

# 4

## LEADERSHIP AND POWER

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## 4.1 Meaning and Importance

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- Leadership can be defined as the ability of the management to make sound decisions and inspire others to perform well.
- It is the process of directing the behavior of others towards achieving a common goal. In short, leadership is getting things done through others.
- Leadership is very important in a firm as it leads to higher performance by the team members, it improves motivation and morale within the members, and helps to respond to change.
- Leadership facilitates organizational success by creating responsibility and accountability among the members of the organization. In short, it increases value in an organization.

## 4.2 Leadership Style

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- Different leadership styles exist in work environments. The culture and goal of an organization determine which leadership style fits best. Some organizations offer different leadership styles within an organization, depending on the necessary tasks to complete and departmental needs.
- We find five different leadership styles in the corporate world. They are as follows –

### Laissez-Faire

- A laissez-faire leader does not directly supervise employees and fails to provide regular updates to those under his supervision. Highly experienced and trained employees with minimal requirement of supervision fall under the laissez-faire leadership style.
- But, not all employees possess these features. This leadership style blocks the production of employees needing supervision. The laissez-faire style implements no leadership or supervision efforts from managers, which can lead to poor production, lack of control and increasing costs.

### Autocratic

- The autocratic leadership style permits managers to make decisions alone without the input of others. Managers exercise total authority and impose their will on employees. No one opposes the decisions of autocratic leaders. Countries like Cuba and North Korea operate under the autocratic leadership style.
- This leadership style benefits those who require direct supervision. Creative employees who participate in group functions detest this leadership style.

### Participative

- This is also known as the democratic leadership style. It values the input of team members and peers, but the responsibility of making the final decision rests with the participative leader. Participative leadership motivates employee morale because employees make contributions to the decision-making process. It accounts to a feeling that their opinions matter.

- When an organization needs to make changes within itself, that is internally, the participative leadership style helps employees accept changes easily as they play a role in the process. This leadership style meets challenges when companies need to make a decision in a short period of time.

### **Transactional**

- Transactional leadership style is formed by the concept of reward and punishment. Transactional leaders believe that the employee's performance is completely dependent on these two factors. When there is an encouragement, the workers put in their best effort and the bonus is in monetary terms in most of the cases. In case they fail to achieve the set target they are given a negative appraisal.
- Transactional leaders pay more attention to physical and security requirements of the employees.

### **Transformational**

- Transformational leadership has the ability to affect employee's perceptions through the returns that organization gets in the form of human capital benefits. These leaders have the ability to reap higher benefits by introducing knowledge management processes, encouraging interpersonal communication among employees and creating healthy organizational culture.
- It helps in flourishing organizational innovation by creating a participative environment or culture. It promotes a culture where the employees have autonomy to speak about their experiences and share knowledge.
- It has been seen that transformational leaders are more innovative than transactional and laissez-faire leaders.

## **4.3 Behavioural Theories**

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- Behavioral Leadership Theories are developed scientifically by behavior-focused studies of a leader's behavior in a conditioned situation that one can have a specific response to specific stimuli.
- This behavior-focused approach provides real marketing potential.
- Behavioral Leadership Theories are developed by scientifically studying the behaviors of leaders and the effects of them on the workforce and environment.
- Many behavioral scientists have attempted to identify appropriate behavioral patterns of leadership styles.
- Some of the important contributions in this regard include Michigan University Studies and Ohio State Studies.
- The behavioral scientists don't concentrate on the traits of leaders, rather they study the activities of leaders to identify their behavioral patterns.

### **Michigan Leadership Studies**

- Michigan Leadership Studies is a behavioral Leadership theory that indicates the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan conducted empirical studies to identify styles of leader behavior that results in higher performance and satisfaction of a group.
- The value of Michigan Leadership Studies lies in the analysis of 2 leadership styles task and employee-oriented styles.
- Instead of restricting to traits of leaders, they concentrated on the behavior of leaders.

