

# Chapter 13

## Power and Politics

(Click on the title when connected to the Internet for online video teaching notes)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES (ppt13-1)

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Define *power* and contrast leadership and power.
2. Contrast the five bases of power.
3. Identify nine power or influence tactics and their contingencies.
4. Show the connection between sexual harassment and the abuse of power.
5. Distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate political behavior.
6. Identify the causes and consequences of political behavior.
7. Apply impression management techniques.
8. Determine whether a political action is ethical.
9. Show the influence of culture on the uses and perceptions of politics.

### INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

#### **Text Exercises**

- International OB: Influence Tactics in China
- Myth or Science? Power Breeds Contempt
- An Ethical Choice: Making Excuses
- Point/CounterPoint: Managing Impressions is Unethical
- Questions for Review
- Experiential Exercise: Understanding Power Dynamics
- Ethical Dilemma: Does “Aping” Others Work? Is It Ethical?

#### **Text Cases**

Case Incident 1: Dress for Success

Case Incident 2: The Persuasion Imperative

#### **Instructor’s Choice**

This section presents an exercise that is NOT found in the student's textbook. Instructor's Choice reinforces the text's emphasis through various activities. Some Instructor's Choice activities are centered on debates, group exercises, Internet research, and student experiences. Some can be used in-class in their entirety, while others require some additional work on the student's part. The course instructor may choose to use these at anytime throughout the class—some may be more effective as icebreakers, while some may be used to pull together various concepts covered in the chapter.



## WEB EXERCISES

At the end of each chapter of this Instructor's Manual, you will find suggested exercises and ideas for researching the WWW on OB topics. The exercises "Exploring OB Topics on the Web" are set up so that you can simply photocopy the pages, distribute them to your class, and make assignments accordingly. You may want to assign the exercises as an out-of-class activity or as lab activities with your class.

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

If you want to get things done in a group or an organization, it helps to have power. As a manager who wants to maximize your power, you will want to increase others' dependence on you. You can, for instance, increase your power in relation to your boss by developing knowledge or a skill she needs and for which she perceives no ready substitute. But you will not be alone in attempting to build your power bases. Others, particularly employees and peers, will be seeking to increase your dependence on them, while you are trying to minimize it and increase their dependence on you. The result is a continual battle.

Few employees relish being powerless in their job and organization. It's been argued, for instance, that when people in organizations are difficult, argumentative, and temperamental, it may be that the performance expectations placed on them exceed their resources and capabilities, making them feel powerless.

People respond differently to the various power bases. Expert and referent power are derived from an individual's personal qualities. In contrast, coercion, reward, and legitimate power are essentially organizationally derived. Because people are more likely to enthusiastically accept and commit to an individual whom they admire or whose knowledge they respect (rather than someone who relies on his or her position for influence), the effective use of expert and referent power should lead to higher employee motivation, performance, commitment, and satisfaction. Competence especially appears to offer wide appeal, and its use as a power base results in high performance by group members. The message for managers seems to be "Develop and use your expert power base!"

The power of your boss may also play a role in determining your job satisfaction. "One of the reasons many of us like to work for and with people who are powerful is that they are generally more pleasant—not because it is their native disposition, but because the reputation and reality of being powerful permits them more discretion and more ability to delegate to others."

An effective manager accepts the political nature of organizations. By assessing behavior in a political framework, you can better predict the actions of others and use that information to formulate political strategies that will gain advantages for you and your work unit.

Some people are significantly more politically astute than others, meaning that they are aware of the underlying politics and can manage impressions. Those who are good at

playing politics can be expected to get higher performance evaluations and, hence, larger salary increases and more promotions than the politically naïve or inept. The politically astute are also likely to exhibit higher job satisfaction and be better able to neutralize job stressors. Employees who have poor political skills or are unwilling to play the politics game generally relate perceived organizational politics to lower job satisfaction and self-reported performance, increased anxiety, and higher turnover.

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This chapter begins with a discussion of how power can corrupt. However, here the concept of “corrupt” focuses on an inward view of situations rather than an outward view of others’ positions. It reports the results of a study to determine if leaders are inwardly- or other-oriented in their views.

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## BRIEF CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. A Definition of Power (ppt13-2)
  - A. Definition: Power refers to a capacity that A has to influence the behavior of B, so that B acts in accordance with A's wishes.
  - B. Power may exist but not be used. It is, therefore, a capacity or potential.
  - C. Probably the most important aspect of power is that it is a function of dependency.
  
- II. Contrasting Leadership and Power (ppt13-3)
  - A. Leaders use power as a means of attaining group goals. Leaders achieve goals, and power is a means of facilitating their achievement.
  - B. Differences between Leadership and Power:
    1. Power does not require goal compatibility, merely dependence.
    2. Leadership, on the other hand, requires some congruence between the goals of the leader and those being led.
  - C. The direction of influence:
    1. Leadership focuses on the downward influence on one's followers.
    2. Leadership research, for the most part, emphasizes style.
    3. Power does not minimize the importance of lateral and upward influence patterns.
  
- III. Bases of Power
  - A. Formal Power (ppt13-4)
    1. Coercive Power
      - a. The coercive power base is being dependent on fear.
      - b. It rests on the application, or the threat of application, of physical sanctions such as the infliction of pain, the generation of frustration through restriction of movement, or the controlling by force of basic physiological or safety needs.
    2. Reward Power
      - a. The opposite of coercive power is reward power.
      - b. People comply because doing so produces positive benefits; therefore, one who can distribute rewards that others view as valuable will have power over those others.
      - c. These rewards can be anything that another person values.
    3. Legitimate Power
      - a. In formal groups and organizations, the most frequent access to power is one's structural position.
      - b. It represents the power a person receives as a result of his/her position in the formal hierarchy.
      - c. Positions of authority include coercive and reward powers.
  - B. Personal Power (ppt13-5)
    1. Expert Power
      - a. Expert power is "influence wielded as a result of expertise, special skill, or knowledge."
      - b. Expertise has become a powerful source of influence as the world has become more technological. As jobs become more specialized, we become increasingly dependent on experts to achieve goals.
    2. Referent Power
      - a. Its base is identification with a person who has desirable resources or personal traits.
      - b. Referent power develops out of admiration of another and a desire to be like that person; it is a lot like charisma.

