The Management of Political Actors in Institutions

Peter Odion Omoijiade, PhD
Alliance International University, Lusaka, Zambia.

Abstract
The argument that the minimization of the dysfunctional consequences of organizational politics is no longer dependent on self-equilibrating mechanism remains valid. This inquiry is therefore framed with a view to establishing suitable strategies for managing political actors. There is a nexus between the diagnosis typology of political actors and the qualitative classes of political actors and their management strategies. In the management of mixed blessing, supportive, non-supportive and marginal political actors; collaborative, involvement, defensive and information strategies respectively were found suitable. This research is based on existing theoretical knowledge on organizational politics and stakeholders management. Data was collected from the literature by means of critical analysis and dialectic reflection on the emerging themes. The study will enhance capability in contexts where the scientific management of political actors is yet to be exemplified.

Keywords: Organizational Politics, Political interest; Political Actors

JEL classification: B15, Z 18

Introduction
The ability to identify and understand your own political style and that of others around you lies at the heart of political success. As an organizational constituent, you may be competent, highly educated and dazzling in intelligence and speed of thought; you will degenerate to futile existence if you are inept in navigating the political terrain of your organization. As stated by Reardon (2000), the identification of technical political talents and political styles preferences is now imperative.

The objective of this study therefore, is to determine the appropriate strategies for managing political actors. To enable me accomplish this goal, political styles, classification of political actors, and their salience will be done. The question to be answered in this study is oriented on the strategies for managing political actors in institutions.
This research is based on existing theoretical and practical knowledge on organizational politics and stakeholders management. Data was collected from the literature on these concepts by means of critical analysis of literature and through dialectical reflection about my understanding of the emerging themes.

The Identification of Political Styles

Reardon (2000), identified Purist, Team player, Street fighter, and maneuverer as the four political styles:

The Purist: The purist believes that the key to career success is hard work and competence. He rely largely on the sanctioned rules in getting things done. Purists are honest and they trust others. For then, work is not about personal advancement at the expense of others but about getting the job done well. Behind the scenes grappling for power and prestige is not of interest to the true Purist. As argued by Reardon (2000) however, politics is simply too pervasive in most organizations for career advancement to be based solely on competence.

The Team Player: The Team Player prefers to operate by sanctioned rules and believes in getting ahead by working well with others and participating primarily in politics that advance the goals of the group. Team players are focused on getting the job done right and creating conditions for team member advancement.

The Street Fighter: The street fighter is an individualist who believes that the best way to get ahead is through the use of rough tactics. The street fighter relies more on subliminal politics than the Purist and the Team Player, but is just as likely to impose sanctioned rules when those rules serve personal goals. The street fighter derives personal gratification from working the system. According to Reardon (2000: 27), the street fighter “protects himself and the many persons around him by keeping himself fully informed about what is going on and managing some of it himself. Street fighters don’t allow themselves to remain ignorant of new developments. They don’t enter an organizational dark alley unless they have investigated the terrain and are prepared to defend themselves”.

The Maneuverer: The maneuverer is an individualist, one who believes in getting ahead by playing political games in a skillful, unobtrusive manner. He or she is not at all inhibited about using politics to advance personal objectives and favoured team objectives. The maneuverer looks for ulterior motives in others, has little regard for sanctioned rules, relies largely on subliminal politics, and is more likely to be a subtle operator than the street fighter. Maneuverer might be called “Smooth Operators”. They're less committed to hard work than Purists, and only operate as Team Players when it suits their agendas. If people get in the way of a maneuverer, it is at their own peril.

Fitting the Political Style to the Environment/Organization

In navigating the political terrain, the alignment of political style with the environment/organization is necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Political Environment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purist</td>
<td>Best Fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Player</td>
<td>Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Fighter</td>
<td>Highly Unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maneuverer</td>
<td>Highly Unlikely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reardon, K. K (2000)

As shown on Table 1, The Purists are best suited to minimally political arenas, if a Purist finds himself/herself in a moderately politicized environment, she may be able to survive by finding a niche where he/she can work while remaining out of the line of fire.

Team players function best in minimally to moderately politicized organizations. They may encounter significant difficulty in highly politicized environment. The pathologically politicized environment is not
suitable for the team players. They should therefore concentrate on finding a survival niche while looking for a new job elsewhere.