## Ohio State Leadership Studies

- Ohio State Leadership Studies is Behavioral Leadership Theory.
- A series of studies on leadership was done by Ohio State University in 1945 to identify observable behaviors of leaders instead of focusing on their traits.
- Ohio State Leadership Studies showed that initiating structure and consideration are two distinct dimensions and not mutually exclusive.
- A low score on one does not require a high score on the other. Consideration is the people-orientation and initiating structure is the task orientation.
- The Ohio State studies were conducted around the same time as the Michigan Leadership Studies, which also identified as critical the focus on tasks and people.

## 4.4 Fiedler model

- The Fiedler Contingency Model was created in the mid-1960s by Fred Fiedler, a scientist who studied the personality and characteristics of leaders.
- The model states that there is no one best style of leadership. Instead, a leader's effectiveness is based on the situation. This is the result of two factors – "leadership style" and "situational favorableness" (later called "situational control").

### Leadership Style

- Identifying leadership style is the first step in using the model. Fiedler believed that leadership style is fixed, and it can be measured using a scale he developed called Least-Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) Scale (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Least-Preferred Co-Worker Scale

|               |                 |             |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Unfriendly    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Friendly    |
| Unpleasant    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Pleasant    |
| Rejecting     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Accepting   |
| Tense         | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Relaxed     |
| Cold          | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Warm        |
| Boring        | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Interesting |
| Backbiting    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Loyal       |
| Uncooperative | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Cooperative |
| Hostile       | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Supportive  |
| Guarded       | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Open        |
| Insincere     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Sincere     |
| Unkind        | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Kind        |
| Inconsiderate | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Considerate |
| Untrustworthy | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Trustworthy |
| Gloomy        | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Cheerful    |
| Quarrelsome   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Harmonious  |

- The scale asks you to think about the person who you've least enjoyed working with. This can be a person who you've worked with in your job, or in education or training.
- You then rate how you feel about this person for each factor, and add up your scores. If your total score is high, you're likely to be a relationship-orientated leader. If your total score is low, you're more likely to be task-orientated leader.
- The model says that task-oriented leaders usually view their LPCs more negatively, resulting in a lower score. Fiedler called these low LPC-leaders. He said that low LPCs are very effective at completing tasks. They're quick to organize a group to get tasks and projects done. Relationship-building is a low priority.
- However, relationship-oriented leaders usually view their LPCs more positively, giving them a higher score. These are high-LPC leaders. High LPCs focus more on personal connections, and they're good at avoiding and managing conflict. They're better able to make complex decisions.

### Situational Favorableness

- Next, you determine the "situational favorableness" of your particular situation. This depends on three distinct factors:
  - **Leader-Member Relations** – This is the level of trust and confidence that your team has in you. A leader who is more trusted and has more influence within the group is in a more favorable situation than a leader who is not trusted.
  - **Task Structure** – This refers to the type of task you're doing: clear and structured, or vague and unstructured. Unstructured tasks, or tasks where the team and leader have little knowledge of how to achieve them, are viewed unfavorably.
  - **Leader's Position Power** – This is the amount of power you have to direct the group, and provide reward or punishment. The more power you have, the more favorable your situation. Fiedler identifies power as being either strong or weak.

### Applying the Fiedler Contingency Model

- Step 1: Identify your leadership style
  - Think about the person who you've least enjoyed working with, either now or in the past.
  - Rate your experience with this person using the scale in figure 1, above. According to this model, a higher score means that you're naturally relationship-focused, and a lower score means that you're naturally task-focused.
- Step 2: Identify your situation
  - Answer the questions:
    - Are leader-member relations good or poor?
    - Is the task you're doing structured, or is it more unstructured, or do you have little experience of solving similar problems?
    - Do you have strong or weak power over your team?
- Step 3: Determine the most effective leadership style
  - Figure 2 shows a breakdown of all of the factors we've covered: Leader-Member Relations, Task Structure, and Leader's Position Power. The final column identifies the type of leader that Fiedler believed would be most effective in each situation.

