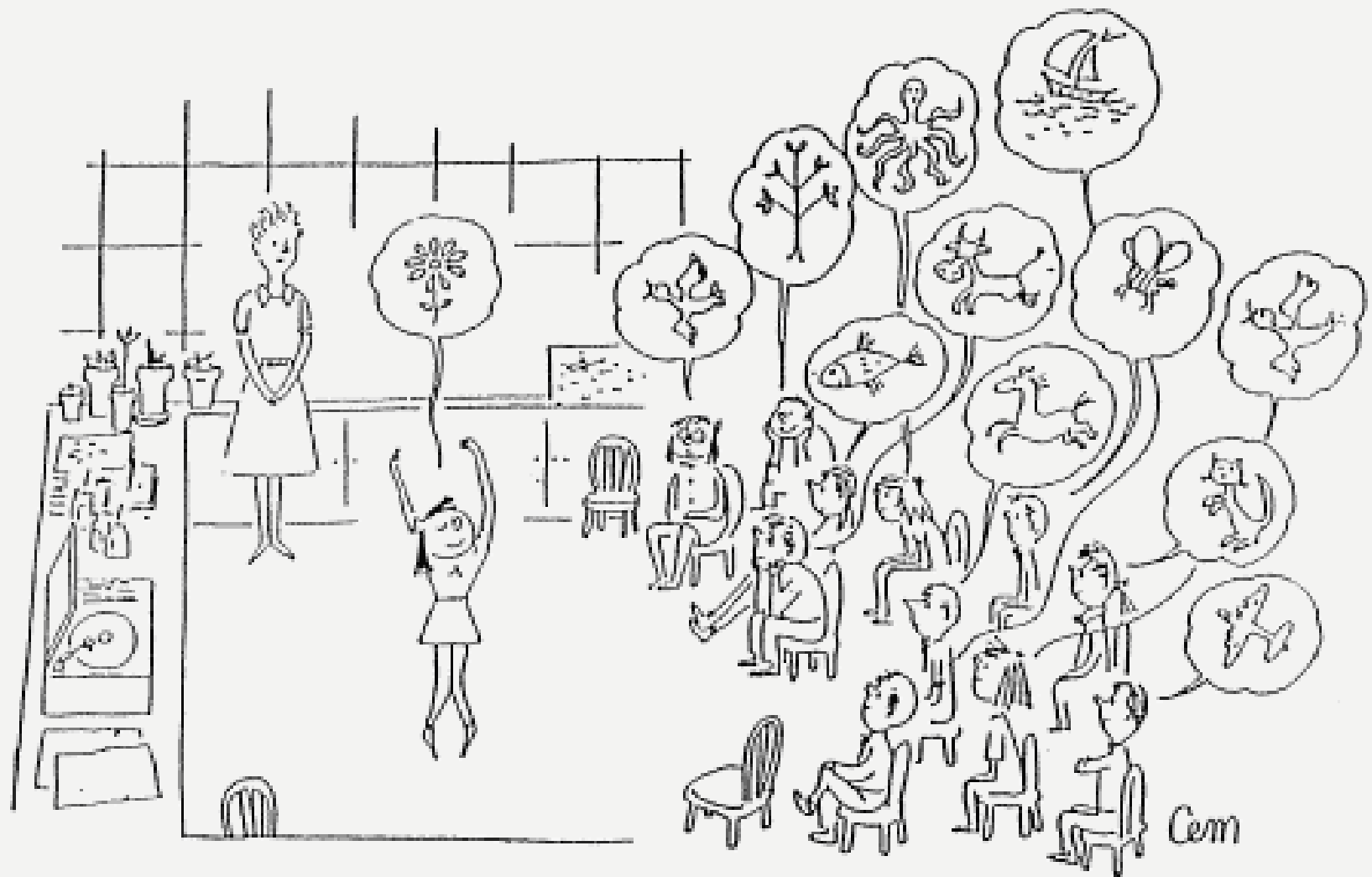


# **REFRAMING ORGANIZATIONS: A FOUR-FRAME MODEL**

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## The Challenge of Multiple Interpretations



*A PROBLEM OF MULTIPLE INTERPRETATION*

# Reframing Organizations: Bolman & Deal's Four Frames

## *I. STRUCTURAL*

Leaders who make change using this approach focus on structural elements within the organization as well as strategy, implementation, and adaptation. Changing institutional structures works well when goals are clear, when cause-and-effect relationships are well understood, and when there is little conflict, uncertainty, or ambiguity.