*Street fighters* are unlikely to be welcomed in a minimally politicized environment where people prefer to get along and avoid overt conflict. The street fighters are suitable for moderately political arenas, but must be toned down; however because of their inclination toward conflicts, the best place for Street fighters is the highly politicized environment where the chance of using politics to advance personal ends is very high. If they are also capable of expert maneuvering, they could well survive in pathologically politicized arenas.

*Maneuverers* often function effectively in moderately politicized environments and best in a highly politicized environment. On the other hand, they may be surprised to find themselves unpopular or even despised in minimally or even some moderately politicized arenas. Their manipulative tendencies make it possible for them to succeed in pathological environments, especially if they are good in deception.

**The commonality of Interest and relationships among political actors.**

The commonality of interest and relationship among political actors are situated within the context of a given political environment/people (Dobson & Dobson, 2001).

![Figure 1: The Political Environment/People](image)


**Commonality of Interest**

According to Dobson & Dobson (2001), people whether principled, unprincipled, differently principled, indifferently principled, or extremist, operate on the basis of their interests. Dobson & Dobson (2001:92) wrote “interest may be shared, conflicting or compatible. A shared interest in an organizational or project vision may present two people who agree on substance. A conflicting interest might involve two people who want the same promotion. While the interest is the same, there is no commonality, only competition. A compatible interest, on the other hand, is a non-identical interest that supports the same overall plan or strategy”.

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Relationship

Trust is an essential foundation of good relationships. Personal like and dislike can also exist apart from the issues of trust. Trust itself can be subdivided into trust in someone’s integrity and trust in someone’s competence. The shifting alliances in an organization are in factions, and you often belong – or are perceived to belong – to a fraction in the organization, whether you do or not. It is vital to know about such personal rivalries and personal friendships in understanding the relationship terrain. (Dobson & Dobson, 2001). As stated by Dobson & Dobson, in classifying people, the following principles must be noted:

(i) Have the courage to make hard decisions, and the empathy to work with people.
(ii) For long – term success, build good relationship; for short – term success, build commonality of interest.
(iii) Avoid making enemies.

The Classification of Political Actors

According to Dobson & Dobson (2001), people occupy fine sections in the political environment: allies, fellow travelers, opponents, enemies and four favours of neutrals.

Allies

Allies are people with whom you share a commonality of interest and good relationship. The action of allies can advance your interests and share concerns and difficulties for constructive purpose. The allies could be permanent or situational. A permanent ally is someone who sees his or her interests and relationship with you as a key value and can be trusted on a wide range of issues. A situational ally is someone with whom you have a good relationship and strong commonality of interest on a certain issue or group of issues. A situational ally will sometimes be an ally, neutral and opponent, depending on the circumstances.

Dominance and relationship issues

Whether permanent or situational, an ally has interests and long term goals. An understanding of those interests is one of the keys to achieving the purpose of the relationship. The issue of dominance is crucial in a relationship. Does the ally want to be your equal, your protégé, or your mentor?

Building alliance relationships

The issue of building and good alliance is, first a matter of understanding your own interests and goals, and second, a matter of deep understanding of the interests and goals of your allies. When your allies have interests you don’t share but that don’t actively conflict with your own, you should be prepared to show support for those interests, because in the long run you need your allies to support you in similar enterprise.

Enemies

The enemies are people with whom you have no commonality of interest and good relationship. Sometimes you inherit enemies in developing allies.

Opponents

The opponents are opposed to your position on issues. As political actors they often take an opposite position in relation to any position taken by you.

Fellow Travelers

According to Dobson & Dobson (2001), fellow travelers are people with whom you share a commonality of interest but with whom you don’t have a strong relationship. That means you have a limited degree of trust and a constant risk of divergence of interest. Fellow travelers tend to be with you on some issues and against you on others; their value as allies is limited because you cannot afford to take them fully into confidence. Some fellow travelers can turn into allies in the long run; others will never move fully into your
camp, for reasons ranging from their untrust – worthiness to your membership of different power cliques within the organization.