Figure 2: Breakdown of Most Effective Leader Style

| Leader-Member Relations | Task Structure | Leader's Position Power | Most Effective Leader |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Good                    | Structured     | Strong                  | Low LPC               |
| Good                    | Structured     | Weak                    | Low LPC               |
| Good                    | Unstructured   | Strong                  | Low LPC               |
| Good                    | Unstructured   | Weak                    | High LPC              |
| Poor                    | Structured     | Strong                  | High LPC              |
| Poor                    | Structured     | Weak                    | High LPC              |
| Poor                    | Unstructured   | Strong                  | High LPC              |
| Poor                    | Unstructured   | Weak                    | Low LPC               |

- For instance, imagine that you've just started working at a new company, replacing a much-loved leader who recently retired. You're leading a team who views you with distrust (so your Leader-Member Relations are poor). The task you're all doing together is well defined (structured), and your position of power is high because you're the boss, and you're able to offer reward or punishment to the group.
- The most effective leader in this situation would be high LPC – that is, a leader who can focus on building relationships first.
- Or, imagine that you're leading a team who likes and respects you (so your Leader-Member relations are good). The project you're working on together is highly creative (unstructured) and your position of power is high since, again, you're in a management position of strength. In this situation, a task-focused leadership style would be most effective.

## 4.5 LMX theory and Path Goal theory

### The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Also known as LMX or Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory)

- As a manager, it's not always right to treat everyone on your team in the same way.
- For instance, you probably have team members that you've developed a great relationship with: you trust them, they work hard, and they've never let you down. To you, these team members are invaluable, and you make an extra effort to send challenging projects their way.
- It's also likely that you have others on your team who you think less well of. They may not have far-reaching career goals, they're less competent, and you simply don't trust them to the same extent. These team members get everyday responsibilities, and are not considered for promotions or challenging assignments.
- However, have you ever stopped to analyze why you don't trust certain team members? Rightly or wrongly, do you let that distrust, or the belief that they're unreliable, influence how you relate to them? Do you, even subconsciously, withhold opportunities that might help them grow and succeed?
- This situation is at the heart of the Leader-Member Exchange Theory. This theory, also known as LMX or the Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory, explores how leaders and managers develop relationships with team members; and it explains how those relationships can either contribute to growth or hold people back.

## Understanding the Theory

- The Leader-Member Exchange Theory first emerged in the 1970s. It focuses on the relationship that develops between managers and members of their teams.
- The theory states that all relationships between managers and subordinates go through three stages. These are:
  - Role-Taking.
  - Role-Making.
  - "Routinization."
- Let's look at each stage in greater detail.

### Role-Taking

- Role-taking occurs when team members first join the group. Managers use this time to assess new members' skills and abilities.

### Role-Making

- New team members then begin to work on projects and tasks as part of the team. In this stage, managers generally expect that new team members will work hard, be loyal and prove trustworthy as they get used to their new role.
- The theory says that, during this stage, managers sort new team members (often subconsciously) into one of two groups.
- **In-Group** - if team members prove themselves loyal, trustworthy and skilled, they're put into the In-Group. This group is made up of the team members that the manager trusts the most. Managers give this group most of their attention, providing challenging and interesting work, and offering opportunities for additional training and advancement. This group also gets more one-to-one time with the manager. Often, people in this group have a similar personality and work-ethic to their manager.
- **Out-Group** - if team members betray the trust of the manager, or prove that they're unmotivated or incompetent, they're put into the Out-Group. This group's work is often restricted and unchallenging. Out-Group members tend to have less access to the manager, and often don't receive opportunities for growth or advancement.