- C. Which Bases of Power Are Most Effective?
  - 1. Personal sources are most effective.
  - 2. Coercive power usually backfires.
- IV. Dependency: The Key to Power (ppt13-6)
  - A. The General Dependency Postulate
    - 1. When you possess anything that others require but that you alone control, you make them dependent upon you and, therefore, you gain power over them.
    - 2. Dependency, then, is inversely proportional to the alternative sources of supply.
  - B. What Creates Dependency?
    - 1. Importance
      - a. To create dependency, the thing(s) you control must be perceived as being important.
      - b. Organizations actively seek to avoid uncertainty.
    - 2. Scarcity
      - a. A resource needs to be perceived as scarce to create dependency.
      - b. Low-ranking members in an organization who have important knowledge not available to high-ranking members gain power over the high-ranking members.
    - 3. Nonsubstitutability
      - a. The more that a resource has no viable substitutes, the more power that control over that resource provides.
- V. Power Tactics (ppt13-7)
  - A. Research has identified nine distinct influence tactics:
    - 1. Legitimacy
    - 2. Rational persuasion
    - 3. Inspirational appeals
    - 4. Consultation
    - 5. Exchange
    - 6. Personal appeals
    - 7. Ingratiation
    - 8. Pressure
    - 9. Coalitions
  - B. Some tactics are more effective than others.
    - 1. Rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation tend to be the most effective, especially when the audience is highly interested in the outcomes of a decision process.
    - 2. Pressure tends to backfire and is typically the least effective of the nine tactics.
  - C. But the effectiveness of some influence tactics depends on the direction of influence. (ppt13-8)
    - 1. As Exhibit 13-2 shows, rational persuasion is the only tactic effective across organizational levels. Inspirational appeals work best as a downward influencing tactic with subordinates.
    - 2. When pressure works, it's generally downward only. Personal appeals and coalitions are most effective as lateral influence.
    - 3. The effectiveness of tactics depends on the audience.
    - 4. People differ in their political skill, or their ability to influence others to enhance their own objectives. (ppt3-9)
  - D. Finally, we know cultures within organizations differ markedly—some are warm, relaxed, and supportive; others are formal and conservative.

1. The organizational culture in which a person works will have a bearing on which tactics are considered appropriate. Some cultures encourage participation and consultation, some encourage reason, and still others rely on pressure. People who fit the culture of the organization tend to obtain more influence.

VI. Sexual Harassment: Unequal Power in the Workplace (ppt13-10)

- A. Sexual harassment is wrong.
- B. It can also be costly to employers.
- C. It can have a negative impact on the work environment, too.
- D. When organizational leaders make honest efforts to stop the harassment, the outcomes are much more positive.
- E. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted activity of a sexual nature that affects an individual's employment and creates a hostile work environment.
- F. Organizations have generally made progress in the past decade toward limiting overt forms of sexual harassment. (ppt13-11)
- G. How do coworkers exercise power?
  1. Most often it's by providing or withholding information, cooperation, and support.
- H. A recent review of the literature shows the damage caused by sexual harassment.
- I. But it can be avoided.

VII. Politics: Power in Action (ppt13-12)

- A. Definition of Politics
  1. Definition: Those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization.
  2. This definition encompasses key elements.
    - a. Political behavior is outside one's specified job requirements.
    - b. It encompasses efforts to influence the goals, criteria, or processes used for decision making.
  3. The "Legitimate-Illegitimate" Dimension
    - a. Legitimate political behavior refers to normal everyday politics—complaining to your supervisor, bypassing the chain of command, forming coalitions, etc.
    - b. Illegitimate political behaviors that violate the implied rules of the game, such as sabotage, whistle blowing, and symbolic protests, etc.
- B. The Reality of Politics (ppt13-13)
  1. Interviews with experienced managers show that most believe political behavior is a major part of organizational life.
  2. Politics is a fact of life in organizations.
  3. Resources in organizations are also limited, which often turns potential conflict into real conflict. Because resources are limited, not everyone's interests can be provided for, causing the conflict.
- C. The most important factor leading to politics within organizations is the realization that most of the "facts" that are used to allocate the limited resources are open to interpretation.
- D. Most managerial decisions take place in the large and ambiguous middle ground of organizational life. (Exhibit 13-3)
  1. Because most decisions have to be made in a climate of ambiguity, people within organizations will use whatever influence they can to taint the facts to support their goals and interests.

VIII. Causes and Consequences of Political Behavior (ppt13-14)

- A. Factors Contributing to Political Behavior (Exhibit 13-4)

