# The Use of Influence Tactics in Constructive Change Processes

## Kilian M. Bennebroek Gravenhorst and Jaap J. Boonstra

*University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

The use of nine influence tactics by four groups in organizations in constructive change processes was investigated in a field study with 479 participants. Data were collected with a Dutch version of Yukl's Influence Behaviour Questionnaire. The frequency with which line managers, staff specialists, consultants, and works council, delegates used the various influence tactics was examined. Furthermore, differences in direction of influence (upward, downward, or lateral) were assessed and compared to results of previous research in different settings. It was found that rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation were the most frequently used influence tactics. This is an encouraging finding because these three tactics are most effective for gaining target commitment to a proposal or request. In addition, it was found that the four groups used several influence tactics differently. Finally, only three directional differences in tactic use matched prior findings. This result suggests that constructive change processes lead employees to display different influence behaviour than they would in less uncertain and ambiguous circumstances.

## INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Constructive change processes proceed slowly and usually not without difficulties. One of the reasons for the slow or difficult proceeding of constructive change processes is that academics and practitioners have paid relatively little attention to the role of power and influence in such processes (Boonstra, 1995). However, authors from various orientations seem to become increasingly interested in the intimate relationship between power processes and organizational change. Recent publications about organizational development (OD) explicitly address the importance of power and influence in OD practice (French

& Bell, 1995; Greiner & Schein, 1989). The sociotechnical systems approach emphasizes the need for democratization and the distribution of power over all levels in an organization (Cummings, 1994; De Sitter, Den Hartog, & Dankbaar, 1997; Van Beinum, 1993). In addition, empirical work of Pettigrew, Ferlie, and McKee (1992) showed that the power of persons and institutions is an important factor to take into account when analysing processes of change. Likewise, Pfeffer (1992) described how change processes affect existing power constellations and he explained the importance of influence for managing these processes.

The present study focuses on the influence behaviour of four groups in constructive change processes. In this article we report an investigation of the proactive influence behaviour of line managers, staff specialists in business administration, consultants, and works council delegates. We try to contribute to the knowledge about the use of influence in organizational change processes. Previous studies have not focused on influence behaviour during organizational change, and have typically examined the influence behaviour of managers only. Besides these two new elements, the present study builds on earlier research on the relationship between tactic use and direction of influence. The main objectives of this study were: (1) to determine how influence tactics are used by line managers, staff specialists in business administration, consultants, and works council delegates in constructive change processes; and (2) to replicate previous findings concerning directional differences in the use of influence tactics.

## INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE, AND HIERARCHICAL POSITION

In the following two subsections we present the theoretical background of our study. First, we pay attention to influence behaviour, constructive change, use of influence tactics by different groups in change processes, and the relationship between influence behaviour and support for or resistance to change. These topics connect to the first objective of our study. Second, we discuss the relationship between influence behaviour and hierarchical position. We focus on hypotheses that have been tested in previous studies on influence behaviour because we want to know to what extend our findings, support these hypotheses.

### Influence Behaviour in Changing Organizations

Influence behaviour in organizations has been studied quite extensively for the last two decades. Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) were among the first to investigate the influence behaviour of managers. Content analysis lead to the identification of 370 different forms of influence behaviour which were pigeon-holed into 14 categories. Subsequently, factor analysis brought about eight forms of influence behaviour. This exploratory study proved to be an important empirical basis for following studies on influence behaviour of managers (Erez, Rim, & Keider, 1986; Schilit & Locke, 1982; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl

& Falbe, 1990). Yukl and Falbe (1990) continued the work of Kipnis et al. (1980). They developed an instrument, the Influence Behaviour Questionnaire (IBQ), to measure the influence behaviour of managers. In later studies, the IBQ was developed further and psychometric tests were performed (Yukl, Falbe, & Youn, 1993; Yukl, Lepsinger, & Lucia, 1992). Table 1 contains the descriptions of the forms of influence behaviour that are measured with the IBQ. The nine tactics cover a wide range of influence behaviour relevant for managerial effectiveness, or, in a broader sense, for getting things done in an organization.