## *II. HUMAN RESOURCES*

Leaders who approach change from a human resource frame focus on people. This approach emphasizes support, empowerment (perhaps through distributed leadership mechanisms), staff development, and responsiveness to employee needs. A focus on people works well when employee morale is a consideration and when there is relatively little conflict.

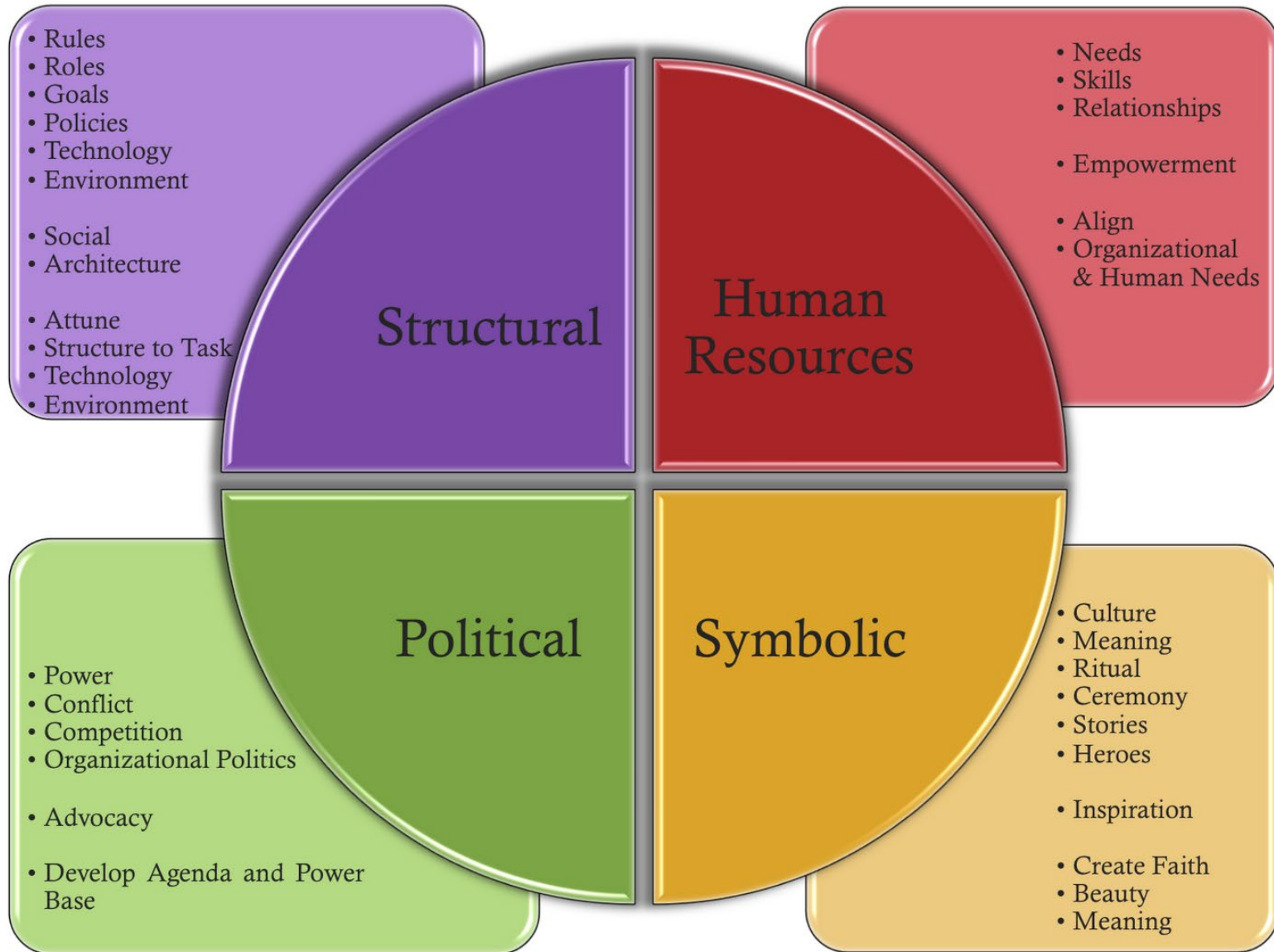
# Reframing Organizations: Bolman & Deal's Four Frames

