

Organizational behavior

Week 5

Decision Making

Power and Politics in Organizations

Decision Making:

Characteristics of the Decision Process.

Common features of decision-making processes include:

Decisions are numerous in the process

Decisions are interlinked

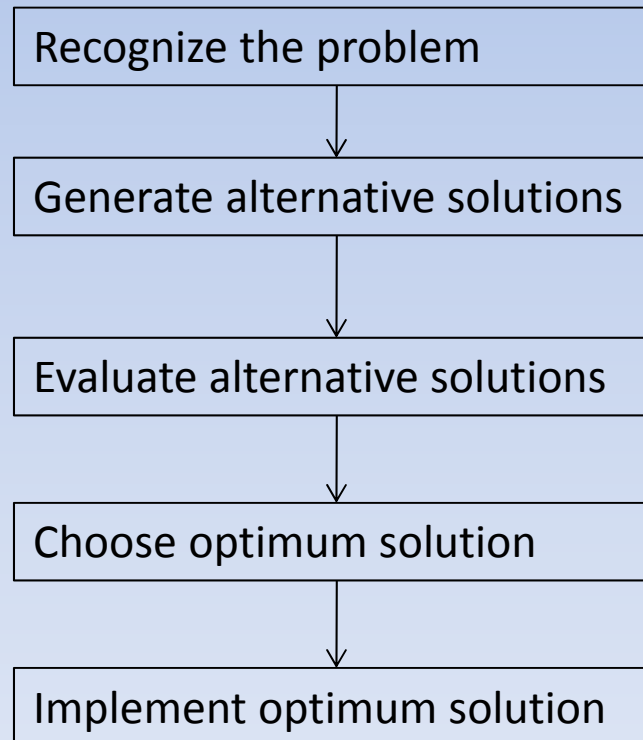
Decisions are temporary and partial



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Models of decision-making

Rational or normative model: decisions are arrived at by means of a rational and methodical process



Can systems
decide?



Models of decision-making

Administrative model: decisions are arrived at by means of a rational and methodical process which is not as perfect as it looks because rationality is fallible (bounded rationality) and decisions are chosen on the basis of minimal rather than optimal criteria (satisficing process).

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Models of decision-making

Garbage can model: unlike other models that seek to relate problems with decisions/solutions, this model dissociates them; it considers that organizations produce more solutions than are problems, which are made available in a “garbage can” for managers to pick from; it also considers that decisions beg for a problem, and not the other round.

Garbage Can Model of Decision Making
(picture conveys many words)



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Improving individual decision-making

Pieces of advice:

- Recognize that nothing is a problem until it is called that
- Work on problem definition
- Be aware of the worldviews in use
- Separate idea generation from idea evaluation
- Recognize perceptual errors

Improving group decision-making

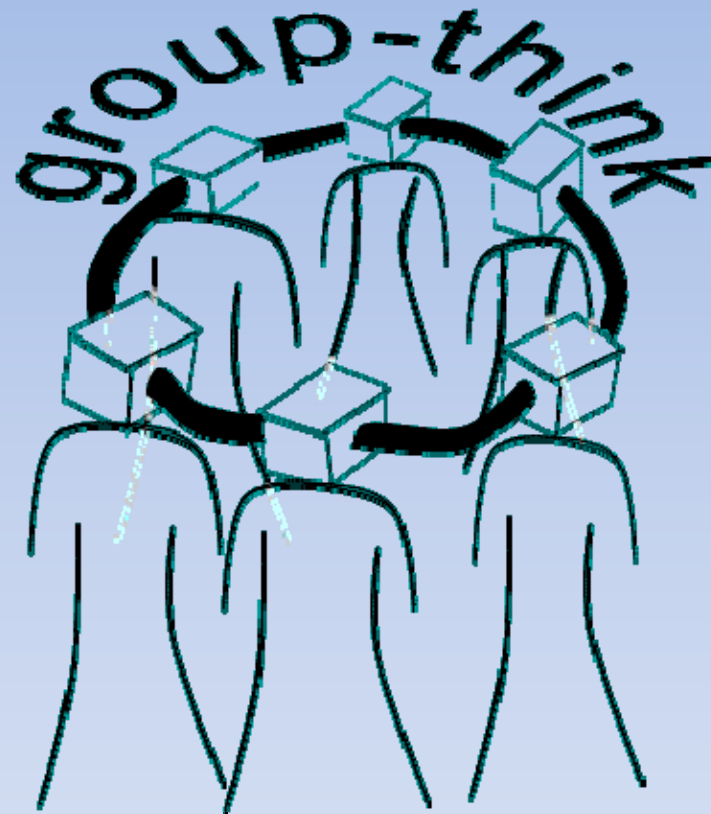
Deciding whether to use a group for dealing with an issue or a person alone (e.g. manager) is affected by the following criteria (Vroom-Yetton model) :

