



The Facts of Work: Living with Power and Politics



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Introduction

- **Power** – the *ability* to influence another person
 - To do what you want them to do
 - When you want them to do it
 - In the way you need them to do it
 - Without altering your behavior in a way you don't want
- **Influence** – the *process* of affecting the thoughts, behavior, and feelings of another person
- **Authority** – the *right* to influence another person
- **Politics** – the *use* of Power and Influence



Why Organizations Exist

- Economic Reason
 - Create a surplus of income over costs by meeting needs in the marketplace
- Political
 - Political structures which provide opportunities for people to develop careers and therefore provide platforms for the experssion of individual interests and motives

Zaleznik, HBR May/June 1970 "Power and Politics in Organizational Life"



Two Faces of Organizational Life

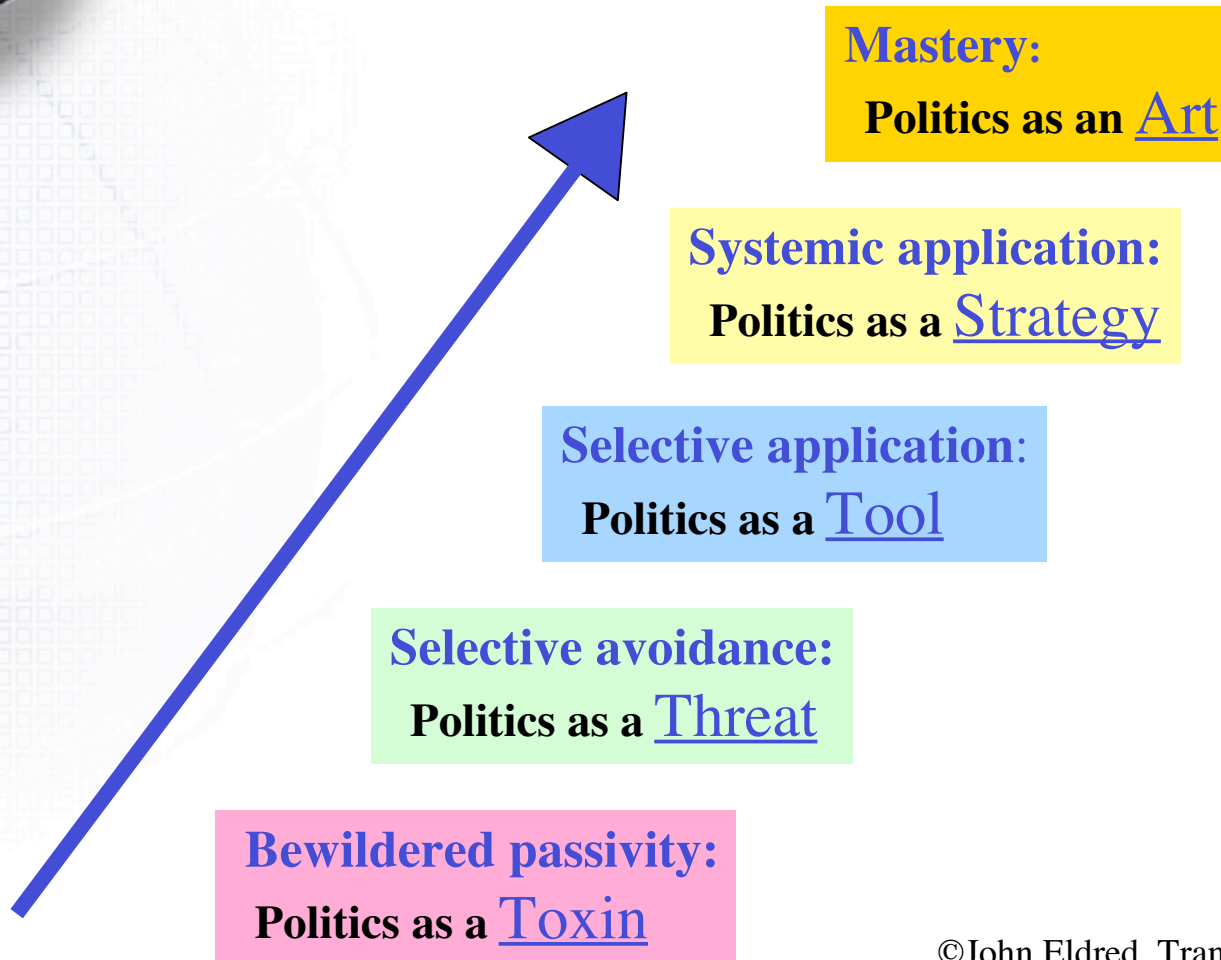


- **Planning**
- **Organizing**
- **Directing**
- **Controlling**

- **Power Struggle**
- **Alliance Formation**
- **Strategic Maneuvering**
- **Cut-throat Actions**



Stages of Political Maturity



©John Eldred, Transition One Associates, 1991



Two Faces of Power

- Negative View
 - Personal Power used for personal gain
- Positive View
 - Social Power used to create motivation or to accomplish group goals





Six Forms of Power

- **Reward Power**
 - Salary, Bonus, Promotion
- **Coercive Power**
 - Forcing someone to do something
- **Legitimate Power**
 - Based on position; mutual agreement
- **Referent Power**
 - Based on interpersonal attraction
- **Expert Power**
 - Based on knowledge or info value
- **Information Power**
 - Sole source of critical information



Finding Your Sources of Power

- Your Power Base
 - Quantity of power thru position
 - Experience and Reputation
 - Attractiveness of Personality
- Know Yourself
- Prioritized list of what YOU want from each person that you are trying to influence
- Don't define arbitrary boundaries between yourself and potential allies
- Don't stand back...Step Up!