The nature of mutuality of interest may also account for the divergence in the relationship may be affected negatively where the interest they are pursuing is mutually exclusive. In such a situation, the relationship will degenerate to the case of “dog eat dog” or “war – war”, for example if two candidates are competing for one vacant position in an organization, the argument “let every man answer his father’s name” will be valid. Under such a situation, it will be difficult to move a non-supportive fellow traveler to supportive/allies. On the other hand, the relationship between two fellow travellers will be positively affected where the interest they are pursuing is not mutually exclusive. It will be jaw – jaw or win – win, where the selection of “A” will not prevent the selection of “B” for a particular position. Under such a situation the argument: “there is sufficient space in the sky to accommodate everyone” will hold. Thus, the movement of a fellow traveller from non-supportive to supportive/allies will be possible.

(i) Neutrals

Neutrals can have leanings in any of the four quadrants:

(a) Ally neutral
(b) Fellow traveler neutral
(c) Opponent neutral
(d) Enemy neutral

(a) Ally neutral
The ally neutral believes that he or she has no personal stake in the fight and quite wisely declines to participate. In other words, the relationship is still present, but the commonality of interest is not sufficient to support any action or risk.

(b) Fellow Traveler Neutral
The fellow traveler neutral would like to coast to victory on your coattails by having you take the risks and do the heavy lifting.

(c) Opponent Neutral
The opponent neutrals want to sit out of the battle because they don’t have much at stake.

(d) Enemy Neutral
The enemy neutral may be like an opposition neutral, content to have a particular issue alone.

The classification of political actors is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. To enable us make meaning from the classification of political actors, further classification is required with a view to establishing if the political actors are mixed blessing, supportive, non-supportive or marginal (see Table 2). The determination of the salience of political actors is therefore a condition precedent to such mapping. In the next section I will carry out an overview of political actors salience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political actors</th>
<th>Other Classifications of political actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 2: Configuration, convergence of Political actors
Mixed Blessing

Supportive

Non Supportive

Marginal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Blessing</th>
<th>Allies (Dobson &amp; Dobson, 2001) Team Player (Reardon, 2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Purist (Reardon, 2000), Opponents (Dobson &amp; Dobson, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Supportive</td>
<td>Fellow Travellers, Enemies (Dobson &amp; Dobson, 2000). Street fighter, Maneuver (Reardon, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Neutral, Ally Neutral, fellow traveller neutral, opponent neutral, enemy neutral (Dobson &amp; Dobson, 2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Determination of the qualitative classes/salience of political actors

The political actors classes resulting from combinations of certain attributes are shown in Figure 2. The actors types that emerge from various combinations of attributes are: Power, Legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997).

Figure 2: Qualitative Classes of Political actors


A political actor with only power as salience is dangerous. As shown on Figure 2. Street fighters, maneuverers and enemies are dangerous political actors.

Power: Most current definitions of power derive, at least in part, from the early Weberian idea that power is “the probability that one actor within a social relationship would be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance” (weber, 1947). Pfeffer (1981:3) rephrases Dahl’s (1957) definition of power as “a relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done”. Like Pfeffer and Weber, (Salancik & Pfeffer (1974: 3) concur that “power is the ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire”. Therefore, a party to a relationship has power, to the extent it has or can gain access to coercive, utilitarian,
or normative means, to impose its will in the relationship. We note, however, that this access to means is a variable, not a steady state, which is one reason why power is transitory: it can be acquired as well as lost.

**Legitimacy:** As stated on Figure 2, the claim of the ally neutral, opponents neutral, fellow traveller and enemy neutral is only legitimate. Those seeking a “normative core” for stakeholder theory are focused almost exclusively on defining the basis of political actor legitimacy. Whether or not that core of legitimacy is to be found in something “at risk,” or in property rights, in moral claims or in some other construct, articulations of “The Principle of who or What Really Counts” generally are legitimacy based.

However, the notion of “legitimacy,” loosely referring to socially accepted and expected structures or behaviours, often is coupled implicitly with that of power when people attempt to evaluate the nature of relationships in society. Davis, (1973:314), distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate use of power by declaring, “In the long run, those who do not use power in a manner which society considers responsible will tend to lose it”.

