

# Leadership Vs Member Politics

## ICPAK Presentation

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# Politics and rationality:

- Politics: “science of muddling through” (*Lindblom, 1959*)
- Politics refers to individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all in the technical sense, illegitimate - sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (though it may exploit any of these).

(*Mintzberg, 1983, p.172*)

# Politics and rationality:

- Satisficing (*Simon, 1957*)
  - competing and shifting coalitions of multiple and conflicting interests
  - demands and objectives are constantly, but imperfectly reconciled
  - rationality is limited or bounded by uncertainty over what is wanted and how to achieve it.
  
- Leadership often act irrationally
  - Goals and objectives emerge through a process of negotiation and influence
  - Composed of competing and shifting coalitions
  - Based in decision-making (*Cyert & March 1963*)

# Politics and pluralism –

it is rational, depending on your point of view

- “The distinction between a political approach and other perspectives is NOT based on presumptions of rationality....Rather the distinction revolves around the role of power and influence in decision making, the basis for decisions, and the role of interests in organizations” (Pfeffer, 1989) 380)
- Political activity concerns processes of using influence to mobilize support for different interests and individual achievement (Pettigrew, 1973)



# Politics and pluralism –

it is rational, depending on your point of view

- Politics as a game (Marshall, 1986)
- Linked to conflict (Darr & Johns, 2004)
- Individual rather than organizational rationality

# Political skill and political behaviour

Treadway et al 2005

- Political Skill (18 items Ferris et al 2005)
  - Networking ability
    - (eg I am good at building relationships with influential people at work)
  - Social astuteness
    - I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others
  - Interpersonal influence
    - It is easy for me to develop a good rapport with most people
  - Apparent genuineness
    - When communicating with others I try to be genuine in what I say and do

# Politics and paradox

- Individual self interest - antithetical to organizational goals (Drory & Romm, 1990)
- Necessary but deplored (*Kanter 1979*)
- Non sanctioned, informal or discretionary behaviour not clearly prohibited (Pfeffer, 1992; Mintzberg, 1983)
- Perceptions of politics (POPS) linked to negative individual and organizational outcomes (Ferris et al 1992) and political skill linked to positive individual and organizational outcomes (Ferris et al 2007)

So, if I act politically the outcomes are positive.. If I see you acting politically the outcomes are negative

# Critical approaches to politics

- “how control is exercised, power exerted, authority legitimated, compliance achieved, consent maintained” (Knights & McCabe, 1998 p.772).
- labour processes of constructing subjectivity (Kunda, 1992)
- social micro-processes through which power is maintained: “the marrow of organization process” (Knights & Murray, 1994, p.xiv).
- .. the articulation of various individual and group interests through the everyday enactment of communicative processes that produce, reproduce, resist, and transform collective (intersubjective) structures of meaning. Politics is power enacted and resisted. (Mumby, 2001:587).



# Politics and leadership

## Further definition..

■ Because we define politics in organizational leadership as **the constructive management of shared meaning**, we demonstrate how a political perspective does not necessarily cast leaders in a personally ambitious, manipulative role. We proceed to show how this political perspective can contribute to effectiveness through both enhanced leader outcomes and the constituencies' consequences to which leaders are directing their efforts. (Ammeter et al. 2002).

■ Political skill is important in positive “strategic bullying” (Ferris et al, 2007)



# Politics and identity

- Scarce resources: basis for self esteem and source of power. Possible unconscious collusion based on defensive reaction (Zaleznik, 1970)
- A political view can explain why members withhold information, restrict output, attempt to build empires (Robbins, 1986)
- Politics
  - “needs to be understood in terms of power and identity relations or how individuals seek through political maneuverings to further or secure their individual aspirations and identities in an uncertain world.” (Knights and McCabe, 1998, p.761).

# Politics and identity

- Denying politics: avoid exposing self interest (Knights and Murray, 1994)
- Politics as a game or a joke (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Marshall, 1986).