## ***III. POLITICAL***

Leaders who use a political approach to facilitate change focus on the political realities that exist within and outside organizations. This approach emphasizes dealing with interest groups (and their varying agendas), building power bases, coalition-building, negotiating conflicts over limited resources, and creating compromises. The political approach is appropriate when resources are scarce or diminishing as well as when goals or values are in conflict.

## ***IV. SYMBOLIC***

Leaders who make change using a symbolic approach focus on vision and inspiration. Symbolic leaders feel that people need to believe that their personal work, and the work of the organization, is important and meaningful. Traditions, ceremonies, and rituals are very important to the symbolic approach, which is most appropriate when goals and/or cause-and-effect relationships are unclear.



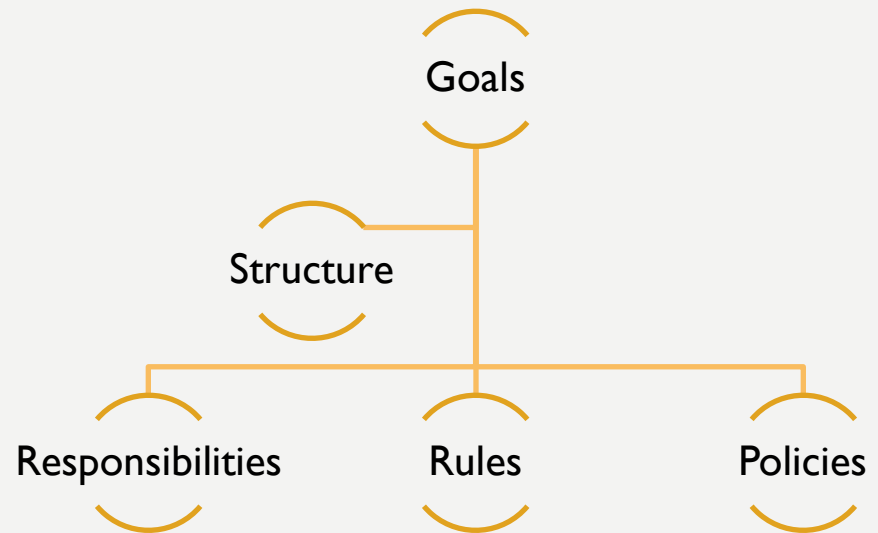
## Exhibit 1.1.

### Overview of the Four-Frame Model.

	FRAME			
	STRUCTURAL	HUMAN RESOURCE	POLITICAL	SYMBOLIC
Metaphor for organi- zation	Factory or machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theater
Central concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organiza- tional politics	Culture, meaning, met- aphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy and political savvy	Inspiration
Basic lead- ership challenge	Attune struc- ture to task, technology, environment	Align organi- zational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

# STRUCTURAL FRAME

- Origins - sociology & management science.
- Goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships.
- Structures fit organizations environment and technology.
- Responsibilities, rules, policies, procedures.



Problems arise when the structure does not fit the situation.





# HUMAN RESOURCES FRAME

- Origins - Psychology.
- Organizations as extended family.
- Individuals with needs, feelings, prejudices, skills and limitations.
- Capacity to learn – and capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs.

Challenge is to tailor organization to people – find a way for individuals to get the job done while feeling good about what they are doing.





# POLITICAL FRAME



- Origins - Political Science.
- Organizations as arenas, contests, or jungles.
- Different interests competing for power and resources.
- Rampant conflict – difference in needs, perspectives, and lifestyles.
- Bargaining, negotiation, coercion, compromise, and coalitions.
- Problems arise when power is concentrated in the wrong places or is too broadly dispersed.