1. Individual Factors
  - a. Researchers have identified certain personality traits, needs, and other factors that are likely to be related to political behavior.
  - b. Employees who are high self-monitors, possess an internal locus of control, and have a high need for power are more likely to engage in political behavior. The high self-monitor is more sensitive to social cues and is more likely to be skilled in political behavior than the low self-monitor.
2. Organizational Factors
  - a. Political activity is probably more a function of the organization's characteristics than of individual difference variables.
  - b. When an organization's resources are declining, when the existing pattern of resources is changing, and when there is opportunity for promotions, politics is more likely to surface.
  - c. Cultures characterized by low trust, role ambiguity, unclear performance evaluation systems, zero-sum reward allocation practices, democratic decision making, high pressures for performance, and self-serving senior managers will create breeding grounds for politicking.
  - d. When organizations downsize to improve efficiency, people may engage in political actions to safeguard what they have.
  - e. Promotion decisions have consistently been found to be one of the most political in organizations.
  - f. The less trust there is within the organization, the higher the level of political behavior and the more likely it will be illegitimate.
  - g. Role ambiguity means that the prescribed behaviors of the employee are not clear.
  - h. The greater the role ambiguity, the more one can engage in political activity with little chance of it being visible.
  - i. Subjective criteria in the appraisal process
  - j. The zero-sum approach treats the reward "pie" as fixed so that any gain one person or group achieves has to come at the expense of another person or group. If I win, you must lose!
  - k. The more pressure that employees feel to perform well, the more likely they are to engage in politicking.
- B. How Do People Respond to Organizational Politics? (ppt13-15)
  1. For most people—who have modest political skills or are unwilling to play the politics game—outcomes tend to be predominantly negative.
    - a. Exhibit 13-5 summarizes the extensive research on the relationship between organizational politics and individual outcomes.
  2. There is very strong evidence indicating that perceptions of organizational politics are negatively related to job satisfaction.
  3. The perception of politics leads to anxiety or stress. When it gets to be too much to handle, employees quit.
  4. Researchers have also noted several interesting qualifiers.
    - a. The politics–performance relationship appears to be moderated by an individual's understanding of the "hows" and "whys" of organizational politics.
    - b. When employees see politics as a threat, they often respond with defensive behaviors—reactive and protective behaviors to avoid action, blame, or change. (ppt13-16)
- C. Impression Management (ppt13-17)
  1. We know that people have an ongoing interest in how others perceive and evaluate them.
  2. Being perceived positively by others should have benefits for people in organizations.

3. Who engages in IM—the high self-monitor (Exhibit 13-7)
  4. IM does not imply that the impressions people convey are necessarily false.
  5. Excuses and acclaiming, for instance, may be offered with sincerity.
  6. You can actually believe that ads contribute little to sales in your region or that you are the key to the tripling of your division's sales. (Exhibit 13-7)
  7. Misrepresentation can have a high cost. If the image claimed is false, you may be discredited.
  8. Situations that are characterized by high uncertainty or ambiguity that provide relatively little information for challenging a fraudulent claim increase the likelihood of individuals misrepresenting themselves.
  9. Most of the studies undertaken to test the effectiveness of IM techniques have related it to two criteria: interview success and performance evaluations. (ppt13-18)
  10. Let's consider each of these.
    - a. The evidence indicates most job applicants use IM techniques in interviews and that it works.
    - b. In terms of performance ratings, the picture is quite different. Ingratiation is positively related to performance ratings, meaning those who ingratiate with their supervisors get higher performance evaluations.
    - c. Ingratiation always works because everyone—both interviewers and supervisors—likes to be treated nicely.
- IX. The Ethics of Behaving Politically (ppt13-19)
- A. Although there are no clear-cut ways to differentiate ethical from unethical politicking, there are some questions you should consider.
  - B. One thing to keep in mind is whether it's really worth the risk.
  - C. Finally, does the political activity conform to standards of equity and justice?
    1. Sometimes it is difficult to weigh the costs and benefits of a political action, but its ethicality is clear.
  - D. When faced with an ethical dilemma regarding organizational politics, try to consider whether playing politics is worth the risk and whether others might be harmed in the process.
  - E. If you have a strong power base, recognize the ability of power to corrupt.
- X. Global Implications (ppt13-20)
- A. Although culture might enter any of the topics we've covered to this point, three questions are particularly important:
    1. Does culture influence perceptions of politics?
    2. Does culture affect the power of influence tactics people prefer to use?
    3. Does culture influence the effectiveness of different tactics?
  - B. Perceptions of Politics
    1. We have already noted that (based on research conducted mostly in the United States) when people see their work environment as political, the effect on their overall work attitudes and behaviors is usually negative.
  - C. Preference for Power Tactics
    1. Evidence indicates people in different countries tend to prefer different power tactics.
    2. A study comparing managers in the United States and China found that U.S. managers prefer rational appeals; whereas Chinese managers preferred coalition tactics.
    3. Research also has shown that individuals in Western, individualistic cultures tend to engage in more self-enhancement (such as self-promotion) behaviors than individuals in Eastern, more collectivistic cultures.
  - D. Effectiveness of Power Tactics
    1. Almost all our conclusions on employee reactions to organizational politics



- are based on studies conducted in North America.
2. The few studies that have included other countries suggest some minor modifications.

XI. Summary and Implications for Managers (ppt13-21)

- A. If you want to get things done in a group or an organization, it helps to have power.
  1. As a manager who wants to maximize your power, you will want to increase others' dependence on you.
  2. You can, for instance, increase your power in relation to your boss by developing knowledge or a skill she needs and for which she perceives no ready substitute.
- B. Few employees relish being powerless in their job and organization.
  1. It's been argued, for instance, that when people in organizations are difficult, argumentative, and temperamental, it may be that the performance expectations placed on them exceed their resources and capabilities, making them feel powerless.
- C. People respond differently to the various power bases.
  1. Expert and referent power are derived from an individual's personal qualities. In contrast coercion, reward, and legitimate power are essentially organizationally derived.
- D. The power of your boss may also play a role in determining your job satisfaction.
  1. "One of the reasons many of us like to work for and with people who are powerful is that they are generally more pleasant—not because it is their native disposition, but because the reputation and reality of being powerful permits them more discretion and more ability to delegate to others."
- E. An effective manager accepts the political nature of organizations.
  1. By assessing behavior in a political framework, you can better predict the actions of others and use that information to formulate political strategies that will gain advantages for you and your work unit.
- F. Some people are significantly more politically astute than others, meaning that they are aware of the underlying politics and can manage impressions.
  1. Those who are good at playing politics can be expected to get higher performance evaluations and, hence, larger salary increases and more promotions than the politically naïve or inept.

## EXPANDED CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. A Definition of Power
  - A. Definition: Power refers to a capacity that A has to influence the behavior of B, so that B acts in accordance with A's wishes.
  - B. Power may exist but not be used. It is, therefore, a capacity or potential.
  - C. Probably the most important aspect of power is that it is a function of dependency.
  - D. The greater B's dependence on A, the greater is A's power in the relationship.
  - E. Dependence, in turn, is based on alternatives that B perceives and the importance that B places on the alternative(s) that A controls.
  - F. A person can have power over you only if he or she controls something you desire.
  
