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14

The Cultural Psychology of Social Influence: Implications for Organizational Politics

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Organizational politics, defined as “social influence attempts directed at those who can provide rewards that will help promote or protect the self-interests of the actor” (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997, p. 657) is a reality of organizational life. Not surprisingly, a large research industry has developed on the existence, antecedents, and consequences of organizational politics (see Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002; Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, Blass, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2002 for reviews). Like most organizational phenomena, organizational politics is context dependent. Specifically, the organizational context is a determinant of the degree of politics within organizations as well as a boundary condition for outcomes of organizational politics (e.g., Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002; Andrews, Kacmar, & Harris, 2009). As such, accounting for contextual contingencies is critical for fully understanding the nature and consequences of organizational politics.

In addition to organizational contexts, organizational politics likely are shaped by the broader national culture. It has been long argued that organizations are open systems and therefore are influenced by the societies in which they are embedded (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Moreover, societal culture has a powerful impact on a wide range of behaviors within organizations (see Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007 for a review), and organizational politics

is likely to be of no exception. As such, a given political act, such as the use of gifts to persuade others, may be seen as normative and legitimate in one culture but unethical and problematic in another (cf. Steidlmeier, 1999).

Theory suggests that cultural differences are relevant for understanding organizational politics, yet organizational politics research largely has relied on Western samples and has yet to fully integrate culture into its theories and findings. Although cross-cultural research exists on certain aspects of organizational politics (i.e., influence tactics), others have been investigated with little attention to the cultural context (i.e., perceptions of politics and political behavior), and no comprehensive review of culture and organizational politics exists.

The goal of this chapter is to better integrate research streams on organizational politics and culture. To this end, an integrative model of how culture affects the construct space of organizational politics is presented. Then, research relevant to the model's propositions is reviewed, and key knowledge gaps and avenues for future research are highlighted. In reviewing and synthesizing the literature, the intended contributions are theoretical and practical in nature.

First, an effort is made to advance organizational politics theory and research, which has a predominantly Western focus, to be more global in scope, with the hope that further understanding cultural contingencies will help move toward more sophisticated theories of organizational politics and its correlates. Second, differences in the nature of organizational politics across country can cause major hurdles for expatriates navigating different political systems as well as for organizations engaged in multinational mergers. Thus, practical insights also are provided for individuals and organizations working across the intercultural divide.

AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS

The proposed integrative model of culture and organizational politics is presented in Figure 14.1. Advancing a cross-cultural model of organizational politics first requires defining the model's two core constructs, specifically culture and organizational politics. The definition of culture has been debated among anthropologists and psychologists, and many definitions

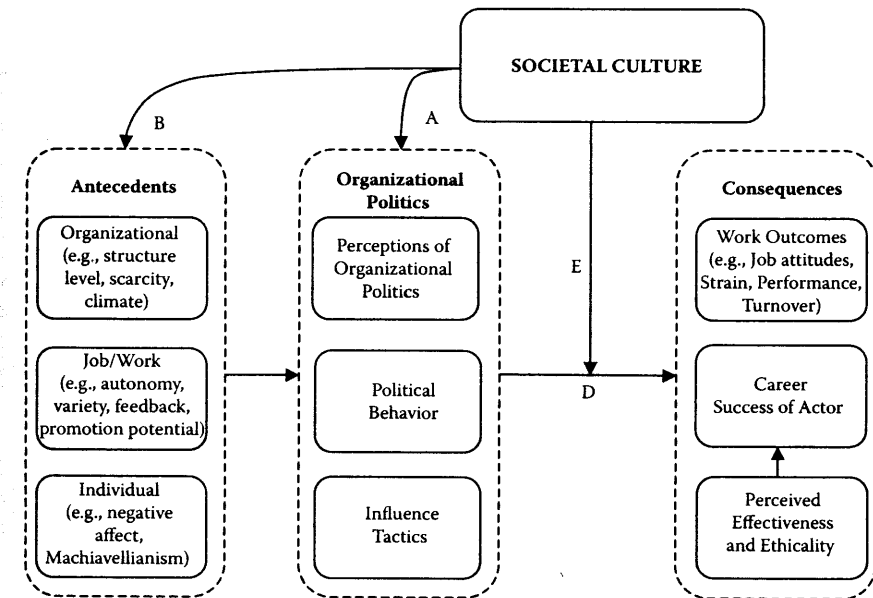


FIGURE 14.1

An integrative model of societal culture and organizational politics.

of culture exist. Geertz (1973), an anthropologist, and Kluckhohn (1954), a psychologist, both defined culture as a pattern of meaning that is transmitted through symbols. Skinner (1981), a behaviorist, argued that culture is a set of reinforcements. Hofstede (1980) asserted that culture consists of mental programs that guide individuals' responses, and Triandis (1972) distinguished between objective (e.g., housing, roads, tools) and subjective (e.g., attitudes, norms, values) culture.

These definitions share several important elements of culture—namely, that it is a pattern of values, norms, and assumptions that are shared by members of a given society. In this chapter, culture is conceptualized as a societal-level construct, yet it also is acknowledged that culture may exist at other levels. In describing culture in this chapter, Hofstede's (1980) cultural value dimensions (e.g., individualism-collectivism, power distance) have been the subject of much organizational research (see Taras, Piers, & Kirkman, 2010). Additional culture values (e.g., fatalism) that are relevant to organizational politics are discussed as well.

The proposed model encompasses three key organizational politics constructs, including political behavior, perceptions of organizational politics, and influence tactics. Political behavior is any act intended to influence

others and advance one's self-interests, whereas perceptions of organizational politics reflect the belief that political behavior is prevalent in a given organization (cf. Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002). Alternatively, influence tactics are the specific behaviors individuals use to influence others, such as rational arguments or ingratiating oneself to others. Notably, several constructs that similarly focus on social influence have received attention in the organizational literature, including leadership and negotiation (see Gelfand & Brett, 2004; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004 for reviews). However, these topics fall outside the scope of the present chapter and are therefore omitted from this review.

The proposed model of culture and organizational politics is based on two core assumptions. First, organizational politics is purported to be a pan-cultural phenomenon that is part and parcel of everyday organizational life around the globe. By definition, organizations create interdependencies among their members. In any interdependent social environment, there is a fundamental need for coordinated social action and mechanisms through which individuals can pursue the interests of the self and valued social groups, regardless of the cultural context (cf. Katz & Kahn, 1978). It follows that existence of organizational politics is likely universal.

In spite of the existence of organizational politics around the globe, the nature, prevalence, and consequences of organizational politics are likely to vary across cultures. Thus, the second core assumption is that cultural influences on organizational politics are multifinal, in that culture affects organizational politics through multiple pathways. The ways culture shapes organizational politics are represented by linkages A through E in Figure 14.1.

Linkage A suggests a direct effect of culture on the existence, nature, and prevalence of organizational politics, including political behavior, perceptions of organizational politics, and influence tactics. Linkage B suggests that culture has a direct effect on a number of organizational, job, and individual factors, and linkage C indicates that these organizational, job, and individual factors in turn predict the three organizational politics constructs of interest. Thus, taken together, linkages B and C suggest an indirect effect of culture on the nature and level of organizational politics. Linkage D represents the consequences of organizational politics, including work outcomes (e.g., job attitudes), career success, and success in influencing others. Finally, linkage E suggests that culture is a boundary condition for these outcomes,

such that the magnitude of the relationship between organizational politics and their consequences varies with the cultural context.