**Urgency:** We define urgency as the degree to which political actors claims call for immediate attention. Urgency exists only when two conditions are met: (1) when a relationship or claim is of a time-sensitive nature and (2) when that relationship or claim is important or critical to the actor. Thus, similar to Jones (1993) description of moral intensity as a multidimensional construct, we argue that urgency is based on the following two attributes: (1) time sensitive – the degree to which managerial delay in attending to the claim or relationship is unacceptable to the actor, and (2) Criticality – the importance of the claim or the relationship to the actor. We define urgency as the degree to which political actor claim call for immediate attention.

**Definitive Political Actors**

A definitive political actor salience will be high where the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency are perceived to be present. A political actor exhibiting both power and legitimacy will be dominant in any coalition. When such a political actor’s claim is urgent, managers have a clear and immediate mandate to attend to and give priority to that political actor’s claim. Managers should never forget that political actors changes in salience, requiring different degrees and types of attention depending on their attributed possession of power, legitimacy, and/or urgency, above all, the level of attributes can vary from issue to issue and from time to time (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997).

The combination of all the three attributes of power, urgency and legitimacy (including the dynamic relations among them) is the defining feature of highly salient political actors (Area 7). As shown on Figure 2, the Team Players and Allies are definitive political actors.

**Latent Political actors:** The low salience classes (area 1, 2 and 3) which are termed “latent” political actors are identified by their possession of or attributed possession of only one of the attributes. For example, power, urgency and legitimacy (see figure 2)

**Expectant Political actors:** The moderately salience political actors, for example, power and legitimacy (Area 4), Power and Urgency (Area 5) and legitimacy and urgency (Area 6) are identified by their possession or attributed possession of two of the attributes, and because they are political actors who “expect something”, we call them “expectant” political actors. As stated on Figure 2, the Purists, opponents and fellow travellers are expectant political actors and their salience is moderate.

The salience of political actors is not static. This dynamism will be examined in the next section.

**Dynamism in Political actors – Manager Relations**

As shown on Figure 2, the purists, opponents and fellow travellers (Area 6), are dependent political actors. The political actors who lack power but who have urgent legitimate claims could be characterized as “dependent”, because they depend upon other political actors or firm’s managers for the power necessary to carry out their will (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997). The claim of the dependent political actor is done through alliance, advocacy or guardianship of other actors or through the guidance of internal management values. The task before a dependent supportive political actor is to move into the most salient definitive
class. By definitive, a political actor exhibiting both power and legitimacy already will be dominant in any coalition/alliance. When such a political actor’s claim is urgent, the leadership has a clear and immediate mandate to attend to such a claim. For example, in 2012, the principal managers and Senior managers in Union Bank of Nigeria Plc who were dependent political actors became active members of the Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions in order to acquire power with a view to becoming definitive political actors (Omoijiade, 2015). We can also observe an example of political actor’s salience dynamism in street fighters, maneuvers and enemies (Area 1: Power). They may begin as political actors with urgent claim without legitimacy and power. They may make the next move into the “dangerous category” by using coercive power. They may also attain the definitive status by acquiring legitimacy.

Managing Political Actors: Types and Strategies

According to Savage, Nix, Whitehead and Blair (1991:65-67), the two dimensions – potentials for threat and potential for cooperation – permit a manager to classify stakeholders into four types as shown in Figure 3. This typology helps the executive specify generic strategies for managing stakeholders with different levels of potentials.

**Table 2:** Factors Affecting Political actors Potentials for Threat and Cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political actor controls key resources (needed by organization)</th>
<th>Increase or Decrease</th>
<th>Increase Or Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder’s Potential For Threat?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholder’s Potential For Cooperation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases</td>
<td>Increases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Either</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor does not control key resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor more powerful than organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor as powerful as organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either</td>
<td>Either</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor less powerful than organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor likely to take action (supportive of the organization)</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor likely to take non-supportive action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor unlikely to take any action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor likely to form coalition with other actor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases</td>
<td></td>
<td>Either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor holder likely to form coalition with organization</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political actor unlikely to form any coalition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Type 1 - The Supportive Political actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential for threat</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>Non-Supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed Blessing</td>
<td>Fellow travellers (Interest: not mutually exclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allies</td>
<td>- Purist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team player</td>
<td>- Opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marginal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ally neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Fellow Travellers neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Opponent neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Enemy neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy: Collaborate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy: Defend</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy: Inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy: Involve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Diagnostic Typology of organizational political actors


The ideal political actor supports the organization goals and actions. Such actor is low on potential for threat but high on potential for co-operation. As shown on Figure 3, the fellow traveller (interest: not mutually exclusive), purist, opponent are supportive political actors

Strategy 1: Involve the supportive political actors. By involving the supportive political actors in relevant issues, executives can maximally encourage co-operative potential. The implementation of participative management techniques, decentralization of authority will assist in enhancing the co-operation potential of the supportive political actors.