- II. Contrasting Leadership and Power
  - A. Leaders use power as a means of attaining group goals. Leaders achieve goals, and power is a means of facilitating their achievement.
  - B. Differences between Leadership and Power:
    1. Goal compatibility
    2. Power does not require goal compatibility, merely dependence.
    3. Leadership, on the other hand, requires some congruence between the goals of the leader and those being led.
  - C. The direction of influence:
    1. Leadership focuses on the downward influence on one's followers.
    2. Leadership research, for the most part, emphasizes style.
    3. Power does not minimize the importance of lateral and upward influence patterns.
    4. The research on power has tended to encompass a broader area and focus on tactics for gaining compliance.
  
- III. Bases of Power
  - A. Formal Power
    1. Coercive Power
      - a. The coercive power base is being dependent on fear.
      - b. It rests on the application, or the threat of application, of physical sanctions such as the infliction of pain, the generation of frustration through restriction of movement, or the controlling by force of basic physiological or safety needs.
      - c. At the organizational level, A has coercive power over B if A can dismiss, suspend, or demote B, assuming that B values his or her job.
      - d. Similarly, if A can assign B work activities that B finds unpleasant or treat B in a manner that B finds embarrassing, A possesses coercive power over B.
    2. Reward Power
      - a. The opposite of coercive power is reward power.
      - b. People comply because doing so produces positive benefits; therefore, one who can distribute rewards that others view as valuable will have power over those others.
      - c. These rewards can be anything that another person values.
      - d. These rewards can be either financial—such as controlling pay rates, raises, and bonuses—or nonfinancial, including recognition, promotions, interesting work assignments, friendly colleagues, and preferred work shifts or sales territories.
    3. Legitimate Power

- a. In formal groups and organizations, the most frequent access to power is one's structural position.
  - b. It represents the power a person receives as a result of his/her position in the formal hierarchy.
  - c. Positions of authority include coercive and reward powers.
  - d. Legitimate power, however, is broader than the power to coerce and reward.
    - i. It includes acceptance of the authority of a position by members of an organization.
- B. Personal Power
1. Expert Power
    - a. Expert power is "influence wielded as a result of expertise, special skill, or knowledge."
    - b. Expertise has become a powerful source of influence as the world has become more technological. As jobs become more specialized, we become increasingly dependent on experts to achieve goals.
  2. Referent Power
    - a. Its base is identification with a person who has desirable resources or personal traits. If I admire and identify with you, you can exercise power over me because I want to please you.
    - b. Referent power develops out of admiration of another and a desire to be like that person; it is a lot like charisma.
    - c. Referent power explains why celebrities are paid millions of dollars to endorse products in commercials.
- C. Which Bases of Power Are Most Effective?
1. Personal sources are most effective.
  2. Both expert and referent power are positively related to employees' satisfaction with supervision, their organizational commitment, and their performance, whereas reward and legitimate power seem to be unrelated to these outcomes.
  3. Coercive power usually backfires.
- IV. Dependency: The Key to Power
- A. The General Dependency Postulate
1. The greater B's dependency on A, the greater the power A has over B.
  2. When you possess anything that others require but that you alone control, you make them dependent upon you and, therefore, you gain power over them.
  3. Dependency, then, is inversely proportional to the alternative sources of supply.
  4. This is why most organizations develop multiple suppliers rather than using just one.
  5. It also explains why so many of us aspire to financial independence.
- B. What Creates Dependency?
1. Importance
    - a. To create dependency, the thing(s) you control must be perceived as being important.
    - b. Organizations actively seek to avoid uncertainty.
    - c. Therefore, those individuals or groups who can absorb an organization's uncertainty will be perceived as controlling an important resource.
  2. Scarcity
    - a. A resource needs to be perceived as scarce to create dependency.
    - b. Low-ranking members in an organization who have important knowledge not available to high-ranking members gain power over the high-ranking members.

- c. The scarcity-dependency relationship can further be seen in the power of occupational categories.
  - d. Individuals in occupations in which the supply of personnel is low relative to demand can negotiate compensation and benefit packages, which are far more attractive than can those in occupations where there is an abundance of candidates.
3. Nonsubstitutability
    - a. The more that a resource has no viable substitutes, the more power that control over that resource provides.

## V. Power Tactics

### A. Research has identified nine distinct influence tactics:

1. Legitimacy. Relying on your authority position or saying a request accords with organizational policies or rules.
2. Rational persuasion. Presenting logical arguments and factual evidence to demonstrate a request is reasonable.
3. Inspirational appeals. Developing emotional commitment by appealing to a target's values, needs, hopes, and aspirations.
4. Consultation. Increasing the target's support by involving him or her in deciding how you will accomplish your plan.
5. Exchange. Rewarding the target with benefits or favors in exchange for following a request.
6. Personal appeals. Asking for compliance based on friendship or loyalty.
7. Ingratiation. Using flattery, praise, or friendly behavior prior to making a request.
8. Pressure. Using warnings, repeated demands, and threats.
9. Coalitions. Enlisting the aid or support of others to persuade the target to agree.

### B. Some tactics are more effective than others.

1. Rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation tend to be the most effective, especially when the audience is highly interested in the outcomes of a decision process.
2. Pressure tends to backfire and is typically the least effective of the nine tactics.
3. You can also increase your chance of success by using more than one type of tactic at the same time or sequentially, as long as your choices are compatible.
4. Using both ingratiation and legitimacy can lessen the negative reactions from appearing to "dictate" outcomes, but only when the audience does not really care about the outcomes of a decision process or the policy is routine.