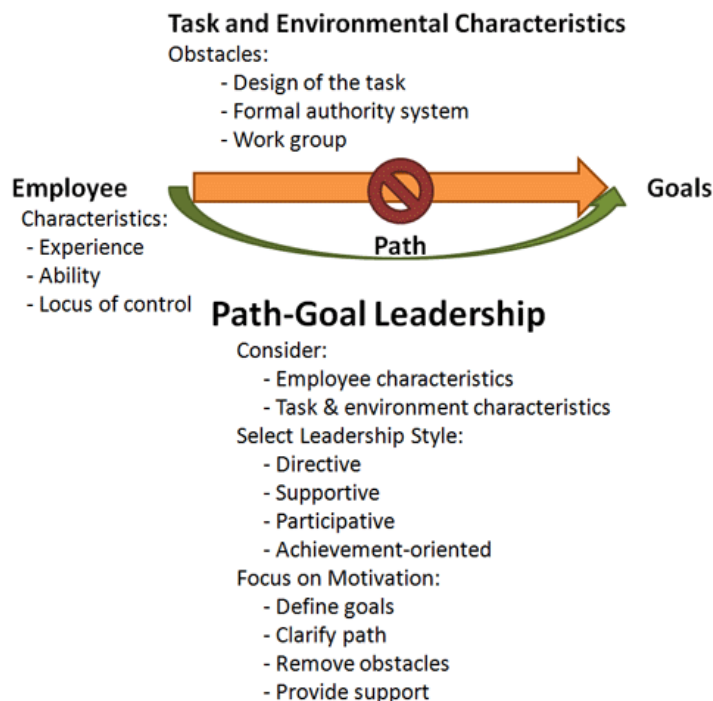
### Routinization

- During this last phase, routines between team members and their managers are established.
- In-Group team members work hard to maintain the good opinion of their managers, by showing trust, respect, empathy, patience, and persistence.
- Out-Group members may start to dislike or distrust their managers. Because it's so hard to move out of the Out-Group once the perception has been established, Out-Group members may have to change departments or organizations in order to "start over."
- Once team members have been classified, even subconsciously, as In-Group or Out-Group, that classification affects how their managers relate to them from then on, and it can become self-fulfilling.
- For instance, In-Group team members are often seen as rising stars and the manager trusts them to work and perform at a high level. This is also the group that the manager talks to most, offering support and advice, and they're given the best opportunities to test their skills and grow. So, of course, they're more likely to develop in their roles.
- This also holds true for the Out-Group. The manager spends little, if any, time trying to support and develop this group. They receive few challenging assignments or opportunities for training and advancement. And, because they're never tested, they have little chance to change the manager's opinion.

## Path-Goal Leadership Theory



- The Path-Goal model is a theory based on specifying a leader's style or behavior that best fits the employee and work environment in order to achieve a goal (House, Mitchell, 1974). The goal is to increase your employees' motivation, empowerment, and satisfaction so they become productive members of the organization.
- Path-Goal is based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory in which an individual will act in a certain way based on the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. The path-goal theory was first introduced by Martin Evans (1970) and then further developed by House (1971).
- The path-goal theory can best be thought of as a process in which leaders select specific behaviors that are best suited to the employees' needs and the working environment so that they may best guide the employees through their path in the obtainment of their daily work activities (goals) (Northouse, 2013).
- While Path-Goal Theory is not a detailed process, it generally follows these basic steps as shown in the graphic below:
  - Determine the employee and environmental characteristics
  - Select a leadership style
  - Focus on motivational factors that will help the employee succeed





- Employees interpret their leader's behavior based on their needs, such as the degree of structure they need, affiliation, perceived level of ability, and desire for control. For example, if a leader provides more structure than what they need, they become less motivated. Thus, a leader needs to understand their employees so they know how to best motivate them.

### Task and Environmental Characteristics

- Overcoming obstacles is a special focus of path-goal theory. If an obstacle becomes too strong, then the leader needs to step in and help the employee select a path to work around it. Some of the more difficult task characteristics that often arise are:
  - Design of the task - The design of the task might call for the leader's support. For example, if the task is ambiguous, then the leader might have to give it more structure or an extremely difficult task might call for leader support.
  - Formal authority system - Depending upon the task authority, the leader can provide clear goals and/or give the employee some or all control.
  - Work group - If the team is non-supportive, then the leader needs to be cohesiveness and espouse esprit-de-corps that provides comradeship, enthusiasm, and devotion to all team members.