In working with the supportive political actors, Dobson & Dobson (2001) suggested the following:

i. Determination of the extent of common interest.
If someone is a supportive political actor; on political issues that are of concern to you, the extent of the common interest must be well defined.

ii. Adjust Tactics and confidence building

It is necessary to select a strategy and tactics that will work best for both parties. The first strategy is to promote win/win outcomes, those that make both parties to the relationship feel that their essential needs have been met.

iii. Maximize common interest and minimize liability.

The cooperation of a supportive political actor is a matter of mutual self-interest. You can count on the cooperation as the other person believes his or her interests are best supported by co-operation. Determine measures for maximizing common interests and minimization of liabilities.

iv. Build the relationship.

Trust worthiness is not the only ingredient in building a relationship, but it is essential. Building trust takes time especially with people who have reason to distrust you from past experience or who have reason to distrust the faction or side with which you are affiliated.

v. Preserve and extend the relationship.

Mutual respect, understanding, and empathy are the key ingredients that make relationships with the supportive political opponents viable. While your interests with an opponent maybe in conflict, deeper analysis may reveal commonality of interest. It is therefore possible to turn an opponent into an ally, and this strategy maximizes the possibility of co-operation.

vi. Identify common interests and goals.

Because of the strength of the relationship, it is possible to work together on matters of common interest. The difference between compromise and consensus must be carefully acknowledged. Sometimes “half loaf is better than none”. Sometimes “half a child is worse than no child at all.

vii. Keep lines of communication open.

While the strategy of empathic listening is essential, the ability to be candid and exact about your position and goals are also vital. Assertive communication which is the ability to be clear, unafraid, and strong in stating what your needs and wants are must be fully explored.

viii. Fight fair when you have to fight

You have the assertive right and need to advocate for your position. To preserve the relationship, fight fairly and with integrity. This includes doing your homework, providing a factual and values-based rationale for your position, confronting openly and honestly, and being assertive, rather than aggressive.

ix. Avoid tactics that either are or seem to be underhanded or sneaky, such as these:

(a) Short – Circuiting the chain of command.

This involves by passing your boss and going to higher levels of management to achieve your goals. Whatever short-term gain you may receive, it leaves substantial bitterness and distrust in its wake.

(b) Undercutting your opponent’s position or motives behind his or her back. This tactics always presents the risk that your opponents will find out what you have done.

(c) Using anger or negative emotions to influence outcomes

Type 2: The Marginal Political Actors

As shown on Figure 3, the ally neutral, fellow travellers neutral, opponent neutral and enemy neutral are marginal political actors. Marginal political actors are neither highly threatening nor especially co-operative.
Although they potentially have a stake in the organization and its decisions, they are generally not concerned about most issues.

**Strategy 2: Monitor the Marginal Political Actor.**

Monitoring helps manage marginal political actors whose potential for both threat and co-operation is low. By recognizing that these political actors’ interests are narrow and issues specific, executives can minimize the organization’s expenditure of resources.

**Type 3: The Non Supportive Political Actors**

The enemies, street fighters, maneuverer and a segment of fellow travellers (Interest: mutually exclusive) are non-supportive political actors. The political actors are low on potential for co-operation and high on potential for threat (see figure 3).

**Strategy 3: Defend against the non-supportive political actors.**

The non-supportive political actors initially are best managed with defensive strategy. The defensive strategy tries to reduce the dependence that forms the basis of their political interest.