- Decision quality
- Availability of the necessary information
- The problem is structured
- Subordinate acceptance of a decision
- Acceptance of an autocratic decision
- Motivation to attain organizational goals
- Subordinate's disagreement over solutions

Social influences

Groups may be influenced by:

- Groupthink: homogeneous thinking
- Uniformity: complying with groupthink
- Riskyshift: taking more risks than as an individual



Power and Politics in Organizations:

A Model of Influence Processes in Organizations.

Influence is a process through which one attempts to extract compliance with one's intentions from others

Influence is premised on interactive dependence which is perceived as

- Commitment
- Force
- Calculative involvement

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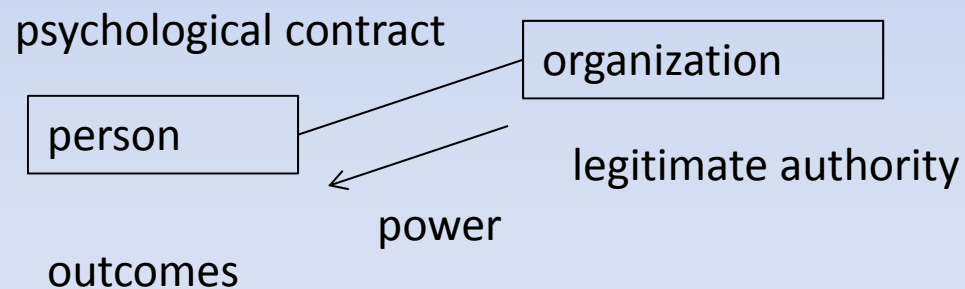
A Model of Influence Processes in Organizations

Influence in an organization involve

A psychological contract: mutual set of expectations

Legitimate authority: the right of decision and command that is reflected through structure and culture

Power: force for extracting compliance (reward, coercive, charismatic)



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A Model of Influence Processes in Organizations

Outcomes include:

- Intended results
- Modified behaviors
- Modified relationship

Yet is not a case for “being under the influence of an organization”? If so is there a psychological contract?



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Acquiring and maintaining organizational based influence

The pattern of power and influence in an organization makes up its power structure, but as power is diffused asymmetrically, one can expect power differences within the organization

The strategic contingency theory of organizational power explains that a sub-unit is powerful when it can

- Cope with volatility
- Have the monopoly of activities
- Centralize workflow

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Acquiring and maintaining organizational based influence

In the face of powerful sub-units those who in a position of authority (legitimate power) need to have the following traits:

- Competence
- Self-confidence
- Organizational orientation
- Power needs
- Political orientation
- Cognitive complexity
- Machiavellianism

But faced with such powerful individuals is there not the risk of powerful resistance and opposition that undermine organizational performance?

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Acquiring and maintaining personal based influence

Types of personal-based power include:

- Charismatic: use of personal traits
- Expert: use of knowledge and skills



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Organizational politics

Organizational politics refers to the intentional behaviors of individuals or groups with the purpose of vying for their own interest

Organizational politics occurs in situations of

- Low emotional or task involvement
- Opportunities or threats
- High stakes
- Peer/colleague pressure

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Organizational politics

Political tactics as sets of behaviors with political character include:

- Impression management
- Blaming others
- Controlling information
- Building coalitions
- Networking