### Leader Behavior or Style

- The independent variables of Path-Goal Theory are the leader's behavior – the leader adjusts her style of behavior to the employee and task characteristics so that the employee's motivation is to excel at their goal.
- House and Mitchell (1974) defined four types of leader behaviors or styles: Directive, Supportive, Participative, and Achievement (explained in detail below). They are based on two factors that were identified by an Ohio State University study behaviors (Stogdill, 1974):
  - Consideration - relationship behaviors, such as respect and trust.
  - Initiating Structure - task behaviors, such as organizing, scheduling, and seeing that work is completed.
- The first behavior listed below, Directive, is based on initiating structure. The other three (achievement, participative, and supportive) are based upon consideration.

### The four path-goal types of leader behaviors are:

- **Directive:** The leader informs her followers on what is expected of them, such as telling them what to do, how to perform a task, and scheduling and coordinating work. It is most effective when people are unsure about the task or when there is a lot of uncertainty within the environment.
- **Supportive:** The leader makes work pleasant for the workers by showing concern for them and by being friendly and approachable. It is most effective in situations in which tasks and relationships are physically or psychologically challenging.
- **Participative:** The leader consults with his followers before making a decision on how to proceed. It is most effective when subordinates are highly trained and involved in their work.
- **Achievement:** The leader sets challenging goals for her followers, expects them to perform at their highest level, and shows confidence in their ability to meet this expectation. It is most effective in professional work environments, such as technical, scientific; or achievement environments, such as sales.
- The leaders' behavior is not set in stone, as there are other leadership styles that may be used depending upon the situation. For example, House (1996) defined four other behaviors:
  - Work Facilitation
  - Group Oriented Decision Process

- Work Group Representation and Networking
- Value Based

## 4.6 Leaders vs Managers



- A leader is someone whom people follow or someone who guides or directs others. A manager is someone who is responsible for directing and controlling the work and staff in an organization, or of a department within it.
- The main difference between the two is that a leader works by example, while a manager dictates expectations. If a manager goes against the rules, that will tarnish his position as a manager. If a leader goes against the example he or she is trying to set, that will be seen as a setback. Following are a few subtle differences between the two –
  - A leader is an innovator and creator whereas a manager is a commander.
  - A leader can't be a manager but the opposite is possible, a manager is more than a leader.
  - A leader does what is right, while the manager makes things right.
  - A leader deals with change whereas a manager plans for a change.
  - A leader gives direction to do something whereas the manager plans for everything that is to be done.
  - A leader encourages people whereas the manager controls people.
  - A leader handles communication, credibility, and empowerment whereas a manager deals with organizing and staffing.

## 4.7 Power and Politics

- Generally, power is the ability to cause or prevent an action, make things happen; the discretion to act or not act.
- Ability conferred on a person by law to determine and alter (by his or her own will) the rights, duties, liabilities, and other legal relations, of himself or others. The ability to do something or act in a particular way, especially as a faculty or quality.
- The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. "Power refers to a capacity that A has to influence the behavior of B so that B acts following A's wishes".
- According to Kingsley Davis, "Power as the determination of the behavior of others following one's own ends.<sup>1</sup>"
- According to Sheriff, "Power denotes the relative Weights of behavior by a member in a group structure."
- According to Weber, "Power as the probability that one actor (individual or group) within a social relationship in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests".
- According to Green, "Power is simply the extent of the capability to control others so that they will do what they are wanted to do."