The outlined guidelines are also suitable in dealing with the non-supportive political actors (Dobson & Dobson, 2001):

1. Show respect for the non-supportive political actor’s opinions and goals (which is not necessarily the same thing as agreeing with them).
2. Act in a trustworthy and honest fashion, even where the non-supportive political actor is not doing so.
3. Listen empathically to your non-supportive political actor’s point of view and demonstrate your understanding of same.
4. Take your non-supportive political actor’s objections seriously and consider them in a thoughtful and appropriate way.
5. Show that you keep your word, and do what you say.
6. Development of commonality of interest.

To turn a non-supportive political actor into supportive, you must find and develop common interest. To enable you attain this goal, you must also practice good listening to get beyond a person’s stated positions to the underlying interests that drive these positions.

1. Is the non-support Personal or Professional?

The non-supportive political actors are particularly dangerous because they have the natural incentive to do harm and in extreme cases oppose your good and constructive ideas merely because you are in favour of them. A simple remark may create a personal enemy. Such a remark may be trivial or imaginary. A professional non-supportive political actor may result from hatred in getting promotion or a position in an organization.

1. Analyzing and minimizing the damage of the non-supportive political actor. In a military sense, the word “threat” is often used synonymously with “capability”. In other words, a non-supportive political actor poses a threat to the extent he or she has the power to do harm. This should be separated from whether the actor actually intends to do harm with a given capacity. You plan your defense on the basis of what they can do, rather than only on what they are likely to do.

1. Access to Decision Makers. Does your non-supportive political actor have access to your boss, your boss’s boss, your customer or other decision makers behind your back to provide information or an opinion that undercuts you before you go in? If so, look for your own ways of access, prepare good facts, intelligence network to canvass your view points.
Control of resources you need.

Does the non-supportive political actor have the power to decide whether (or when) you gain access to the resources you need? This is particularly pernicious power, especially when used with malice. This negative phenomenon could be mitigated through the assistance of a higher authority.

In appropriate communication behaviors.

Some non-supportive political actors are disruptive in meetings, for example, shouting you down using anger and rage as a technique to wear you and your allies down. Because many people are conflict averse, people unafraid of extreme behavior can bully a group into giving them their way.

Appropriate Defensive/ positive strategies.

The following appropriate defensive/ positive strategies are necessary in dealing with the non-supportive political actors while trying to turn them into supportive.

(a) Keep an eye on them.

Make sure you know what they are up to, whom they are talking with, and what their issues are. Spy-craft is statecraft. The quality and range of your organizational network is a powerful tool.

(b) Keep your emotions in check.

One powerful strategy is to get your enemy to lose his or her temper and become publicly out of control. While it may not be prudent to deploy this strategy, you must avoid being a victim.

(c) Keep your relationship networks expanding.

Don’t believe that “the friend of my enemy is my enemy” or “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. If you can’t build a better relationship with your enemy, develop relationships with their friends.

(d) Keep your eye on your own goals.

As the saying goes, “Living well is the best revenge”. Focus on achieving good results with your goals, and your enemies become less and less important in your life.

(e) Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.

Type 4: The Mixed Blessing Political actors.

The mixed blessing political actors play a major role. Here the executive faces a political actor whose potential to threaten or co-operate are equally high. As shown on fig.3, the mixed blessing political actors are Allies and Team Players.

Strategy 4:

In the management of mixed blessing political actors, the consideration of the following are necessary (Dobson & Dobson, 2001):

(i) The determination of the gains to political actors. The vital question here is, “what do the political actors stand to gain. People will do what you want when some benefits will accrue for doing so.

(ii) The measurement of the detriment by the political actors.

It is necessary to ask, “What do political actors stand to lose? You must be realistic about the loss in a political battle.

(iii) The determination of the tolerance for risk and conflict.

What is the level of tolerance for risk and conflict by the political actors? The tolerance for risk and conflict is a matter of individual style and temperament, affects what is at stake. In motivating your allies towards taking risks on an enterprise, you must be prepared to reduce the risk and conflict or increase the payoff to them.
(iv) Work at moving people from the other quadrants:

In building good relationship and commonality of interest, it is easier to turn opponent into allies than its
turn fellow travelers (where interest is mutually exclusive) into allies. To attain this goal, you must be honest
and forthright in your dealings, with a view to being acknowledged as dependable and reliable. The second
most effective thing you can do is to work very hard in understanding the interests and goals of others. To
find a common interest, you must understand the interests of others. Work at putting yourself in other
shoes, seeing situations from different points of view and always providing respectful acknowledgement of
other’s points of view, even if you disagree with them.

