Session 6
Power & Networks in Organizations

Advice & Friendship Networks
Elizabeth Best Case
More Networks

15:322
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Ambivalence about POWER

I love power. But it is as an artist that I love it. I love it as a musician loves his violin, to draw out its sounds and chords and harmonies.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

Contact with men who wield power and authority still leaves an intangible sense of repulsion. It's very like being in close proximity to faecal matter.

—Jean Baudrillard
The Political Perspective

- Ideas, no matter how brilliant, alone change nothing
  - XEROX PARC

- Not all conflict is due to miscommunication
  - Ignoring the issue of power won’t make it go away

- Management is about influence
  - Power is the ability to get people to do things they wouldn’t otherwise do (and like it).

- The exercise of power need not be ostentatious
  - In some contexts, politics yields the most influence when it is performed invisibly and legitimately so as to provoke little resistance

_Leadership is the ability to get people to do things they did not want to do, and make them happy they did them._

—Winston Churchill
Organization as Political System...

Key Concepts: Power and influence, social networks, interests, dominant coalition

Key Processes: Conflict, negotiation, forming (dissolving) relationships

View of Environment: Stakeholders

Role of Leader: Forging coalitions, identifying and leveraging interests, negotiating

Stimuli for change: Shifts in dominant coalition, in power of stakeholders

Barriers to change: “Entrenched interests”
Power: The Ability to Mobilize Resources to Get Things Done

Networks: The Map of the Political Landscape

- Power accrues to those who are central in the network
- Power accrues to those who understand the network
Understanding Networks

- Not easy: The best get only half of it right
- Critical to powerful, effective leadership
- A source of power to those who may have no formal power at all, even outsiders …
Different types of power represented by different types of networks …

- Advise network: Reveals the power of getting things done in the routines

- Affect Network: Reveals the power of getting things done in the face of crises or major changes
NETWORK CENTRALITY

Three Flavors …

Popularity Centrality
- Describes one who is influential within a clique
- Often the informal leader

Closeness centrality
- Useful for diffusing information quickly
- Also useful as listening posts for rumors

Betweenness Centrality (Structural Holes)
- Gatekeepers of information
- Access to non-redundant information
Law of Propinquity
Diagnosing the Network:

- Groups, leaders and bridges are the first features to look for …
- Develop stakeholder’s map
- What are the interests of each group, leader and bridge
- Proper visualization helps but is difficult
The Critical Question …

**HOW DO NETWORKS FORM?**

Law of propinquity

*(with implications for strategic design of organizations)*

Reciprocity & Relationships

*(drawing on culture - notions of fair play, shared fate, etc.)*

Conflict and Negotiation …

*(‘the friend of my enemy is my enemy’)*