **Ambiguity** in work processes and procedures enhances politics: e.g., low formalization, low centralization, minimal feedback, etc.

2.   Norms that produce **large and rigid power differentials** enhance politics: e.g., authoritarian leadership, normative formal power usage, etc.

3.   **High frequency of social interactions** can enhance politics; e.g., personal accountability becomes salient

Perception of Politics

Political behavior shapes the political context, expectations, and assumptions experienced by employees people often view politics can be useful and beneficial for organization, but politics as negative or toxic

The **perception of politics (POPS)** is the degree to which people attribute other people's behavior to self-interested motives (i.e., poorly executed political behavior), or perceive their organization's formal processes to be biased by social influence

Perception of Politics

Although political behavior may be beneficial for the actor, when it is perceived as self-serving (i.e., the more POPS arises among others) by others, there are negative consequences for those others:

Increased stress, and intention to turnover

Decreased satisfaction, commitment, and performance

Increased likelihood of others engaging in political behavior themselves

Decreased perceptions of justice/fairness

Political Skill

Political skill is the ability effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objective

Political skill has been found to enhance the social and organizational effectiveness of employees and leaders

Political Skill

Political skill consists of four dimensions:

1. **Social astuteness**: Understanding of social dynamics, self-awareness

2. **Interpersonal influence**: Adapting one's behavior to meet situational demands and elicit desired responses in others

3. **Networking ability**: Develop social relations and alliances, obtain resources

4. **Apparent sincerity**: Appear authentic only works if others buy it

Political Skill

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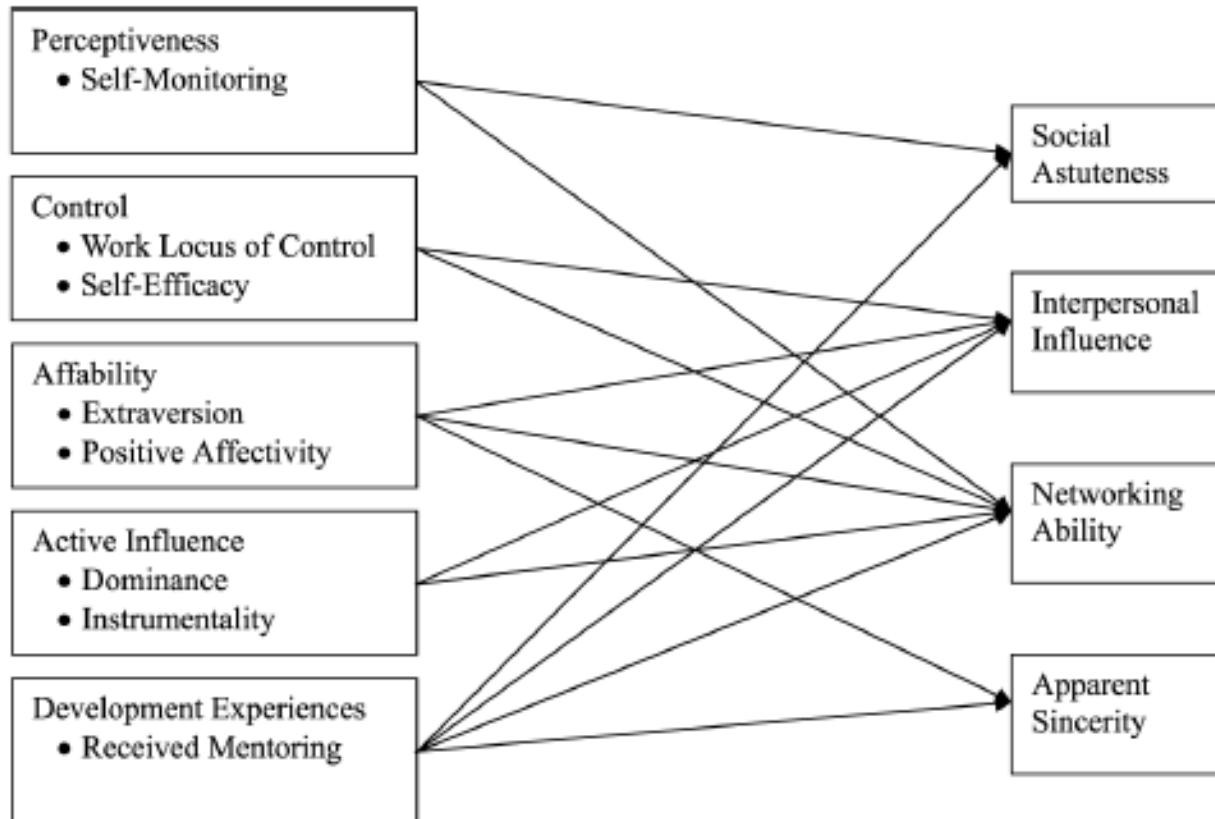
One of biggest predictors

Political Skill

Political skill can serve many functions for an individual, including:

1. Neutralize stressors (e.g., role conflict, role overload, supervisor conflict, POPS for oneself)

2. Increases effectiveness of political behavior (e.g., enhance likelihood of desired outcome, reduce the likelihood that they will be perceived as solely self-serving)

3. Enhancing work outcomes (e.g. job performance, leader effectiveness, trust)

Managing Politics

Political behavior is unavoidable and it is not necessarily a bad thing

Leaders often use influence and impression management tactics to:

Enhance cooperation

Create consensus in how things are perceived

Clarify and inspire goal-directed team   performance

Managing Politics

There are two employee experiences that can help reduce the negative effects of POPS:

1. **Understanding** the causes, expectations, norms, and general nature of politics in one's context
2. **Having a sense of control** over the arising and enactment of politics in one's context

This can be done situationally (e.g., leadership or management actions, organizational processes, etc.), or by enhancing employees' political skill

*** test Managing Politics

The other primary approach is to reduce the likelihood of political behavior and POPS arising in the first place, some tactics include:

- Transparent communication and feedback (reduces uncertainty)

- Managing and clarifying resource allocation

- Participative management and involvement (neutralizes threat in felt accountability)

- Encouraging cooperation among groups

- Managing scarce resources equitably