In what follows, cultural influences on political behavior and perceptions of politics are discussed, followed by a discussion on influence tactics. Each section begins by reviewing support for the first assumption—that is, that organization politics is a pan-cultural phenomenon. Theory and research are then reviewed on the nature, prevalence, and consequences of organizational politics across cultures, and key knowledge gaps and avenues for future research are highlighted. Both etic studies, which assess if what is known about organizational politics in one culture generalizes to other cultures, as well as emic studies, which seek to understand the unique features of organizational politics in a particular cultural setting (Berry, 1969), are included in the review. The chapter concludes by discussing the importance of better understanding organizational politics in multicultural work settings and the practical implications of the proposed model.

POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICS

Political behavior is defined as acts aimed at influencing others and advancing self-interests, whereas perceptions of organizational politics are defined as the belief that political behavior is present in an organization. Political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics are distinct constructs that are reciprocally related. Specifically, high levels of perceptions of organizational politics increase the tendency to engage in political behavior, which in turn reinforces perceptions of organizational politics (cf. Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002; Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000). The interrelationship between political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics suggests that they have similar nomological networks. Therefore, the existence, nature, prevalence, and consequences of political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics across cultures are discussed in the same section. For the sake of parsimony, the term *political activity* is used to refer to political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics simultaneously.

Linkage A: Existence and Nature Across Cultures

Consistent with the notion that organizational politics is a pan-cultural phenomenon, evidence suggests that political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics are meaningful constructs across cultures. Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, and Ferris (2005) developed a measure of political behavior in the United States (e.g., “I use my interpersonal skills to influence people at work”). At least one other study administered the measure in China and similarly found that political behavior is a reliable construct (Liu, Liu, & Wu, 2010).

Most research on perceptions of organizational politics has used the Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS), which was developed and validated in the United States (e.g., “Favoritism, rather than merit, determines who gets good raises and promotions around here”; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). Scholars have administered the POPS in many cultures and found that perceptions of organizational politics emerges as a reliable construct in Britain, China, Finland, India, Israel, Kuwait, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Taiwan (see Table 14.1). Reliable and valid measures of perceptions of organizational politics also have been developed in other cultures, including Canada (Darr & Johns, 2004), Finland (Salimäki & Jämsén, 2010), France (Tziner, Latham, Price, & Haccoun, 1996), and Israel (Drory, 1993).

Political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics appear to be meaningful constructs across cultures, yet these constructs may not have the same meaning in different cultural contexts. Culture affects cognition, such that the same behavior is often interpreted differently (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and the definition of political behavior may therefore vary across cultures. For example, research on the definition of political behavior across cultures suggests that informal influence attempts are viewed as more political than formal influence attempts in both Canada and Israel (Drory & Romm, 1988; Romm & Drory, 1988). At the same time, the same behaviors are viewed as less political in Israel than in Canada, perhaps because political acts are a normative part of life in Israel (Romm & Drory). These findings suggest that political behavior exists across cultures but that there are differences in the tendency to perceive behavior as political.

Political activity also may differ in its goals across cultures. American definitions of political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics focus on efforts to advance self-interests (e.g., Kacmar & Carlson, 1997),

TABLE 14.1

Studies of Perceptions of Politics Conducted Outside the United States

Article	Country	Scale	M	SD	N	α
Vigoda (2001)	Britain	POPS	3.03/5	1.12	149	.94
Darr and Johns (2004)	Canada	Original scale	2.30/5	.78	626	.92
Liu et al. (2010)	China	POPS	3.46/5	1.00	283	.89
Salimäki and Jämsén (2010)	Finland	Original scale	3.51/5	.89	367	.79
Tziner et al. (1996, Sample 1)	France	Original scale	2.63/6	.88	51	.97
Tziner et al. (1996, Sample 2)	France	Original scale	2.35/6	.88	157	.98
Aryee et al. (2004, Study 2)	India	POPS	2.70/5	.58	211	.75
Aryee et al. (2004, Study 3)	India	POPS	2.75/5	.62	176	.80
Drory (1993)	Israel	Original scale	—	—	200	.78
Vigoda and Cohen (2002)	Israel	POPS	3.06/5	.60	303	.77
Vigoda (2000b)	Israel	POPS	3.06/5	.60	303	.77
Vigoda (2001)	Israel	POPS	2.94/5	.77	303	.79
Vigoda (2002, Study 1)	Israel	POPS	2.69/5	.78	155	.77
Vigoda (2002, Study 2)	Israel	POPS	2.90/5	.65	185	.78
Vigoda (2002, Study 3)	Israel	POPS	3.29/5	.64	201	.68
Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2003, Study 1)	Israel	POPS	3.25/5	.71	169	.78
Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2003, Study 2)	Israel	POPS	2.76/5	.58	224	.65
Vigoda-Gadot (2007)	Israel	POPS	2.56/5	.67	201	.83
Vigoda (2000a)	Israel	POPS	3.06/5	.60	303	.77
Muhammed (2007)	Kuwait	POPS	2.86/5	.83	206	.88
Poon (2003)	Malaysia	POPS	5.04/10	1.76	208	.90
Poon (2004)	Malaysia	POPS	2.74/5	.47	103	.74
Poon (2006)	Malaysia	POPS	2.73/5	.48	106	.74
Ladebo (2006)	Nigeria	POPS	2.64/5	.87	229	.79
Chen and Fang (2008)	Taiwan	POPS	—	—	290	.94
Huang et al. (2003)	Taiwan	POPS	3.05/5	.61	612	.87

which is consistent with the focus on individualism and the self in the United States (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In collectivistic cultures, group memberships are highly salient, and work tends to be organized around groups (cf. Kashima & Callan, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, political activity may be defined as efforts to advance group interests in these settings, although this hypothesis has not been tested. In all, measures of political activity seem to tap relevant construct space across cultures but also may be *deficient* (i.e., exclude some political behaviors) or *contaminated* (i.e., include behaviors that are not relevant in some cultures).

Linkage A: Prevalence Across Cultures (Direct Effects)

In addition to variation in the nature of political activity across cultures, linkage A suggests that the degree of political activity varies across cultures. Cultural psychology theory and research suggest that cultural values influence the types of behaviors that are normative and accepted and that organizational behaviors and practices are more common when they are consistent with cultural norms (Erez & Earley, 1993). For example, evidence supports that organizational newcomers are more likely to seek feedback in highly assertive cultures than in less assertive cultures (Morrison, Chen, & Salgado, 2004) and that leaders are more likely to use participative leadership styles in low power distance cultures, where employee proactivity is valued, compared with high power distance cultures (House et al., 2004).

Several cultural dimensions are likely to lead to high base rates of political activity. In *fatalistic* cultures, individuals lack the ability to control their outcomes through formal mechanisms, which breeds ambiguity and uncertainty (e.g., Acevedo, 2005; Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). Political activity is common in ambiguous contexts (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Ferris et al., 2000), which suggests that fatalistic cultures will be characterized by high levels of political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics. Political activity also is likely to be prevalent in high *power distance* cultures, at least among those who lack power. In high power distance cultures, social hierarchies are fixed, and there are few formal mechanisms for advancement (cf. Hofstede, 1980). At the same time, power is greatly valued, and individuals with low power are likely to work outside the system to gain power.