# SYMBOLIC FRAME



- Origins - Social and Cultural Anthropology.
- Organizations as tribes, theatres, or carnivals.
- Culture – rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths.
- Organisation is theatre – actors play role while audiences form impressions.



Problems arise when actors play their parts badly, when symbols lose their meaning, and/or when ceremonies & rituals lose their potency.

# OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR-FRAME MODEL

	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Metaphor for Organization	Factory or Machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theatre
Central Concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organisational policies	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of Leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic Leadership Challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning
Organizational Ethic	Excellence	Caring	Justice	Faith
Leadership Contribution	Authorship	Love	Power	Significance

# CHOOSING A FRAME

Question	Frame if answer is Yes	Frame if answer is No
Are individual commitment and motivation essential to success?	Human Resource, Symbolic	Structural, Political
Is the technical quality of the decision important?	Structural	Human Resource, Political, Symbolic
Are there high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty?	Political, Symbolic	Structural, Human Resource
Are conflict and scarce resources significant?	Political, Symbolic	Structural, Human Resource
Are you working from the bottom up?	Political	Structural, Human Resource, Symbolic

# REFRAMING THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

	Structural	Human Resources	Political	Symbolic
Strategic Planning	Strategies to set objectives and coordinate resources	Gatherings to promote participation	Arenas to air conflicts and realign power	Ritual to signal responsibility, produce symbols, negotiate meanings
Decision Making	Rational sequence to produce right decision	Open process to produce commitment	Opportunity to gain or exercise power	Ritual to confirm values and provide opportunities for bonding
Reorganizing	Realign roles and responsibilities to fit tasks and environment	Maintain balance between human needs and formal roles	Redistribute power and form new coalitions	Maintain image of accountability and responsiveness; negotiate new social order
Evaluating	Way to distribute rewards or penalties and control performance	Process for helping individuals grow and improve	Opportunity to exercise power	Occasion to play roles in shared ritual
Approaching Conflict	Maintain organisational goals by having authorities resolve conflict	Develop relationships by having individuals confront conflict	Develop power by bargaining, forcing, or manipulating others to win	Develop shared values and use conflict to negotiate meaning
Goal Setting	Keep organisation headed in right direction	Keep people involved and communication open	Provide opportunity for individuals and groups to make interests known	Develop symbols and shared values
Communication	Transmit facts and information	Exchange information, needs, and feelings	Influence or manipulate others	Tell stories
Meetings	Formal occasions for making decisions	Informal occasions for involvement, sharing feelings	Competitive occasions to win points	Sacred occasions to celebrate and transform the culture
Motivation	Economic incentives	Growth and self-actualisation	Coercion, manipulation, and seduction	Symbols and celebrations

# REFRAMING LEADERSHIP & CHANGE

	Structural	Human Resources	Political	Symbolic
Effective Leader	Analyst, architect	Catalyst, servant	Advocate, negotiator	Prophet, poet
Effective Leadership Process	Analysis, design	Support, empowerment	Advocacy, coalition building	Inspiration, framing experience
Ineffective Leader	Petty tyrant	Weakling, pushover	Con artist, thug	Fanatic, fool
Ineffective Leadership Process	Management by detail and fiat	Abdication	Manipulation, fraud	Mirage, smoke & mirrors
	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Barriers to Change	Loss of clarity and stability, confusion, chaos	Anxiety, uncertainty, feelings of incompetence, neediness	Disempowerment, conflict between winners and losers	Loss of meaning and purpose, clinging to the past
Essential Strategies	Communicating, realigning and renegotiating formal patterns and policies	Training to develop new skills, participation and involvement, psychological support	Creating arenas where issues can be renegotiated and new coalitions formed	Creating transition rituals – mourning the past, celebrating the future

# THE FOUR-FRAME MODEL

- How do the four frames connect with/to your organization/institution?
- What problems exist, and what are the situations in which they are embedded?
  - Which frames are in play?
- Which frames are most likely to lead to the desired change(s)?
- How can the concepts, metaphors, and values of these frames be used to
  - 1) Reframe the situation(s) and
  - 2) Resolve the problem(s)?





# REFERENCE



Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. John Wiley & Sons.