### C. But the effectiveness of some influence tactics depends on the direction of influence.

1. As Exhibit 13-2 shows, rational persuasion is the only tactic effective across organizational levels. Inspirational appeals work best as a downward influencing tactic with subordinates.
2. When pressure works, it's generally downward only. Personal appeals and coalitions are most effective as lateral influence.
3. Other factors that affect the effectiveness of influence include the sequencing of tactics, a person's skill in using the tactic, and the organizational culture.
4. You're more likely to be effective if you begin with "softer" tactics that rely on personal power, such as personal and inspirational appeals, rational persuasion, and consultation.
5. If these fail, you can move to "harder" tactics, such as exchange, coalitions, and pressure, which emphasize formal power and incur greater costs and risks.

6. Interestingly, a single soft tactic is more effective than a single hard tactic, and combining two soft tactics or a soft tactic and rational persuasion is more effective than any single tactic or combination of hard tactics.
  7. The effectiveness of tactics depends on the audience.
    - a. People especially likely to comply with soft power tactics tend to be more reflective, are intrinsically motivated, have high self-esteem, and have greater desire for control.
    - b. People especially likely to comply with hard power tactics are more action oriented and extrinsically motivated and are more focused on getting along with others than with getting their own way.
  8. People differ in their political skill, or their ability to influence others to enhance their own objectives.
    - a. The politically skilled are more effective users of all of the influence tactics. Political skill also appears more effective when the stakes are high—such as when the individual is accountable for important organizational outcomes.
    - b. Finally, the politically skilled are able to exert their influence without others detecting it, a key element in being effective (it's damaging to be labeled political).
- D. Finally, we know cultures within organizations differ markedly—some are warm, relaxed, and supportive; others are formal and conservative.
1. The organizational culture in which a person works will have a bearing on which tactics are considered appropriate. Some cultures encourage participation and consultation, some encourage reason, and still others rely on pressure. People who fit the culture of the organization tend to obtain more influence.
  2. Specifically, extraverts tend to be more influential in team-oriented organizations, and highly conscientious people are more influential in organizations that value working alone on technical tasks.
  3. Part of the reason people who fit the culture are influential is that they are able to perform especially well in the domains deemed most important for success. In other words, they are influential because they are competent.
  4. So the organization itself will influence which subset of power tactics is viewed as acceptable for use.

#### VI. Sexual Harassment: Unequal Power in the Workplace

- A. Sexual harassment is wrong.
- B. It can also be costly to employers.
  1. Mitsubishi paid \$34 million to settle a sexual harassment case.
  2. A former UPS manager won an \$80 million suit against UPS on her claims it fostered a hostile work environment when it failed to listen to her complaints of sexual harassment.
- C. It can have a negative impact on the work environment, too.
  1. Research shows sexual harassment negatively affects job attitudes and leads those who feel harassed to withdraw from the organization.
  2. In many cases, reporting sexual harassment doesn't improve the situation because the organization responds in a negative or unhelpful way.
- D. When organizational leaders make honest efforts to stop the harassment, the outcomes are much more positive.
- E. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted activity of a sexual nature that affects an individual's employment and creates a hostile work environment.
  1. The U.S. Supreme Court helped to clarify this definition by adding a key test for determining whether sexual harassment has occurred—when comments or behavior in a work environment “would reasonably be perceived, and [are] perceived, as hostile or abusive.”

2. But disagreement continues about what *specifically* constitutes sexual harassment.
- F. Organizations have generally made progress in the past decade toward limiting overt forms of sexual harassment.
  1. This includes unwanted physical touching, recurring requests for dates when it is made clear the person isn't interested, and coercive threats that a person will lose his or her job for refusing a sexual proposition.
  2. Problems today are likely to surface around more subtle forms of sexual harassment—unwanted looks or comments, off-color jokes, sexual artifacts like pinups posted in the workplace, or misinterpretations of where the line between being friendly ends and harassment begins.
  3. A recent review concluded that 58 percent of women report having experienced potentially harassing behaviors, and 24 percent report having experienced sexual harassment at work.
  4. One problem with reporting is that sexual harassment is, to some degree, in the eye of the beholder.
    - a. Women are more likely than men to see a given behavior or set of behaviors as constituting sexual harassment.
    - b. Men are less likely to see harassment in such behaviors as kissing someone, asking for a date, or making sex-stereotyped jokes. As the authors of this study note, “Although progress has been made at defining sexual harassment, it is still unclear as to whose perspective should be taken.”
    - c. The best approach is to be careful—refrain from any behavior that may be taken as harassing, even if that was not the intent. Realize that what you see as an innocent joke or hug may be seen as harassment by the other party.
  5. Most studies confirm that the concept of power is central to understanding sexual harassment.
    - a. This seems true whether the harassment comes from a supervisor, a co-worker, or an employee.
    - b. Sexual harassment is more likely to occur when there are large power differentials.
    - c. The supervisor–employee dyad best characterizes an unequal power relationship, where formal power gives the supervisor the capacity to reward and coerce.
    - d. Because employees want favorable performance reviews, salary increases, and the like, supervisors control resources most employees consider important and scarce.
    - e. Thus sexual harassment by the boss typically creates the greatest difficulty for those being harassed.
    - f. If there are no witnesses, it is the victim's word against the harasser's. Has this boss harassed others, and, if so, will they come forward or fear retaliation?
    - g. Although coworkers don't have legitimate power, they can have influence and use it to sexually harass peers.
    - h. In fact, although they appear to engage in somewhat less severe forms of harassment than do supervisors, coworkers are the most frequent perpetrators of sexual harassment in organizations.
- G. How do coworkers exercise power?
  1. Most often it's by providing or withholding information, cooperation, and support.
  2. The effective performance of most jobs requires interaction and support from coworkers, especially today because work is often assigned to teams.
  3. By threatening to withhold or delay providing information that's necessary