In contrast, political activity is likely to be infrequent in *uncertainty avoidant* cultures, where individuals are risk averse (cf. Hofstede, 1980). Efforts to influence others by working outside the formal system are likely to be viewed as threatening, with the result that political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics will be low in high uncertainty avoidant cultures. Political activity also is likely to vary with *individualism-collectivism* and *universalism-particularism*. In individualistic cultures, equity and merit are valued, and there is a general expectation that hard work leads to advancement (cf. Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, attempts to advance by working around the system should be less frequent in individualistic than collectivistic cultures. Similarly, everyone is expected to follow the same rules in universalistic cultures, whereas rules vary with ascribed status and

relationships in particularistic cultures (Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996). Political activity should therefore be less prevalent in universalistic than particularistic cultures.

A variety of cultural dimensions are likely to affect base rates of political activity, yet surprisingly little research has investigated this possibility. Two studies compared the level of political activity across cultures. Romm and Drory (1988) found that political behavior is more prevalent in Israel than Canada, a difference that may reflect greater informality in Israeli culture. Alternatively, Vigoda (2001) compared perceptions of organizational politics in Israel and Britain but found no significant difference. Researchers also have reported the mean level of perceptions of organizational politics in a number of cultures other than the United States (see Table 14.1). Importantly, these samples vary on a number of contextual factors other than culture (e.g., industry, public versus private sector), and thus it is difficult to use these studies to draw inferences about mean differences in perceptions of organizational politics across cultures.

Linkages B + C: Prevalence Across Cultures (Indirect Effects)

In addition to direct effects, culture may exert indirect effects on the prevalence of political activity across cultures. Specifically, linkages B and C in Figure 14.1 suggest that culture affects organizational, job, and individual characteristics, which in turn impact political activity. This combined pathway implies that the antecedents of political activity are universal but that certain antecedents are more prevalent in some cultures than in others. First, evidence regarding the universality of antecedents of political activity is described, and then the dimensions of culture that may have an indirect effect on political activity base rates are examined.

Antecedents

A number of organizational-level factors predict political activity across cultures. Formal organizational structures create tight control and reduce ambiguity, which is likely to reduce political activity. Research supports that formalization and perceptions of organizational politics are indeed negatively correlated in the United States (Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002), India (Aryee, Chen, & Budhwar, 2004), and Kuwait (Muhammed, 2007). Alternatively, in organizations with centralized structures, power

is concentrated at the top, which is likely to increase political activity, particularly at low levels in the organization. The correlation between centralization and perceptions of organizational politics is usually positive in the United States (Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002), and one study found a positive correlation in Kuwait (Muhammed).

Theory also suggests that political activity will be greater at higher organizational levels. Research conducted in the United States has found that hierarchical level is either positively related or unrelated to perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002), but one study found that hierarchical level was negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics in Kuwait (Muhammed, 2007). Kuwait is high in power distance, and this finding could be explained by the previous proposition that power distance results in high levels of political activity among those who lack power. Finally, several studies have investigated trust climate (i.e., positive expectations regarding the motives of organizational members) as an antecedent to political activity and found that trust climate is negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics in Kuwait (Muhammed, 2007) and Malaysia (Poon, 2003).

In addition to organizational factors, job characteristics have been investigated as antecedents to political activity. For example, work role ambiguity and work role conflict are likely to create ambiguity and uncertainty and therefore increase political activity. Research indeed supports that these characteristics are positively correlated with perceptions of organizational politics in Kuwait (Muhammed, 2007), Malaysia (Poon, 2003), Taiwan (Huang, Chuang, & Lin, 2003), and Canada (Darr & Johns, 2004). Scarcity (e.g., few advancement opportunities) also is likely to increase political activity by increasing the need to take action to procure favorable outcomes for the self, and research supports a positive relationship between scarcity and perceptions of organizational politics in Malaysia (Poon, 2003), Taiwan (Huang et al.), and the United States (Ferris, Adams, et al. 2002).

In all, research supports that many antecedents of political activity are universal, with several caveats. First, research has focused on perceptions of organizational politics more than political behavior, which is not surprising given that perceptions of organizational politics have been proposed as an antecedent to political behavior (Ferris et al., 2000). Second, a number of job characteristics (e.g., feedback) and individual differences (e.g., Machiavellianism) that are antecedents to political activity have not

been tested in multiple cultures (Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002). Third, additional antecedents that are common in other cultures but that exhibit low base rates in the United States may exist.

Indirect Effects

The antecedents of political activity may be universal, yet culture is likely to demonstrate an indirect effect on political activity through the antecedents discussed previously. For example, in *fatalistic* cultures, where there is little perceived control and high uncertainty, organizations are likely to have low trust climates. Trust climate is negatively associated with perceptions of organizational politics, which suggests that fatalism will lead to high levels of political activity indirectly through trust climate. Similarly, in high *power distance* cultures, where power is concentrated, organizations are likely characterized by centralized structures, few opportunities for advancement, and little employee participation, all of which increase political activity among employees who lack power (Ferris, Adams, et al., 2002). Thus, power distance also is likely to indirectly increase political activity among low-level employees.

In high *uncertainty avoidant* cultures, individuals seek to minimize risk, with the result that formal organizational structures are prevalent and work role ambiguity is rare. Thus, uncertainty avoidance should indirectly reduce political behavior through high formalization and low role ambiguity. *Individualism-collectivism* is correlated with affluence, such that individualistic cultures are more affluent than collectivistic cultures (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004). Scarcity (e.g., few resources or opportunities) increases political activity, which suggests that political activity will be lower in individualistic than collectivistic cultures due to greater affluence. In all, macrocultural context is likely to affect political activity not only directly, but also indirectly through more micro-organizational and job features, although these indirect effects have not been tested empirically.

Linkage E: Consequences Across Cultures

Linkage E suggests that culture moderates the consequences of political activity. Political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics

share similar antecedents but have different consequences. In particular, political behavior has positive outcomes for the actor, while perceptions of organizational politics have negative outcomes for the perceiver. Therefore, culture is first discussed as a moderator of the consequences of political behavior, and then discussed as a moderator of the consequences of perceptions of organizational politics.

Political Behavior

Theory and research, primarily conducted within the United States, suggest that political behavior has positive career consequences. Performance appraisals, promotion decisions, and other aspects of human resource management are subjective, and efforts to influence others may therefore help individuals achieve career success (Ferris, Fedor, & King, 1994; Ferris & Judge, 1991). However, the relationship between political behavior and career success also is dependent on political skill, a construct developed in the United States that includes the four dimensions of networking ability, social astuteness, interpersonal influence, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al., 2005). Specifically, individuals are most likely to benefit from political behavior if their political skill is high (Ferris et al., 1994, 2005; Semadar, Robins, & Ferris, 2006).