(v) Demonstrate that you are an ally worth having. To demonstrate that you are worth having
as an ally, you must demonstrate the power to get things done.

(vi) Stand up for your allies. When the going gets tough, the tough gets going- sometimes at
full speed in retreat. Be careful about bugging out when the situation becomes more
difficult than you had expected. While you want to cut your losses before they become
unacceptable, you also want to show that you are not a “fair-weather friend”.

(vii) Give support to get support. Not everyone's issue is your issue, but if you value and need
the person’s support, take on some issues for the sake of the relationship, whether in
building a relationship or nurturing one that already exists. Don't be afraid of the quid pro
quo: I give you this because I want that. Exchanging favors and support is the primary
currency of the political workplace. The mixed blessing political actors, high on both the
dimension of potential threat and potential co-operation, may best be managed through
collaboration. If the co-operation potential of the political actors is maximized, potentially
threatening actors will find it more difficult to oppose the organization. Indeed, for the
mixed blessing political actors, effective collaboration may well determine the long-term
political actor – organization relationship. If this type of political actor is not properly
managed through collaborative strategy, it can easily become a non-supportive political
actor.

Discussion

In this study, the determination of the strategies for managing political actors, classification of political
actors, political styles were done. While the Purists, Team players, street fighters and maneuvers were
found as political styles, political actors were classified as fellow travelers allies, enemies, opponents,
fellow travelers neutrals, allies neutral, enemies neutral and opponent’s neutrals. The fitting of the political
style to organization type indicates that the Purist, Team player, Street fighter and maneuver are best fit in
minimal high and high political environments respectively. The relationship among the political actors within
the context of the environment/organization is defined by the commonality of interest. The establishment of
the salience and mapping of political actors constitutes an integral part of the management of political
actors in any institution. The analysis of the salience of the political actors indicates that the neutral with
one attribute of legitimacy is low salience. The street fighters, fellow travelers (where interest is mutually
exclusive), maneuvers and enemies with a single attribute of power are dangerous and low in salience. The
purists, opponents, fellow travelers (where interest is not mutually exclusive) with the three attributes of
legitimacy, urgency and power are definitive political actors with high salience. On the management of
political actors, the Allies, Team players, are within the rubrics of mixed blessing. They are high on potential
for threat and potential for co-operation. They should be managed with a collaboration strategy. The
Purists, opponents and fellow travelers (where interest is not mutually exclusive) are supportive political
actors. They are high on potential for co-operation and low in potential for threat. The leadership must
obviate the danger of allowing the mixed blessing and supportive political actors move into the non-
supportive quadrant.

The enemies, street fighters, maneuvers and fellow travelers (where interest is mutually exclusive) are non-
supportive political actors). They are high on potential for threat and low on potential for co-operation. The
allies' neutrals, fellow travelers neutrals, opponent neutrals and enemy neutrals are marginal political
actors. They are low potential on potential for threat and co-operation. They should be managed with information strategy.

The management of political actors in any institution requires scientific methodology and precision. The prescriptive strategies of collaborations, involvement, defense and information for managing mixed blessing, supportive, non-supportive and marginal political actors respectively will enable the attainment of this goal.

**Conclusion**

Organizational politics could be diverted to improper ends as there are functional and dysfunctional consequences of organizational politics. Although organizational politics is a regular phenomenon in institutions, the management of political actors is yet to be fully exemplified. The minimization of the dysfunctional consequences of organizational politics and maximization of their functional consequences is now imperative. The attainment of this goal is highly dependent on the scientific management of political actors. As a condition precedent to this, I identified relevant political styles. The classification of political actors also attracted my attention. The commonality of interest which is the fulcrum upon which political relationships is predicated and the qualitative classes of political actors/salience were examined. The mapping/diagnostic typology of political actors was also alone. I found a nexus/between mapping/diagnostic typology of political actors and quantitative classes of political actors. In the management of mixed blessing, supportive, non-supportive and marginal political actors, collaborative involvement, defensive and information strategies respectively were found suitable. The present study will contribute to the knowledge in the scientific management of political actors with a view to enhancing corporate performance.

**References**