- for the successful achievement of your work goals, coworkers can exert power over you.
- H. Although it doesn't get nearly as much attention as harassment by a supervisor, as the lawsuit against Philip Morris showed, women in positions of power can be subjected to sexual harassment from males who occupy less powerful positions within the organization.
    - 1. The employee devalues the woman in power by highlighting traditional gender stereotypes that reflect negatively on her (such as helplessness, passivity, or lack of career commitment), usually in an attempt to gain some power over her or minimize power differentials.
  - I. Increasingly, too, there are cases of women in positions of power harassing male employees.
  - J. A recent review of the literature shows the damage caused by sexual harassment.
    - 1. As you would expect, individuals who are sexually harassed report lower job satisfaction and diminished organizational commitment as a result.
    - 2. This review also revealed that sexual harassment undermines the victims' mental and physical health.
    - 3. However, sexual harassment also negatively affects the group in which the harassment "is significantly and substantively associated with a host of harms."
  - K. But it can be avoided.
    - 1. A manager's role in preventing sexual harassment is critical.
    - 2. The following are some ways managers can protect themselves and their employees from sexual harassment:
      - a. Make sure an active policy defines what constitutes sexual harassment, informs employees they can be fired for sexually harassing another employee, and establishes procedures for how complaints can be made.
      - b. Ensure employees that they will not encounter retaliation if they issue a complaint.
      - c. Investigate every complaint and include the legal and human resource departments.
      - d. Make sure offenders are disciplined or terminated.
      - e. Set up in-house seminars to raise employee awareness of the issues surrounding sexual harassment.  
The bottom line is that managers have a responsibility to protect their employees from a hostile work environment, but they also need to protect themselves.
      - f. Managers may be unaware that one of their employees is being sexually harassed. But being unaware does not protect them or their organization. If investigators believe a manager could have known about the harassment, both the manager and the company can be held liable.

## VII. Politics: Power in Action

### A. Definition of Politics

- 1. Definition: Those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization.
- 2. This definition encompasses key elements.
  - a. Political behavior is outside one's specified job requirements.
  - b. It encompasses efforts to influence the goals, criteria, or processes used for decision making.
  - c. It includes such varied political behaviors as withholding key information from decision makers, whistle blowing, spreading rumors, leaking confidential information, etc.
- 3. The "Legitimate-Illegitimate" Dimension

- a. Legitimate political behavior refers to normal everyday politics—complaining to your supervisor, bypassing the chain of command, forming coalitions, etc.
  - b. Illegitimate political behaviors that violate the implied rules of the game, such as sabotage, whistle blowing, and symbolic protests, etc.
  - c. The vast majority of all organizational political actions are legitimate.
  - d. The extreme illegitimate forms of political behavior pose a very real risk of loss of organizational membership or extreme sanction.
- B. The Reality of Politics
1. Interviews with experienced managers show that most believe political behavior is a major part of organizational life.
    - a. Many managers report some use of political behavior is both ethical and necessary, as long as it doesn't directly harm anyone else.
    - b. They describe politics as a necessary evil and believe someone who *never* uses political behavior will have a hard time getting things done.
    - c. Most also indicate they had never been trained to use political behavior effectively.
  2. Politics is a fact of life in organizations.
    - a. Organizations are made up of individuals and groups with different values, goals, and interests.
    - b. This sets up the potential for conflict over resources.
  3. Resources in organizations are also limited, which often turns potential conflict into real conflict. Because resources are limited, not everyone's interests can be provided for, causing the conflict.
  4. Gains by one individual or group are often perceived as being at the expense of others.
  5. These forces create a competition.
- C. The most important factor leading to politics within organizations is the realization that most of the "facts" that are used to allocate the limited resources are open to interpretation.
1. What is good performance?
  2. What's an adequate improvement?
- D. Most managerial decisions take place in the large and ambiguous middle ground of organizational life. (Exhibit 13-3)
1. Because most decisions have to be made in a climate of ambiguity, people within organizations will use whatever influence they can to taint the facts to support their goals and interests.
  2. These are activities we call politicking.
  3. It is possible for an organization to be politics free, if all members of that organization hold the same goals and interests; however, that is not the organization most people work in.
- VIII. Causes and Consequences of Political Behavior
- A. Factors Contributing to Political Behavior (Exhibit 13-4)
1. Individual Factors
    - a. Researchers have identified certain personality traits, needs, and other factors that are likely to be related to political behavior.
    - b. Employees who are high self-monitors, possess an internal locus of control, and have a high need for power are more likely to engage in political behavior. The high self-monitor is more sensitive to social cues and is more likely to be skilled in political behavior than the low self-monitor.
    - c. Individuals with an internal locus of control are more prone to take a proactive stance and attempt to manipulate situations in their favor.



- d. The Machiavellian personality is comfortable using politics as a means to further his/her self-interest.
  - e. An individual's investment in the organization, perceived alternatives, and expectations of success will influence the tendency to pursue illegitimate means of political action.
  - f. The more that a person has invested and the more a person has to lose, the less likely he/she is to use illegitimate means.
  - g. The more alternative job opportunities an individual has, a prominent reputation, or influential contacts outside the organization, the more likely he/she will risk illegitimate political actions.
  - h. A low expectation of success in using illegitimate means diminishes the probability of its use.
2. Organizational Factors
- a. Political activity is probably more a function of the organization's characteristics than of individual difference variables.
  - b. When an organization's resources are declining, when the existing pattern of resources is changing, and when there is opportunity for promotions, politics is more likely to surface.
  - c. Cultures characterized by low trust, role ambiguity, unclear performance evaluation systems, zero-sum reward allocation practices, democratic decision making, high pressures for performance, and self-serving senior managers will create breeding grounds for politicking.
  - d. When organizations downsize to improve efficiency, people may engage in political actions to safeguard what they have.
  - e. Promotion decisions have consistently been found to be one of the most political in organizations.
  - f. The less trust there is within the organization, the higher the level of political behavior and the more likely it will be illegitimate.
  - g. Role ambiguity means that the prescribed behaviors of the employee are not clear.
  - h. The greater the role ambiguity, the more one can engage in political activity with little chance of it being visible.
  - i. Subjective criteria in the appraisal process
    - i. Subjective performance criteria create ambiguity.
    - ii. Single outcome measures encourage doing whatever is necessary to "look good."
    - iii. The more time that elapses between an action and its appraisal, the more unlikely that the employee will be held accountable for his/her political behaviors.
  - j. The zero-sum approach treats the reward "pie" as fixed so that any gain one person or group achieves has to come at the expense of another person or group. If I win, you must lose!
    - i. This encourages making others look bad and increasing the visibility of what you do.
    - ii. Making organizations less autocratic by asking managers to behave more democratically is not necessarily embraced by all individual managers.
    - iii. Sharing their power with others runs directly against some managers' desires.
    - iv. The result is that managers, especially those who began their careers in the 1950s and 1960s, may use the required committees, conferences, and group meetings in a superficial way as arenas for maneuvering and manipulating.
  - k. The more pressure that employees feel to perform well, the more likely they are to engage in politicking.