The positive impact of political behavior and skills on career success is likely to hold in other cultures. Consistent with research based on American samples, researchers in China have found that political skill has a positive effect on career development (Wei, Liu, Chen, & Wu, 2010) and that political behavior is positively associated with career potential ratings for employees high in political skill (Liu et al., 2010).*

At the same time, political behavior is more likely to be an effective means of achieving career success in some cultural contexts than in others. Research supports that management practices and behaviors are more effective when well aligned with cultural values and norms. For example, individuals from collectivistic cultures, who are socialized to cooperate with others, achieve higher levels of performance when working in groups than when working individually, whereas the reverse is true of individuals from individualistic cultures (Earley, 1993). Similarly, allowing group participation in goal setting has a stronger impact on performance in

collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures (Erez & Earley, 1987). It follows that political behavior is more likely to lead to career success when engaging in political acts is considered normative within the cultural contexts.

It was previously argued that political behavior is likely to be normative and prevalent in *fatalistic* and high *power distance* cultures. Therefore, political behavior should be a highly effective means of achieving career success in these cultural contexts because political behavior is an accepted part of organizational life. Alternatively, it is proposed that political behavior is rare in *uncertainty avoidant*, *individualistic*, and *universalistic* cultures. Thus, political behavior is less likely to result in career success in these cultural contexts, given that pursuing self-interests through informal mechanisms is inconsistent with cultural values and norms. However, we are unaware of research that provides insight into these propositions.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Unlike political behavior, perceptions of organizational politics are associated with negative outcomes. High levels of perceptions of organizational politics signal a threatening work environment in which employees need to rely on informal behaviors to succeed and also breed uncertainty regarding whether hard work will lead to favorable outcomes (cf. Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009; Ferris et al., 1989). As a result, perceptions of organizational politics are associated with increased strain (e.g., stress, burnout, exhaustion), poor job attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment), high turnover (intentions), and poor performance (e.g., objective, manager-rated, citizenship; Chang et al.). Many of the consequences of perceptions of organizational politics have been replicated in different cultures, including France, Israel, Malaysia, Nigeria, Taiwan, and the United States (Chang et al., 2003; Chen & Fang, 2008; Huang et al., 2003; Ladebo, 2006; Poon, 2003; Tziner et al., 1996), which suggests that perceptions of organizational politics have negative consequences across cultures.

Even if perceptions of organizational politics have similar consequences across cultures, culture is likely to moderate the magnitude of the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and these consequences (see linkage E). For example, in cultural contexts where it is normative to get things done through informal mechanisms, high levels of perceptions of organizational politics are unlikely to cause severe distress. It was

* It remains unknown, however, if the political skill construct has the same meaning across cultures.

previously hypothesized that perceptions of organizational politics will be prevalent in *fatalistic* and high *power distance* cultures, which suggests that the negative consequences of perceptions of organizational politics will be mitigated in these cultural contexts. Alternatively, it is proposed that perceptions of organizational politics will be rare in high *uncertainty avoidant*, *individualistic*, and *universalistic* cultures which suggests that high levels of perceptions of organizational politics are likely to be particularly distressing in these settings.

Two meta-analyses have investigated whether culture moderates the consequences of perceptions of organizational politics. Chang and colleagues (2009) found that the negative effects of perceptions of organizational politics on job attitudes were stronger in the United States than in Israel, perhaps because the United States is more individualistic than Israel. However, the magnitude of the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and stress, performance, and turnover did not vary across cultures. Miller, Rutherford, and Kolodinsky (2008) similarly found that the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and commitment was stronger in the United States than outside the United States, although the magnitude of the relationship did not differ for satisfaction, stress, turnover, or performance. This study did not report the countries in the non-U.S. samples, and the findings are therefore difficult to interpret. Finally, one primary study also found that the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and turnover and satisfaction was stronger in Britain than in Israel (Vigoda, 2001). In all, research supports that culture moderates perceptions of politics consequences, but provides little insight into the cultural values that drive these effects.

Summary and Future Research

Extant research on culture and political activity provides both insights and avenues for future research. Political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics appear to be pan-cultural phenomenon, but the nature of political activity likely varies with the cultural context. Limited evidence supports that the same behaviors are viewed as more political in some cultures than others (Romm & Drory, 1988), and it is likely that the political behavior construct may include group-serving behaviors instead of or in addition to self-serving behaviors in collectivistic cultures. At the same time, additional research is needed to understand which aspects

of political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics are universal and which are culture-specific.

For example, perceptions of organizational politics are often treated as a unidimensional construct, but evidence from studies conducted in the United States supports that they can be broken down into a number of different dimensions, including perceptions of going along to get ahead, self-serving behaviors, coworker behaviors, clique behaviors, and politics in pay and promotions (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). Although considered an indication of organizational politics in the United States, use of cliques and other social networks to promote one's interests may be seen as a normative part of life in collectivistic and relational cultures and thus not considered part of the perceptions of organizational politics construct. Comparative studies are unlikely to provide useful findings if the validity of the measures used is culture dependent. As such, research that uses confirmatory factor analysis and other techniques to assess the construct equivalence of measures of political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics across cultures is needed (cf. Gelfand, Leslie, & Shteynberg, 2007; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997).

The prevalence and consequences of political activity also are likely to vary with cultural value dimensions, including fatalism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and universalism-particularism. Given the paucity of comparative studies of the level and consequences of political activity, research that assesses differences in political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics across cultures as well as efforts to unpack the specific dimensions of culture that explain any observed differences are needed.

Additional topics for future research include work on culture as a moderator of the relationship between the antecedents included in Figure 14.1 and political activity as well as efforts to identify culture-specific antecedents. Finally, although the focus of this chapter is social influence in organizations, the appropriateness of political behavior in other domains of life may vary across cultures. For example, it is normative to engage in political behavior in a wide range of life domains in the Middle East, including interactions with government offices, professors, and job interviewers, whereas political behavior is not acceptable in all of these domains in the United States (Cunningham & Sarayrah, 1993). Therefore, use of political behavior outside of organizations may be more effective in some cultural contexts than in others.

INFLUENCE TACTICS

In addition to research on political activity, much research exists on the tactics used to influence others. In this section, an overview of the tactics research has focused on to date is provided. Then, the existence and nature of different influence tactics across cultures are discussed, followed by a review of the prevalence and effectiveness of influence tactics across cultures. Finally, key findings and important avenues for future research are highlighted.

Influence Tactic Taxonomies

Several taxonomies of influence tactics exist (see Table 14.2 for a list and tactic definitions), yet the majority of organizational research has relied on the Profile of Organizational Influence Strategies (POIS), which was developed in the United States (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980). The original taxonomy was composed of eight tactics:

1. Pressure: Use force
2. Ingratiation: Create a favorable impression
3. Reason: Use logic
4. Exchange: Offer something in return
5. Authority: Seek help from an authority
6. Coalitions: Mobilize others
7. Sanctions: Use rewards or punishments
8. Blocking: Prevent noncompliance

The first six tactics are tactics used in upward, downward, and peer influence attempts, whereas sanctions and blocking are limited to downward and peer attempts (Terpstra-Tong & Ralston, 2001). Since its initial development, several scholars have refined and expanded the POIS (Table 14.2). For example, Yukl and colleagues developed the Influence Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ), which contains five POIS tactics and six new tactics (Yukl, Seifert, & Chavez, 2008), and Ralston and colleagues developed the Strategies of Upward Influence (SUI) inventory, which includes two POIS