- According to Lundberg and others, “By power, we mean the extent to which persons or groups can limit or regulate the alternative courses of action open to other persons or groups with or without their consent.”
- According to Michel Foucault. “Power is a complex strategic situation in a given society social setting”.
- According to Patrick J. Montana and Bruce H. Charnov, “The ability to attain these unique powers is what enables leaders to influence subordinates and peers by controlling organizational resources.”
- Power may exist but not be used. It is, therefore, capacity or potential. One can have power but not impose it. Probably the most important aspect of power is that it is a function of dependency.
- The greater B’s dependence on A, the greater is A’s power in the relationship. Dependence, in turn, is based on alternatives that B perceives and the importance that B places on the alternative(s) that A controls. A person can have power over you only if he or she controls something you desire. (Robbins, 2003)
- Organizational power is defined as the ability of the organization structure to utilize all the mandatory resources in favor of organization development such as man, machine and other resources.
- Power is not uniformly distributed to all levels in the organization; however, it is confined to certain departments or groups of people depending on the level of responsibility and seniority.
- The motive of assigning power to these levels is to streamline the underlying activities by designing work structures, circulars, policies, and their successful implementation for the success of the organization.

### Sources of Power

- Power refers to the possession of authority and influence over others. Power is a tool that, depending on how it’s used, can lead to either positive or negative outcomes in an organization.
- Where does power come from?
- What is it that gives an individual or a group influence over others?
- We answer these questions by dividing the bases or sources of power into two general groupings – formal and personal – and then breaking each of these down into more specific categories.
- In 1959, American sociologists John French and Bertram Raven published an article, “The Bases of Power”, that is regarded as the basis for classifying power in organizations. They identified some sources of power.
- 10 sources of power are;
  - Formal Power.
  - Legitimate Power.
  - Expert Power.
  - Referent Power.
  - Coercive Power.
  - Reward Power.
  - Informational Power.
  - Connection Power.
  - Political Power.
  - Charismatic Power.

Let’s explain 10 sources of power.

## Formal Power

- Formal power is based on an individual's position in an organization. Formal power can come from the ability to coerce or reward, from formal authority, or the control of information.
- The formal power is based on rank—for example, the fire chief or the captain.

## Legitimate Power

- In the formal groups and organizations, probably the most frequent access to one or more of the power bases is one's structural position. This is called legitimate power.
- Legitimate power is also known as positional power. It's derived from the position a person holds in an organization's hierarchy.
- Job descriptions, for example, require junior workers to report to managers and give managers the power to assign duties to their juniors. For positional power to be exercised effectively, the person wielding it must be deemed to have earned it legitimately.
- An example of legitimate power is held by a company's CEO.

## Expert Power

- Expert power is influence wielded as a result of expertise, special skill, or knowledge. Expert power is derived from possessing knowledge or expertise in a particular area.
- Such people are highly valued by organizations for their problem-solving skills.
- People who have expert power perform critical tasks and are therefore deemed indispensable. The opinions, ideas, and decisions of people with expert power are held in high regard by other employees and hence greatly influence their actions.
- Possession of expert power is normally a stepping stone to other sources of power such as legitimate power.
- For example, a person who holds expert power can be promoted to senior management, thereby giving him legitimate power.

## Referent Power

- Referent power is based on identification with a person who has desirable resources or personal traits.
- If I like, respect, and admire you, you can exercise power over me because I want to please you. It is derived from the interpersonal relationships that a person cultivates with other people in the organization.
- People possess reference power when others respect and like them. Referent power is also derived from personal connections that a person has with key people in the organization's hierarchy, such as the CEO.
- It's the perception of the personal relationships that she has that generates her power over others.

## Coercive Power

- Coercive power is derived from a person's ability to influence others via threats, punishments or sanctions.
- A junior staff member may work late to meet a deadline to avoid disciplinary action from his boss. Coercive power is, therefore, a person's ability to punish fire or reprimand another employee.
- Coercive power helps control the behavior of employees by ensuring that they adhere to the organization's policies and norms.

### **Reward Power**

- The opposite of coercive power is reward power. People comply with the wishes or directives of another because doing so produces positive benefits; therefore, one who can distribute rewards that others view as valuable will have power over those others.
- These rewards can be either financial – such as controlling pay rates, raises, and bonuses; or nonfinancial – including merit recognition, promotions, interesting work assignments, friendly colleagues, and preferred work shifts or sales territories.
- In an organization, people who wield reward power tend to influence the actions of other employees. Reward power, if used well, greatly motivates employees.
- But if it's applied through favoritism, reward power can greatly demoralize employees and diminish their output.