- i. If a person perceives that his or her entire career is riding on the next “whatever,” there is motivation to do whatever is necessary to make sure the outcome is favorable.
    - ii. When employees see top management successfully engaging in political behavior, a climate is created that supports politicking.
- B. How Do People Respond to Organizational Politics?
  1. For most people—who have modest political skills or are unwilling to play the politics game—outcomes tend to be predominantly negative.
    - a. Exhibit 13-5 summarizes the extensive research on the relationship between organizational politics and individual outcomes.
  2. There is very strong evidence indicating that perceptions of organizational politics are negatively related to job satisfaction.
  3. The perception of politics leads to anxiety or stress. When it gets to be too much to handle, employees quit.
  4. It is a demotivating force and performance may suffer as a result.
  5. The effect of politics is moderated by the knowledge the individual has of the decision-making system and his/her political skills:
    - a. High political skills individuals often have improved performance.
    - b. Low political skills individuals often respond with defensive behaviors—reactive and protective behaviors to avoid action, change, or blame.
  6. Researchers have also noted several interesting qualifiers.
    - a. The politics–performance relationship appears to be moderated by an individual’s understanding of the “hows” and “whys” of organizational politics.
    - b. When employees see politics as a threat, they often respond with defensive behaviors—reactive and protective behaviors to avoid action, blame, or change. (ppt13-16)
- C. Impression Management
  1. We know that people have an ongoing interest in how others perceive and evaluate them.
  2. Being perceived positively by others should have benefits for people in organizations.
  3. Who engages in IM—the high self-monitor (Exhibit 13-7)
    - a. Low self-monitors tend to present images of themselves that are consistent with their personalities, regardless of the beneficial or detrimental effects for them.
    - b. High self-monitors are good at reading situations and molding their appearances and behavior to fit each situation.
  4. IM does not imply that the impressions people convey are necessarily false.
  5. Excuses and acclaiming, for instance, may be offered with sincerity.
  6. You can actually believe that ads contribute little to sales in your region or that you are the key to the tripling of your division’s sales. (Exhibit 13-7)
  7. Misrepresentation can have a high cost. If the image claimed is false, you may be discredited.
  8. Situations that are characterized by high uncertainty or ambiguity that provide relatively little information for challenging a fraudulent claim increase the likelihood of individuals misrepresenting themselves.
  9. Most of the studies undertaken to test the effectiveness of IM techniques have related it to two criteria: interview success and performance evaluations.
  10. Let’s consider each of these.
    - a. The evidence indicates most job applicants use IM techniques in interviews and that it works.
      - i. In one study, for instance, interviewers felt applicants for a position as a customer service representative who used IM techniques performed better in the interview, and they seemed somewhat more

inclined to hire these people. Moreover, when the researchers considered applicants' credentials, they concluded it was the IM techniques alone that influenced the interviewers—that is, it didn't seem to matter whether applicants were well or poorly qualified. If they used IM techniques, they did better in the interview.

- ii. Some IM techniques work better than others in the interview. Researchers have compared applicants whose IM techniques focused on promoting their accomplishments (called *self-promotion*) to those who focused on complimenting the interviewer and finding areas of agreement (referred to as *ingratiation*).
- iii. In general, applicants appear to use self-promotion more than ingratiation.
- iv. What's more, self-promotion tactics may be more important to interviewing success.
- v. Applicants who work to create an appearance of competence by enhancing their accomplishments, taking credit for successes, and explaining away failures do better in interviews. These effects reach beyond the interview:
  - (a) Applicants who use more self-promotion tactics also seem to get more follow-up job-site visits, even after adjusting for grade-point average, gender, and job type.
- vi. Ingratiation also works well in interviews; applicants who compliment the interviewer, agree with his or her opinions, and emphasize areas of fit do better than those who don't.
- b. In terms of performance ratings, the picture is quite different. Ingratiation is positively related to performance ratings, meaning those who ingratiate with their supervisors get higher performance evaluations.
  - i. However, self-promotion appears to backfire: Those who self-promote actually seem to receive *lower* performance evaluations.
  - ii. It appears that individuals high in political skill are able to translate IM into higher performance appraisals, whereas those lower in political skill are more likely to be hurt by their IM attempts.
  - iii. Another study of 760 boards of directors found that individuals who ingratiate themselves to current board members (express agreement with the director, point out shared attitudes and opinions, compliment the director) increase their chances of landing on a board.
- c. Ingratiation always works because everyone—both interviewers and supervisors—likes to be treated nicely.
- d. However, self-promotion may work only in interviews and backfire on the job because, whereas the interviewer has little idea whether you're blowing smoke about your accomplishments, the supervisor knows because it's his or her job to observe you.
- e. Thus, if you're going to self-promote, remember that what works in an interview won't always work once you're on the job.