TABLE 14.2

Influence Tactic List and Definitions

Tactic	Inventory	Dimension	Definition
Original POIS tactics			
Pressure/Assertiveness	POIS, IBQ	AST	Use of force, demands, etc.
Authority/Upward appeal	POIS, SI	AST	Seek help from a higher authority
Coalitions	POIS, IBQ	AST	Mobilize others to gain support
Exchange/Bargaining/Reciprocity	POIS, IBQ, SI	REL/RAT	Offer something in exchange
Ingratiation/Friendliness/Liking	POIS, IBQ, SUI, SI	REL	Create a favorable impression/flatter
Reason/Rationality	POIS, IBQ, SUI	RAT	Use logical arguments and facts
Sanctions	POIS	—	Use rewards or punishments
Blocking	POIS	—	Prevent noncompliance
Additional tactics			
Apprising	IBQ	—	Indicate that compliance will help target
Collaboration	IBQ	RAT	Create a win-win solution
Consultation	IBQ	RAT	Seek target's input or participation
Inspiration	IBQ	RAT	Use appeal to values or ideals
Legitimizing	IBQ	—	Establish legitimacy of request
Personal appeal	IBQ	REL	Frame request as a personal favor
Gift-giving	—	REL	Offer gifts to target
Informal	—	REL	Request in nonwork environment
Persistence	—	AST	Repeat pleading with target
Socializing	—	REL	Discuss irrelevant topic first
Written explanation	—	RAT	Use a written rational appeal
Good soldier	SUI	—	Get ahead through hard work
Image management	SUI	—	Present oneself in a positive manner
Personal network	SUI	—	Develop/use informal relationships
Information control	SUI	—	Control information others do not have
Strong-arm coercion	SUI	—	Use blackmail and other illegal tactics
Additional SI principles			
Commitment/consistency	SI	—	Note consistency with past behavior
Social proof	SI	—	Note consistency with peer behavior
Scarcity	SI	—	Highlight urgency/rarity

Notes: POIS, Profile of Organizational Influence Strategies. IBQ, Influence Behavior Questionnaire. SUI, Strategies of Upward Influence. SI, Social influence. AST, assertive (or hard). REL, relational (or soft). RAT, rational (or persuasive).

tactics and five new tactics (Ralston, Giacalone, & Terpstra, 1994; Ralston, Gustafson, Mainiero, & Umstot, 1993).*

Other researchers have also added tactics to the POIS (e.g., gift giving) without renaming the taxonomy (e.g., Fu & Yukl, 2000). Given the large number of tactics examined, scholars have grouped the POIS and related tactics into three higher-order categories: rational tactics (e.g., reason); relationship-based or soft tactics (e.g., gift giving); and assertiveness-based or hard tactics (e.g., pressure; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985). Research supports that many, but not all, of the POIS tactics factor into these three categories (Table 14.3).†

Linkage A: Existence and Nature Across Cultures

Consistent with our proposition that organizational politics is a pan-cultural phenomenon, influence tactics are likely to exist universally across cultures. At the same time, some tactics may be culture specific. In what follows, both *etic* and *emic* studies that assess the universality of influence tactics are reviewed.

Etic Studies

Several studies have examined the existence of influence tactics across cultures by administering the POIS outside of the United States and examining the factor structure (Table 14.3). Four of the original eight POIS strategies (i.e., assertiveness, authority, reason, sanctions) consistently emerge in other cultures. Alternatively, coalitions, ingratiation, and exchange have failed to emerge in at least one culture. (To the best of our knowledge, the factor structure of blocking has not been investigated outside the United States).

* The SUI tactics have been grouped into three metacategories: organizationally beneficial tactics; self-indulgent tactics; and destructive tactics (Ralston et al., 2009). We discuss SUI tactics, not metacategories, to better compare the SUI with the POIS.

† In addition to research on influence tactics used in organizational settings, social influence has also been the topic of much research in social psychology. In particular, Cialdini (1993) identified six general principles of social influence. As shown in Table 14.2, three of Cialdini's tactics (i.e., authority, reciprocity, liking) have analogs in the list of POIS and related tactics, but the remaining principles (i.e., commitment, social proof, scarcity) do not. Consistent with the chapter's focus on *organizational* politics, we focus on the POIS and related tactics; however, we also integrate research on the social influence principles when appropriate.

TABLE 14.3

Factor Analysis Results for Influence Tactics Across Cultures

Study	Rao and Hashimoto											
	Schmidt and Yeh (1992)				Yeh (1995)	Rao et al. (1997)	Fu et al. (2004)	Leong et al. (2006)				
	England	Australia	Taiwan	Japan	3 countries	Japan	Japan	12 countries	China-United States			
Original POIS Tactics												
Pressure	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	AST	AST	AST	N	REL/AST
Authority	Y*	Y*	Y	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	AST	AST	AST	N	REL/AST
Coalitions	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Exchange	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	N	Y*	REL	REL	REL	REL/AST	REL/AST
Ingratiation	Y*	N	Y*	Y*	Y*	N	Y*	N	N	N	N	N
Reason	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	RAT	RAT	RAT	RAT	RAT
Sanctions	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	—	—	—	—	—
Additional Tactics												
Appraising	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	N	N	N	N
Collaboration	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	RAT	RAT	RAT
Consultation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	RAT	RAT	RAT	RAT	RAT
Gift Giving	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	REL	REL	REL	REL/AST	REL/AST
Informal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	REL	REL	REL	REL/AST	REL/AST
Inspiration	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	RAT	RAT	RAT	RAT	RAT
Persistence	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	AST	AST	AST	N	N
Personal Appeal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	REL	REL	REL	REL/AST	REL/AST
Socializing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	REL	REL	REL	REL/AST	REL/AST
Written Explanation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	N	N	N	RAT

Notes: Y, emerged as a meaningful factor. Y*, emerged as a meaningful factor but all items did not load as expected. N, did not emerge as a meaningful factor or load on a higher-order factor. AST, assertiveness factor. RAT, rational factor. REL, relational factor. Schmidt and Yeh (1992), Yeh (1995), Rao and Hashimoto (1996), and Rao et al. (1997) focused on downward influence only; Fu et al. (2004) and Leong et al. (2006) focused on downward, upward, and peer influence. Tactics not included here have not been subjected to factor analysis in cultures outside the United States.

Many of the POIS tactics emerge across cultures, yet studies conducted outside the United States have not replicated the factor structure of the POIS perfectly, in that all behaviors intended to assess a given tactic do not consistently load on the intended factor (Table 14.3). For example, Schmidt and Yeh (1992) found that a reason tactic emerged in each culture they studied but that it included pressure and ingratiation items in some cultures. Thus, the behaviors used to enact each influence tactic may vary across cultures. However, it is important to note that studies conducted in the United States also have failed to replicate the POIS factor structure perfectly (e.g., Hochwarter, Pearson, Ferris, Perrewé, & Ralston, 2000), and it is therefore unclear if variations in the POIS factor structure are a function of cultural differences.

Two studies have used a different approach by examining whether the POIS factors into the rational, relational, and assertive meta-categories in multicultural samples (Table 14.3). They found that the assertiveness category contains pressure, authority, and persistence (i.e., plead repeatedly); the relational category contains exchange, gift giving, informal appeal (i.e., request in a nonwork setting), personal appeal (i.e., frame as a personal favor), and socializing (i.e., discuss an irrelevant topic first); and the rational category contains reason, collaboration (i.e., create a win-win situation), consultation (i.e., seek target's input), and inspiration (i.e., appeal to values). Alternatively, coalitions, ingratiation, apprising (i.e., highlight that compliance will help target), and written explanation (i.e., written rational appeal) do not fit into any of the three metacategories.