# Politics and diversity

- Organizational politics is the usually masked activity through which organizations are constructed and reconstructed. While apparently allowing individuals and groups to undermine existing systems and structures, its insidious nature and its fragmented links to existing power systems operate to exclude those who do not fit the culture.
- Culture linked to political activity: covert and hard to read
- Greater flexibility, informality and ambiguity linked to politics
- Dominant culture understand the rules

# Politics and diversity

- Emotion and politics
- Playing the game
- Links to new organization structures (Wickham et al, 2008)
- Team working (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006)

# Ambivalence in views of organizational politics

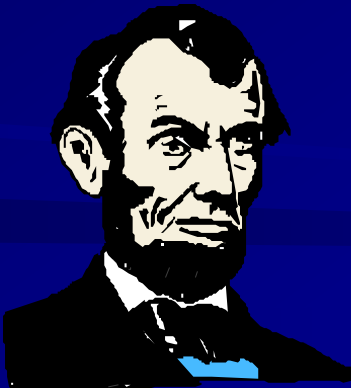
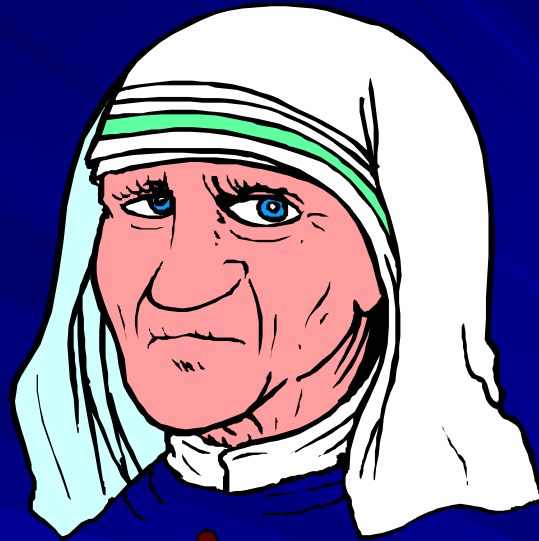
- Distancing or neglect in OD, STS, HRM (French & Bell, 1995)
- Positive (open) or negative (shadow) uses of power (Greiner & Schein, 1988; Egan 1994)
- Recognised as inevitable in processual approaches (Pettigrew, 1988)
- Political skill: positive influencing and leadership (Huczynski, 1996; Ferris et al 2007)
- Politics linked to identity in critical management (eg Hardy, 1996; Knights & McCabe, 2003)



# Politics important for the leaders because..

- Acknowledges plurality of organizational interest groups
- Considers role of power in leadership attainment and growth development
- Recognises conflict of insider-outsider in acculturation
- Links to social exchange in organization
- Includes organizational and individual levels of analysis: focus on the relationship
- Accepts the role of self interest and identity processes in member and work behaviour

# Leadership



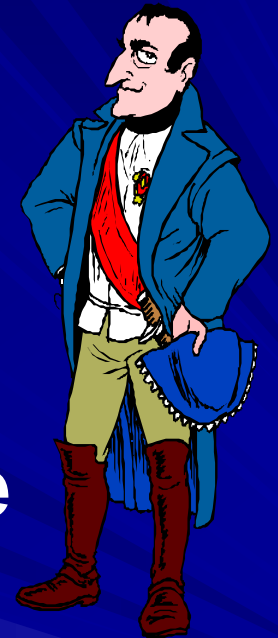
# What is leadership?

Leading people

Influencing people

Commanding people

Guiding people



# Types of Leaders

- Leader by the position achieved
- Leader by personality, charisma
- Leader by moral example
- Leader by power held
- Intellectual leader
- Leader because of ability to accomplish things

# Managers vs. Leaders

## Managers

- Focus on things
- Do things right
- Plan
- Organize
- Direct
- Control
- Follows the rules

## Leaders

- Focus on people
- Do the right things
- Inspire
- Influence
- Motivate
- Build
- Shape entities



# Leadership Traits

## ■ Intelligence

- More intelligent than non-leaders
- Scholarship
- Knowledge
- Being able to get things done

## ■ Physical

- Doesn't see to be correlated

## ■ Personality

- Verbal facility
- Honesty
- Initiative
- Aggressive
- Self-confident
- Ambitious
- Originality
- Sociability
- Adaptability

# Leadership Styles

## ■ Delegating

- Low relationship/  
low task
- Responsibility
- Willing employees

## ■ Participating

- High relationship/  
low task
- Facilitate decisions
- Able but unwilling

## ■ Selling

- High task/high  
relationship
- Explain decisions
- Willing but unable

## ■ Telling

- High Task/Low  
relationship
- Provide instruction
- Closely supervise

# As new Leaders Take Note

## ■ General Advice

- Take advantage of the transition period
- Get advice and counsel
- Show empathy to predecessor
- Learn leadership

## ■ Challenges

- Need knowledge quickly
- Establish new relationships
- Expectations
- Personal equilibrium