#### IX. The Ethics of Behaving Politically

- A. Although there are no clear-cut ways to differentiate ethical from unethical politicking, there are some questions you should consider.
  1. For example, what is the utility of engaging in politicking?
    - a. Sometimes we engage in political behavior for little good reason. Major league baseball player Al Martin claimed he played football at USC when in fact he never did.
    - b. As a baseball player, he had little to gain by pretending to have played football.
    - c. Outright lies like this may be a rather extreme example of impression

- management, but many of us have distorted information to make a favorable impression.
- B. One thing to keep in mind is whether it's really worth the risk. Another question to ask is this:
    - 1. How does the utility of engaging in the political behavior balance out any harm (or potential harm) it will do to others?
      - a. Complimenting a supervisor on his or her appearance in order to curry favor is probably much less harmful than grabbing credit for a project that others deserve.
  - C. Finally, does the political activity conform to standards of equity and justice?
    - 1. Sometimes it is difficult to weigh the costs and benefits of a political action, but its ethicality is clear.
      - a. The department head who inflates the performance evaluation of a favored employee and deflates the evaluation of a disfavored employee—and then uses these evaluations to justify giving the former a big raise and nothing to the latter—has treated the disfavored employee unfairly.
      - b. Unfortunately, powerful people can become very good at explaining self-serving behaviors in terms of the organization's best interests.
        - i. They can persuasively argue that unfair actions are really fair and just.
        - ii. Our point is that immoral people can justify almost any behavior.
        - iii. Those who are powerful, articulate, and persuasive are most vulnerable to ethical lapses because they are likely to be able to get away with unethical practices successfully.
  - D. When faced with an ethical dilemma regarding organizational politics, try to consider whether playing politics is worth the risk and whether others might be harmed in the process.
  - E. If you have a strong power base, recognize the ability of power to corrupt.
    - 1. Remember that it's a lot easier for the powerless to act ethically, if for no other reason than they typically have very little political discretion to exploit.
- X. Global Implications
- A. Although culture might enter any of the topics we've covered to this point, three questions are particularly important:
    - 1. Does culture influence perceptions of politics?
    - 2. Does culture affect the power of influence tactics people prefer to use?
    - 3. Does culture influence the effectiveness of different tactics?
  - B. Perceptions of Politics
    - 1. We have already noted that (based on research conducted mostly in the United States) when people see their work environment as political, the effect on their overall work attitudes and behaviors is usually negative.
    - 2. When employees of two agencies in a recent study in Nigeria viewed their work environments as political, they reported higher levels of job distress and were less likely to help their coworkers.
    - 3. Thus, although developing countries such as Nigeria are perhaps more ambiguous and have more political environments in which to work, the negative consequences appear to be the same as in the United States.
  - C. Preference for Power Tactics
    - 1. Evidence indicates people in different countries tend to prefer different power tactics.
    - 2. A study comparing managers in the United States and China found that U.S. managers prefer rational appeal; whereas Chinese managers preferred coalition tactics.
      - a. These differences tend to be consistent with the values in these two countries. Reason is consistent with the U.S. preference for direct

- confrontation and the use of rational persuasion to influence others and resolve differences.
- b. Similarly, coalition tactics are consistent with the Chinese preference for using indirect approaches for difficult or controversial requests.
3. Research also has shown that individuals in Western, individualistic cultures tend to engage in more self-enhancement (such as self-promotion) behaviors than individuals in Eastern, more collectivistic cultures.
- D. Effectiveness of Power Tactics
1. Almost all our conclusions on employee reactions to organizational politics are based on studies conducted in North America.
  2. The few studies that have included other countries suggest some minor modifications.
  3. One study of managers in U.S. culture and three Chinese cultures (People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan) found U.S. managers evaluated "gentle persuasion" tactics such as consultation and inspirational appeal as more effective than did their Chinese counterparts.
  4. As another example, Israelis and the British seem to generally respond as do North Americans—that is, their perception of organizational politics relates to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover.
    - a. But in countries that are more politically unstable, such as Israel, employees seem to demonstrate greater tolerance of intense political processes in the workplace, perhaps because they are used to power struggles and have more experience in coping with them.
    - b. This suggests that people from politically turbulent countries in the Middle East or Latin America might be more accepting of organizational politics, and even more willing to use aggressive political tactics in the workplace, than people from countries such as Great Britain or Switzerland.

## XI. Summary and Implications for Managers

- A. If you want to get things done in a group or an organization, it helps to have power.
  1. As a manager who wants to maximize your power, you will want to increase others' dependence on you.
  2. You can, for instance, increase your power in relation to your boss by developing knowledge or a skill she needs and for which she perceives no ready substitute.
  3. But you will not be alone in attempting to build your power bases.
  4. Others, particularly employees and peers, will be seeking to increase your dependence on them, while you are trying to minimize it and increase their dependence on you.
  5. The result is a continual battle.
- B. Few employees relish being powerless in their job and organization.
  1. It's been argued, for instance, that when people in organizations are difficult, argumentative, and temperamental, it may be that the performance expectations placed on them exceed their resources and capabilities, making them feel powerless.
- C. People respond differently to the various power bases.
  1. Expert and referent power are derived from an individual's personal qualities. In contrast coercion, reward, and legitimate power are essentially organizationally derived.
  2. Because people are more likely to enthusiastically accept and commit to an individual whom they admire or whose knowledge they respect (rather than someone who relies on his or her position for influence), the effective use of expert and referent power should lead to higher employee motivation,

- performance, commitment, and satisfaction.
3. Competence especially appears to offer wide appeal, and its use as a power base results in high performance by group members. The message for managers seems to be “Develop and use your expert power base!”
- D. The power of your boss may also play a role in determining your job satisfaction.
1. “One of the reasons many of us like to work for and with people who are powerful is that they are generally more pleasant—not because it is their native disposition, but because the reputation and reality of being powerful permits them more discretion and more ability to delegate to others.”
- E. An effective manager accepts the political nature of organizations.
1. By assessing behavior in a political framework, you can better predict the actions of others and use that information to formulate political strategies that will gain advantages for you and your work unit.
- F. Some people are significantly more politically astute than others, meaning that they are aware of the underlying politics and can manage impressions.
1. Those who are good at playing politics can be expected to get higher performance evaluations and, hence, larger salary increases and more promotions than the politically naïve or inept.
  2. The politically astute are also likely to exhibit higher job satisfaction and be better able to neutralize job stressors.
  3. Employees who have poor political skills or are unwilling to play the politics game generally relate perceived organizational politics to lower job satisfaction and self-reported performance, increased anxiety, and higher turnover.