Emic Studies

Etic studies are limited in that they may fail to capture culture-specific (i.e., emic) influence strategies. Therefore, several researchers have used an emic approach to investigate if additional influence strategies exist in other cultures. Rao, Hashimoto, and Rao (1997) supplemented their etic study of the POIS with an emic study in which they found evidence for nine tactics in Japan. Three of the tactics had direct analogs in the original POIS (i.e., ingratiation, pressure, reason), and an additional three tactics—personal development (i.e., apprising), open communication (i.e., consultation), and socializing—are included in the expanded list of POIS tactics.

Two unique tactics also emerged: firm authority (i.e., indicate that compliance will help the firm) and role model (i.e., set a good example). The firm authority tactic may reflect Japan's collectivistic culture, in which group identities (e.g., organization membership) are salient and meaningful (cf. Hofstede, 1980). Similarly, the role model tactic may reflect the preference for indirect and subtle communication styles that exist in collectivistic cultures (Hall, 1976). Finally, they found evidence for a coalitions tactic, even though this tactic did not emerge in their analysis of the POIS, suggesting that coalitions may be enacted differently across cultures.

Ralston and colleagues (1993) also conducted an emic study in that they developed the SUI in a sample of American and Hong Kong Chinese managers. The SUI contains two POIS tactics, ingratiation and reason, as well as several unique tactics, including good soldier (i.e., get ahead through hard work), image management (i.e., present oneself positively), personal network (i.e., use informal relationships), information control (i.e., control others' access to information), and strong-arm coercion (i.e., use blackmail and other illegal tactics).

The emergence of the personal networks tactic may reflect the importance of *guanxi*, defined as informal connections that imply favors and trust in Chinese culture (Chen & Chen, 2004). Similarly, information control, a behind-the-scenes tactic, may reflect the preference for indirect communication in Hong Kong and other collectivistic cultures (Hall, 1976). It is important to note, however, that the SUI focuses on upward influence attempts only, whereas the POIS focuses on upward, downward, and lateral attempts. Thus, some SUI strategies may be unique to upward influence attempts, not unique to a particular cultural context.

The emergence of unique tactics in some cultures raises the question of whether these tactics exist only in certain cultures or are simply more prevalent in some cultures than others. Smith, Huang, Harb, and Torres (in press) investigated this question by examining three indigenous influence tactics: (1) *guanxi*, defined as personal connections that create mutual long-term obligations in China; (2) *wasta*, a process through which individuals use connections to powerful others to achieve goals in Arab cultures; and (3) *jeitinho*, or the use of creative solutions to solve short-term problems in Brazil. They examined these tactics in Brazil, China, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom and found that each tactic existed in all cultures studied. They concluded that culture impacts influences tactics in terms of

quantity more than quality. Thus, research supports that many influence tactics are universal, but, as is discussed next, the prevalence and effectiveness of different influence tactics is likely to vary across cultures.

Linkages A and E: Prevalence and Consequences Across Cultures

There are some similarities in the prevalence and consequences (i.e., effectiveness in influencing others, perceived ethicality) of influence tactics across cultures.* For example, reason is the most common and effective influence tactic in a wide variety of cultures (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Fu et al., 2004; Higgins et al., 2003; Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith, & Wilkinson, 1984; Rao et al., 1997; Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991; Xin & Tsui, 1996; Yeh, 1995; Yukl, Fu, & McDonald, 2003). At the same time, linkages A and E in Figure 14.1 suggest that culture is likely to influence the base rates and effectiveness of influence tactics. It was previously argued that political activity is more prevalent when political behavior is consistent with the broader culture. Similarly, a given influence tactic likely will be more common when the strategy converges with cultural values. With regard to consequences, organizational practices are also more effective when well aligned with what is culturally normative (Erez & Earley, 1993), which suggests that tactics will be more effective when aligned with the culture.

For the sake of parsimony, the discussion of influence tactic prevalence and consequences is organized around the influence tactic metacategories (i.e., rational, relational, assertive), but it is acknowledged that all strategies do not fit into these categories (Table 14.3). It is generally proposed that rational tactics will be more common and effective in individualistic than collectivistic cultures; relational tactics likely will be more common and effective in collectivistic than individualistic cultures; and prevalence and effectiveness of assertive tactics will vary with masculinity as well as power distance and the direction of influence. The discussion is limited to the direct effects of influence tactics (linkage A), but it is acknowledged

* Research conducted in the United States has linked influence tactics to a variety of consequences, including success in influencing others, job performance, and career advancement (see Ferris, Hochwarter et al., 2002; Higgins et al., 2003 for reviews). Yet the literature on consequences of influence tactics across cultures has focused on influence effectiveness and to a lesser extent perceived ethicality. We therefore focus our discussion of consequences on effectiveness and ethicality, under the assumption that effectiveness leads to other favorable career consequences (see Figure 14.1).

that culture also may exhibit indirect effects through organizational, job, and individual characteristics (linkages B + C).

Rational Tactics

Rational tactics (e.g., reason, consultation, inspiration) should be more common and effective in *individualistic* cultures, where task performance and outcomes are valued over relationships and process, than in *collectivistic* cultures. Scholars have compared base rates of rational tactics in collectivistic East Asian cultures and the U.S., which is an individualistic culture, but have found mixed results. One study found that reason was more common in the United States than in China (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991); another study found that the prevalence of reason did not differ in the United States, Taiwan, and Japan (Yeh, 1995); and a third study found that reason was more common in China than in the United States, but only in upward influence attempts (Xin & Tsui, 1996). Thus, no strong conclusion exists regarding the prevalence of rational tactics across cultures.

Alternatively, rational tactics generally are more effective in Western cultures as compared to East Asian cultures. Evidence supports that reason, inspiration, and consultation are more effective in the United States and Switzerland than in China and Hong Kong (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Yukl et al., 2003) and that reason is similarly viewed as more ethical in the United States than in Hong Kong (Ralston et al., 1994, 1995). In addition, Leong, Bond, and Fu (2006) found that a composite rational tactics factor, including reason, collaboration, consultation, inspiration, and written appeals, was more effective in the United States than in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

Similarly, Fu and colleagues (2004) investigated a composite rational tactics factor that included reason, inspiration, and consultation in a 12-country study. The effectiveness of rational tactics did not vary with country scores on individualism-collectivism; however, rational tactics were less effective in high uncertainty avoidant cultures, perhaps because the rigid structures present in high uncertainty avoidant cultures may reduce openness to rational arguments. In all, rational tactics appear to be more effective in Western cultures (individualistic, low uncertainty avoidance) than East Asian cultures (collectivistic, high uncertainty avoidance), and uncertainty avoidance may explain this difference.