# New Leader Traps

- Not learning quickly
- Isolation
- Know-it-all
- Keeping existing team
- Taking on too much
- Captured by wrong people
- Successor syndrome



# **Seven Principles for Leadership in political environments**

- **Have two to three years to make measurable financial and cultural progress**
- **Come in knowing current strategy, goals, and challenges. Form hypothesis on operating priorities**
- **Balance intense focus on priorities with flexibility on implementation....**



# **Seven Principles for Leadership in political environments**

- **Decide about new organization architecture**
- **Build personal credibility and momentum**
- **Earn right to transform entity**
- **Remember there is no “one” way to manage a transition**

# Core Tasks

- **Create Momentum**
- **Master technologies of learning, visioning, and coalition building**
- **Manage oneself**



# Create Momentum

- Learn and know about company

- Securing early wins

- First set short term goals
- When achieved make a big deal
- Should fit long term strategy

- Foundation for change

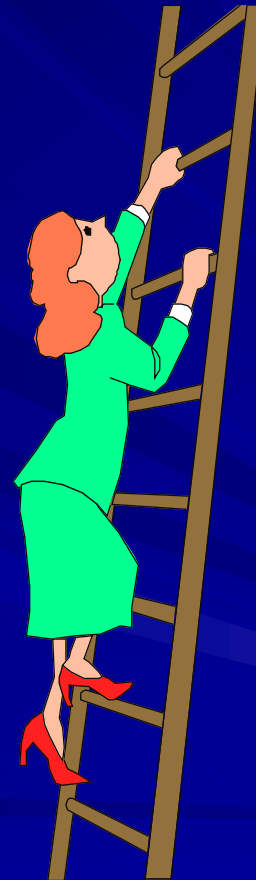
- Vision of how the organization will look
- Build political base to support change
- Modify culture to fit vision

# Create Momentum

## ■ Build credibility

- Demanding but can be satisfied
- Accessible but not too familiar
- Focused but flexible
- Active

Can make tough calls but humane



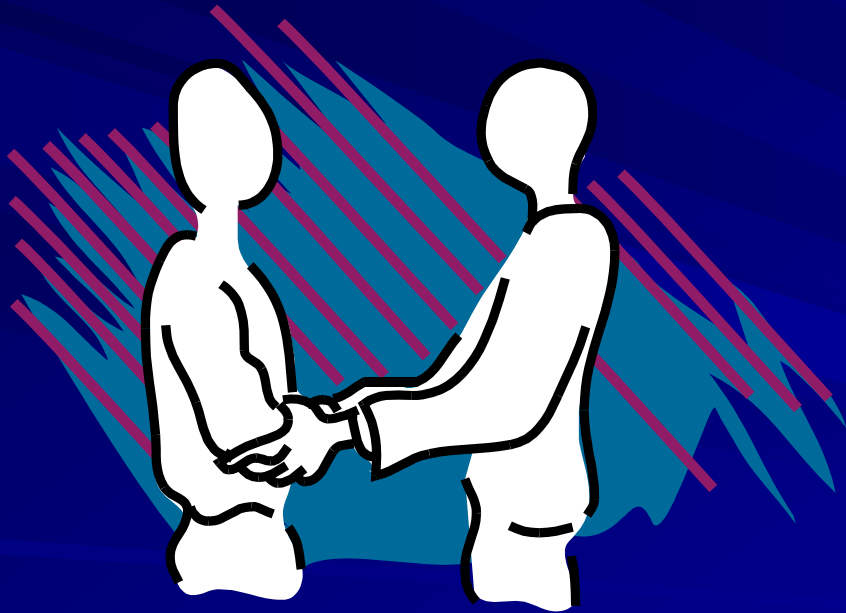
# Master Technologies

- **Learn from internal and external sources**
- **Visioning - develop strategy**
  - Push vs. pull tools
  - What values does the strategy embrace?
  - What behaviors are needed?
- **Communicate the vision**
  - Simple text - Best channels
  - Clear meaning - Do it yourself!

# Enabling Technologies, con't

## ■ Coalition building

- Don't ignore politics
- Technical change not enough
- Political management isn't same as being political
- Prevent blocking coalitions
- Build political capital





# Manage Oneself

- Be self-aware
- Define your leadership style
- Get advice and counsel
  - Advice is from expert to leader
  - Counsel is insight
- Types of help
  - Technical
  - Political
  - Personal
- Advisor traits
  - Competent
  - Trustworthy
  - Enhance your status

**How Far Can You Go?**  
**Wish you well**