Symbols of Power

- Ability to intercede for someone in trouble
- Ability to get placements for favored employees
- Exceeding budget limitations
- Procuring above average raises for employees
- Getting items on the agenda at meetings
- Access to early information
- Having top managers seek out their opinion
- Control of critical resources
- Strategic Contingency



Powerless Behavior

Managers

- Overly close supervision
- Inflexible adherence to rules
- Tendency to do the job themselves instead of teaching others
- Staff resistance to change
- Protect turf
- Focus on budget cuts, punishment, top-down communication

Employees

- React Passively
- Over-dependent on boss
- Blaming others
- Kissing up
- Passing the buck
- Covering your rear
- Creating conflict
- Building clicks
- Scheming



Influence without Authority

- To influence peers and superiors
 - Need to form coalitions – “trade routes”
 - Relationships are key to influence
- **Law of Reciprocity**
 - **Mutually beneficial exchanges**
 - **Basic principle behind all organizational transactions**
 - **Power comes from the ability to meet others’ needs**
 - **Need currency**
- View others as potential allies; not adversaries



Types of Influence (Currency)

- **Inspiration Related**
 - Vision, excellence, moral/ethical correctness
- **Task Related**
 - Resources, assistance, cooperation, information
- **Position Related**
 - Advancement, recognition, visibility
- **Reputation Related**
 - Importance, insider-ness, networks, contacts
- **Relationship Related**
 - Acceptance, inclusion, personal support, understanding
- **Personal Related**
 - Challenge, learning, ownership, involvement, gratitude



Influence Tactics

- **Pressure**
 - Demands, threats, intimidation
- **Upward Appeals**
 - Using higher management
- **Exchange**
 - Promise or reminder of reward or benefit
- **Coalition**
 - Uses others to persuade
- **Ingratiation**
 - Put in good mood, then persuade
- **Rational Persuasion**
 - Using logic and facts
- **Inspirational Appeals**
 - Emotional request
- **Consultation**
 - Seeks participation



Political Behavior in Organizations

- Political Behavior
 - Actions not officially sanctioned by an organization that are taken to influence others in order to meet one's personal goals at the expense of organizational goals
- Conditions that encourage political activity
 - Unclear goals
 - Autocratic decision making
 - Ambiguous lines of authority
 - Scarce resources
 - Uncertainty



Managing Political Behavior

- Open Communication
- Clarify Expectations Regarding Performance
- Participative Management
- Managing Scarce Resources Well
- Creating Conditions for Heightened Motivation
- Empowerment
 - Essential to cultures that support high quality



Managing Up

- Understand the manager and their context
- Understand yourself
- Develop a good relationship that:
 - Fits both needs/styles
 - Sets mutual expectations
 - Keeps the boss informed
 - Is based on dependability & honesty
 - Selectively uses boss's time & resources



Workplace/Organizational Conflict

- Chronic Sources of Conflict
 - Lack of clear and courageous leadership
 - Lack of agreement over values, vision, mission, goals
 - Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities
 - Lack of support for collaboration & participation in decision-making over issues important to people's lives
 - Lack of equality and fairness in distribution of pay and resources



Conflict Management

- Conflict will result in either Impasse or Resolution
- Superficial Settlement
 - Oppressive, Silence, Distrust
- Deep Resolution
 - Learning, Change, Partnership, Trust
- We learn to collaborate too late in life
 - Education system is focused on the individual



Resolving Conflicts

- Simple Approach from “Getting to Yes”
 - **Separate the people from the problem**
 - **Focus on interests, not positions**
 - **Invent options for mutual gain**
 - **Insist on using objective criteria**



Thinking Points

Professor John Eldred, University of Pennsylvania

- “Why is it when we win on an issue, we call it leadership; When we lose we call it politics?”
- “Politics is simply how power gets worked out on a practical day-to-day basis”
- “Politics is a practice. Effective politics is about reaching mature compromises...its about developing relationships and getting results”



Discussion & Questions

Recommended Reading

The Ropes to Skip and The Ropes to Know	Ritti and Levy
Resolving Conflicts at Work	Cloke and Goldsmith
Getting to Yes	Fisher, Ury, and Patton
Getting Past No	Fisher, Ury, and Patton
Sources of Power	Klein
Influence	Caldini
Influence without Authority	Bradford
Power & Politics in Project Mgmt	Pinto
How to Win Friends and Influence People	Carnegie
Management Time: Who's Got the Monkey?	Oncken/Wass (HBR 12/99)



Questions and Feedback

THANK YOU!

email

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