Relational Tactics

Relational tactics should be more prevalent and effective in *collectivistic* than in *individualistic* cultures due to the focus on relationships and personal connections. Two original POIS tactics (i.e., exchange and ingratiation) are considered relational tactics. Although some have argued that exchange may be relational or rational (Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, & Goodman, 1997; Terpstra-Tong & Ralston, 2001), this tactic consistently factors with other relational tactics (Table 14.3). Several studies have found that exchange is more common in collectivistic cultures, including China, Taiwan, and Japan, than in the United States (Xin & Tsui, 1996; Yeh, 1995). Yet one study also found that exchange was more common in the United States than in China (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991), and research on the effectiveness of the exchange tactic suggests it is more effective in the United States than in China (Fu & Yukl, 2000). In all, research on the prevalence and effectiveness of exchange has produced mixed findings, perhaps because this tactic is enacted differently in different cultural contexts.

Some research suggests that ingratiation is more common in collectivistic cultures, including China and Taiwan, than in the United States (Xin & Tsui, 1996; Yeh, 1995). At the same time, one study found that ingratiation did not differ between the United States and Japan (Yeh, 1995), and another found that ingratiation was more common in the United States than in China, at least in upward influence attempts (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991). Research on the effectiveness of ingratiation across cultures is similarly mixed; one study found that the effectiveness of ingratiation did not differ in the United States and China (Fu & Yukl, 2000), and several studies found that ingratiation is viewed as more ethical in the United States than in Hong Kong (Ralston et al., 1994, 1995). However, ingratiation does not consistently factor with other relational tactics across cultures, which could explain the mixed findings (Table 14.3).

A number of additional POIS tactics (e.g., gift giving, informal appeals, personal appeals, socializing) also have been classified as relational, both theoretically and empirically (Table 14.3). Researchers have not investigated the prevalence of these tactics, but evidence supports that they are more effective in collectivistic than individualistic cultures. For example, several studies found that gift giving, informal appeals, and personal appeals are more effective in China than in the United States (Fu & Yukl,

2000; Yukl et al., 2003). However, one study found that informal appeals were equally effective in the United States and Hong Kong (Yukl et al.). The SUI personal networks tactic also is a relational tactic. One study found that personal networks were viewed as more ethical in Hong Kong than in the United States (Ralston et al., 1995), but another found no difference (Ralston et al., 1994).

Finally, Fu and colleagues (2004) investigated a composite relational tactics factor, including gift giving, informal appeals, personal appeals, socializing, and exchange, and found that its effectiveness was positively correlated with country-level scores on both collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. Leong and colleagues (2006) similarly investigated a composite influence tactic factor (i.e., labeled contingent control) that contained many relational tactics (i.e., exchange, gifting, informal, personal appeal, socializing) and one assertive tactic (i.e., authority), but the composite's effectiveness did not differ in the United States and China.

Assertive Tactics

Assertive tactics (i.e., pressure, persistence, authority, coalitions) should be more common and effective in *masculine* cultures, where competition and aggression are valued, than in *feminine* cultures, where solidarity and concern for others are valued (Hofstede, 1980). The prevalence and effectiveness of assertive tactics also are likely to vary with *power distance* and the direction of influence. For downward influenced attempts, assertive tactics should be more common and effective in high than low power distance cultures, as they serve to reinforce and maintain the hierarchy.

Alternatively, for upward influence attempts, assertive tactics should be less common in high than low power distance cultures, as they may be viewed as a challenge to the existing hierarchy. Research on assertive tactics has focused on comparisons between the United States (i.e., low power distance, moderately masculine) and East Asian cultures (i.e., high power distance, moderately masculine) and therefore allows comparisons across low and high power distance cultures but not across masculine and feminine cultures.

For downward influence attempts, research supports that assertive tactics are more common in high than low power distance cultures. Specifically, authority and coalitions are more common in China (Xin & Tsui, 1996), and pressure and authority are more common in Japan and Taiwan (Yeh, 1995), compared with the United States. Alternatively, for

upward influence attempts, authority and coalitions are more common in the United States than in China (Xin & Tsui, 1996). However, a few studies found that pressure is more or equally common in China compared with the United States (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991; Xin & Tsui, 1996).

With regard to effectiveness and ethicality, findings seem to differ by the specific tactic of interest. One study found that the effectiveness of pressure did not differ in the United States and China, although this study collapsed the results across different influence directions (Fu & Yukl, 2000). Research on the related SUI tactic of strong-arm coercion suggests that it is viewed as most ethical in the United States and the Netherlands, followed by Germany and India, Hong Kong, and Mexico (Ralston et al., 1994, 1995; Ralston, Vollmer, Srinivasan, Nicholson, Tang, & Wan, 2001). Importantly, the SUI focuses on upward influence only, and this finding supports that assertive tactics are more effective in upward attempts when power distance is low.

Several studies have found that authority is more effective in China than in the United States and Switzerland, regardless of influence direction, although the effectiveness of this tactic did not differ in the United States and Hong Kong (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Yukl et al., 2003). Similarly, an advertising study found that authority was more effective in France (i.e., comparatively high power distance) than in the United States (Jung & Kellaris, 2006). Thus, authority may be more effective in high power distance cultures regardless of the influence direction.

Research on coalitions has produced mixed findings. One study of upward influence found that coalitions are more effective in the United States and Switzerland than in China and that coalitions were equally effective in the United States and Hong Kong (Yukl et al., 2003). Another study that collapsed the findings across influence direction found that coalitions were more effective in China than in the United States (Fu & Yukl, 2000). Although classified as an assertive tactic, coalitions may have a relational component, which could perhaps explain the Fu and Yukl (2000) finding. Moreover, the coalitions tactic may be enacted differently across cultures (Rao et al., 1997), which could explain the inconsistent findings.

Finally, Fu and colleagues (2004) investigated the effectiveness of a composite assertiveness factor that included persistence, pressure, and authority. They combined the results across influence direction and found that the assertiveness factor was positively related to country scores on collectivism, which is surprising given that indirectness and a lack of assertion is normative in collectivistic cultures. However, the study did

not assess power distance, which is positively correlated with collectivism. Thus, power distance may be a third variable that explains this surprising finding (Fu et al., 2004).

Additional SUI Tactics

The prevalence and effectiveness of the SUI tactics that cannot be easily classified as rational, relational or assertive also are likely to vary across cultures. For example, the image management and good soldier tactics are likely to be more common, effective, and ethical in individualistic cultures due to a greater emphasis on the self and meritocracy compared with collectivistic cultures. Ralston and colleagues (1993) indeed found that image management was more common in the United States than in Hong Kong. In addition, both the image management and good soldier tactics are perceived as most ethical in the United States and the Netherlands, followed by Germany and India, then Hong Kong, and finally Mexico (Ralston et al., 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001).

Alternatively, information control should be more common and effective in collectivistic than individualistic cultures, given that information control is an indirect, behind-the-scenes tactic that can be used to maintain face. Evidence supports that the information control tactic is more common in Hong Kong than in the United States (Ralston et al., 1993), and is viewed as more ethical in the United States and the Netherlands than in India, Germany, Hong Kong, and Mexico (Ralston et al., 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001).