### **Informational Power**

- Informational power is where a person possesses needed or wanted information. It comes from access to and control over information. This is a short-term power that doesn't necessarily influence or build credibility.
- For example, a project manager may have all the information for a specific project and that will give him/her "informational power."
- But it's hard for a person to keep this power for long, and eventually, this information will be released.
- This should not be a long-term strategy.

### **Connection Power**

- It is where a person attains influence by gaining favor or simply acquaintance with a powerful person.
- This power is all about networking. If I have a connection with someone that you want to get to, that's going to give me power.
- People employing this power build important coalitions with others. It is a natural ability to forge such connections with individuals and assemble them into coalitions that give him/her strong connection power.

### **Political Power**

- This power comes from the support of a group. It arises from a leader's ability to work with people and social systems to gain their allegiance and support.
- It develops in all the state-owned organizations, especially when a certain political party holds power and their supporters show power in many aspects in the organizations.
- By using political power, leaders can influence others and get some facilities from the organization.

### **Charismatic Power**

- Charismatic power is an extension of referent power stemming from an individual's personality and interpersonal style.
- Charismatic leaders get others to follow them because they can articulate an attractive vision, take personal risks, demonstrate environmental and follower sensitivity, and are willing to engage in behavior that most others consider unconventional.
- But many organizations will have people with charismatic qualities who, while not in formal leadership positions, nevertheless can exert influence over others because of the strength of their heroic qualities.
- The above-mentioned bases/types of power are normally practiced in many organizations.

- But, indeed, all the powers are not seen in a single organization. The uses of powers vary organization to organization, time to time, person to person, situation to situation, etc.

### **Politics:**

- Politics is the making of a common decision for a group of people, that is, a uniform decision applying in the same way to all members of the group. It also involves the use of power by one person to affect the behavior of another person.
- More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance organized control over a human community, particularly a state.
- Furthermore, politics is the study or practice of the distribution of power and resources within a given community as well as the interrelationship(s) between communities.
- A variety of methods are employed in politics, which include promoting or forcing one's own political views among people, negotiation with other political subjects, making laws, and exercising force, including warfare against adversaries.
- Politics is exercised on a wide range of social levels, from clans and tribes of traditional societies, through modern local governments, companies and institutions up to sovereign states, to the international level. It is very often said that politics is about power.
- A political system is a framework which defines acceptable political methods within a given society.
- History of political thought can be traced back to early antiquity, with seminal works such as Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics and the works of Confucius. Formal Politics refers to the operation of a constitutional system of government and publicly defined institutions and procedures.
- Political parties, public policy or discussions about war and foreign affairs would fall under the category of Formal Politics. Informal Politics is understood as forming alliances, exercising power and protecting and advancing particular ideas or goals.

### **What is Organizational Politics?**

- Organizational politics are informal, unofficial, and sometimes behind-the-scenes efforts to sell ideas, influence an organization, increase power, or achieve other targeted objectives.
- Politics has been around for millennia. Aristotle wrote that politics stems from a diversity of interests, and those competing interests must be resolved in some way. "Rational" decision making alone may not work when interests are fundamentally incongruent, so political behaviors and influence tactics arise.
- Organizational politics refers to intentional behaviors that are designed to enhance or protect a person's influence and self-interest used professionally, these behaviors may help attain a well-earned promotion, sell higher management on the merits of a proposal that will expand one's responsibilities and resources, or gain personal visibility.
- Other employees, however, choose either to avoid politics at all cost or to use politics in a self-serving, manipulative, and deceitful fashion. The risk is that unscrupulous employees involved in organizational politics might put their self-interest above that of their employer in their attempts to gain political power for short-term or long-term benefits.

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