Additional Cialdini Tactics

Cialdini has identified several social influence principles that do not have analogues in the POIS, including commitment/consistency (i.e., note consistency with prior behavior), social proof (i.e., note consistency with prior behavior), social proof (i.e., note consistency with peer behavior), and scarcity (i.e., highlight urgency/rarity) also have been shown to vary across cultures. Several studies suggest that commitment/consistency is more effective in individualistic cultures (i.e., the United States), where the past actions and behaviors of the self are salient motivator. Alternatively, social proof is more effective in collectivistic cultures (i.e., China, Hong Kong, Poland), where the behavior of others is a salient motivator (Chen et al., 2006; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999; Zou, Tam, Morris, Lee,

Lau, & Chiu, 2009). In addition, at least one study investigated the scarcity tactic across cultures and found that it was more effective in the United States than in France (Jung & Kellaris, 2004). The authors attributed the effect to differences in indirect (France) versus direct (United States) communication, although the mechanism was not measured directly.

Summary and Future Research

Several conclusions can be drawn based on existing research on culture and influence tactics. First, a variety of different tactics seem to exist universally, although the behaviors used to enact different tactics may be culture specific. Second, the prevalence and effectiveness of influence tactics varies substantially across cultures. The prevalence of rational tactics does not seem to vary across cultures, although rational tactics generally are more effective in the West than in the East, perhaps due to differences in uncertainty avoidance. Alternatively, relational tactics are more prevalent and effective in the East than in the West, likely due to differences in both individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. Finally, use of assertive tactics are more common in the West than in the East for upward influence attempts but more common in the East than in the West for downward influence attempts. However, the effectiveness of assertive tactics seems to vary with the specific tactic investigated.

In spite of much research, a number of knowledge gaps exist within the literature on culture and influence tactics. First, more research on the different behavioral manifestations of specific influence tactics is needed. Many, if not all, of the POIS tactics could be enacted in either direct ways, which are likely to be common in individualistic cultures, or indirect ways, which are likely to be common in collectivistic cultures. For example, coalitions may be enacted by staging a direct intervention in individualistic cultures but by using an intermediary in collectivistic cultures. A deeper understanding of cultural differences in the ways strategies are enacted could help resolve some of the inconsistent findings for certain influence tactics. Second, most studies have focused on country comparisons, and particularly comparisons between East Asian and Western cultures, with some notable exceptions (e.g., Fu et al., 2004; Ralston et al., 2009). More research that seeks to unpack the cultural dimensions that explain differences in the prevalence and effectiveness of influence tactics would be useful.

With regard to consequences, research primarily has focused on perceived effectiveness. To the extent that there are differences in perceived versus actual effectiveness, the focus on perceived effectiveness could explain some of the surprising findings regarding the effectiveness of assertive tactics, for example. Research on the effectiveness of different tactics also brings the utility of the metacategories of rational, relational, and assertive tactics into question. For example, the effectiveness of assertive tactics in Eastern versus Western cultures was highly variable, even though a composite measure of assertive tactics was positively correlated with societal collectivism (Fu et al., 2004). Thus, although the metacategories provide a useful framework, they also may hide cultural differences among tactics within the same category.

Finally, future research should explore additional tactics that are likely to vary across cultures. In particular, emotional appeals may have different base rates and consequences in different cultural settings. Although generally omitted from research on influence tactics, negotiation research suggests that Arabs use emotional appeals more frequently compared with Americans and Russians (Leung & Wu, 1990). Research also suggests that anger displays are more normative in the West than in the East; as a result, use of anger in negotiation leads to larger concessions from Caucasian Americans than from Asians (Adam, Shirako, & Maddux, 2010). In addition to use of emotion, appeals to a higher spiritual authority are likely to be a common and effective influence tactic in Middle Eastern and other fatalistic cultures.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN MULTICULTURAL SETTINGS

Thus far, we have presented theory and research on how culture affects organizational politics and social influence in situations where the actor and target have the same cultural background. Politicking that crosses cultural boundaries, including influence attempts in multicultural teams and organizations, is also an important area of inquiry, given that the use of inappropriate tactics could lead to severe misunderstandings. A handful of studies have investigated influence tactics in multicultural work settings. For example, Rao and Schmidt (1995) found that Indian employees used influence tactics, including exchange, assertiveness, and coalitions, more frequently when interacting with Indian coworkers than with American

coworkers, perhaps because they were more confident that these behaviors were appropriate when interacting with culturally similar others.

In contrast, however, Rao and Hashimoto (1996) found that Japanese managers in Canada used influence tactics, including reason, authority, sanctions, and reciprocity (i.e., a factor that combined ingratiation and exchange), more frequently with Canadian subordinates than with Japanese subordinates. Finally, Yeh (1995) found some evidence of assimilation, such that Taiwanese managers used tactics common in the United States with American coworkers but tactics common in Japan with Japanese coworkers.

Although useful, these studies have focused on the prevalence of different influence tactics rather than their effectiveness. When individuals attempt to influence culturally dissimilar others, cultural distance and cultural intelligence are likely to determine the success of influence attempts. With regard to cultural distance, even highly motivated expatriates have a difficult time adjusting to new work environments and achieving strong performance when the cultural difference between the home and host culture is great (Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh, & Tangirala, 2010), which suggests that political behaviors may be less effective when cultural distance is high.

In addition, research on negotiation suggests that cultural intelligence facilitates higher joint outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations (Imai & Gelfand, 2010). Thus, individuals who are culturally intelligent in general and also possess knowledge regarding which tactics are appropriate across cultures may be better able to reap the benefits of political behavior. Finally, organizational culture also may play a role in determining the success of influence attempts in multicultural settings. For example, although culture exhibits a large impact on individual behavior, strong situations create a shared reality that helps coordinate action (Adam et al., 2010; Gelfand & Realo, 1999). Thus, cultural differences in political behavior and the associated potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings may be mitigated by strong organizational cultures.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, theory and research were presented on the existence, nature, prevalence, and consequences of organizational politics in different cultural settings. Understanding the cultural psychology of social

influence not only is important for advancing theory but also has practical implications. In organizational settings, inability to successfully influence others may lead to poor performance and even early return for expatriate managers. Similarly, a lack of understanding regarding which influence tactics are normative, effective, and ethical may be a key cause of failed negotiations in the context of international mergers and acquisitions.

Also, it could be argued that the cultural contingencies of organizational politics have implications that extend beyond organizational boundaries. Indeed, a deeper understanding of the cultures in which political behavior is normative and expected, as well as the specific tactics that are effective, may lead to smoother diplomatic encounters and help facilitate more peaceful international relations around the globe.

The perspective adopted in this chapter suggests that understanding cultural influences on organizational politics is of great theoretical and practical importance due to large and persistent cultural differences. At the same time, some have pondered whether increasing globalization will result in homogeneous organizational practices and behavior as organizations in different parts of the world gravitate toward global best practices (cf. Pudelko & Harzing, 2008). Yet there is reason to doubt that organizational practices and behaviors will converge across time.

Although some superficial aspects of American culture have become popular around the globe (e.g., McDonald's, Coca-Cola), deeper cultural differences persist (cf. Huntington, 1996). Indeed, research on cultural values that was first pioneered by Hofstede (1980) and later replicated by the GLOBE research team (House et al., 2004) provides firm evidence that variability in cultural values is alive and well (Huntington). As such, it is necessary to continue to understand the implications of the cultural context for organizational politics as well as other aspects of organizational behavior.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research is based upon work supported in part by the U.S. Army Research Laboratory and the U.S. Army Research Office under grant number W911NF-08-1-0144. The authors are grateful to Si Ahn Mehng and Sam South for their assistance in preparing this chapter.

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