In our study we focus on influence behaviour in changing organizations, whereas most previous studies of influence behaviour focused on the way that managers influence subordinates, colleagues, and superiors in more or less stable situations. We limit our investigation to constructive change processes that aim at improving an organization. Such processes are characterized by a broad scope and a high amount of change (Cummings & Worley, 1993), which means that

TABLE 1
Definitions of Influence Tactics

| Tactic | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Rational persuasion | The agent uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade the target that a proposal or request is viable and likely to result in the attainment of task objectives |
| Inspirational appeals | The agent makes a request or proposal that arouses target enthusiasm by appealing to his or her values, ideals, and aspirations, or by increasing target self-confidence |
| Consultation | The agent seeks target participation in planning a strategy, activity, or change for which target support and assistance are desired, or the agent is willing to modify a proposal to deal with target concerns and suggestions |
| Ingratiation | The agent uses praise, flattery, friendly behaviour, or helpful behaviour to get the target in a good mood or to think favourably of him or her before asking for something |
| Personal appeals | The agent appeals to target feelings of loyalty and friendship toward him of her when asking for something |
| Exchange | The agent offers an exchange of favours, indicates willingness to reciprocate at a later time, or promises a share of the benefits if the target helps to accomplish a task |
| Coalition tactics | The agent seeks the aid of others to persuade the target to do something or uses the support of others as a reason for the target to agree also |
| Legitimating tactics | The agent seeks to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority or right to make it or by verifying that it is consistent with organizational policies, rules, practices, or traditions |
| Pressure | The agent uses demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders to influence the target to do what he or she wants |

*Source:* Yukl, Falbe, and Youn 1993,  p. 7).  Copyright 1993 by Sage. Reprinted with permission.

they have far-reaching consequences for the strategy, structure, culture, and technology of an organization. Besides the effects on the system, constructive change also has important consequences for the individuals and groups that work in an organization (Bennebroek Gravenhorst & Boonstra, 1997). An example of the implications that constructive change can have for an organization is presented in Box 1.

---

### BOX 1
### Example of Constructive Change in a Financial Services Company

A medium-sized company that provides financial support for all kinds of organizations decides to improve the quality of its services in order to reach the level of competitiveness necessary in the turbulent market of the 1990's. The prime consequence of this decision is that they are going to shift their focus from offering different services to the demands of specific groups of clients. This shift requires a new organizational structure. The functional design aimed at producing the different services in specialized departments needs to be abandoned. Instead, teams will be formed that are equipped to deal with all demands of a specific client group. A central issue in the accompanying cultural change is that the way people work has to be modified thoroughly. As a team, employees will be responsible for the integral and pleasant service of their clients, whereas they used to be responsible for providing just one of services that the company offered. Finally, the main technological change is related to the automated information systems, where merging of different databases is needed to provide the teams with the information they need.

   Constructive change also has important consequences for the individuals and groups that work in an organization. For instance, we witnessed a number of intense discussions about the strategic shift and the structural changes that were necessary to implement it. Issues of power and influence were closely related to the positions that individuals and groups took during these discussions. The main dilemma with which people were faced was the difficult choice between the benefit for the organization and the benefit for themselves or their group. The uncertainty of the implications of the change caused some people to take a cautious or even conservative position. After the discussion was settled in favour of the strategic shift described earlier, a team of internal and external consultants was formed to guide the implementation. During the implementation we observed how the works council changed its rejecting attitude into a slightly positive one, which contributed, moderately to the support for the change amongst employees. It is difficult to make a general remark about the line managers because of their diverging points of view regarding the change. On one side were the resisting managers who continued to question the need for change, followed by their more indeterminate colleagues, and on the other side were the managers who favoured the change and were prepared to really "go for it".

---

During constructive change processes, different groups try to influence the process in order to accomplish a result that is beneficial for them (Boonstra, 1993). Line managers play an important role in the implementation of change processes (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992). They shape the strategic decisions and general goals formulated by the top management in such a way that these decisions and goals can be realized in their unit, department, or team. Staff

specialists and consultants assist both top managers with their strategic tasks and line managers during the implementation (Greiner & Schein, 1989). In Dutch organizations, works council delegates represent the interests of employees: the recipients of change. The power of works councils stems from the Dutch Law on Works Councils which stipulates that the works council must grant its approval in all matters concerning personnel or social policy within an organization.

Several authors stress the importance of commitment in constructive change processes (Axelrod, 1992; Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990; Daly & Geyer, 1994). Commitment is needed because the broad scope and high amount of change require members of an organization to learn new behaviours. Giving up routines, abandoning established procedures, and so on requires considerable effort. Therefore, it is very important that people identify with the process and the requests that are being made in order to attain the formulated goals of the change. The consequences of the use of these influence tactics were investigated in three studies (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). It was found that different influence tactics produced varying effects, that is, commitment, compliance, or resistance to a proposal or request. The most effective tactics for realizing commitment or support for change are inspirational appeals and consultation. Rational persuasion can be effective when used together with either of these two tactics or with other soft tactics such as personal appeals and ingratiation (Falbe & Yukl, 1992).

## Influence Behaviour and Hierarchical Position

The main reason for examining directional differences in the use of influence tactics was to determine whether the types of directional differences which have been found in more stable situations would also be found in organizations where constructive change was taking place. Five previous studies examined directional differences in influence behaviour (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Results from these studies show that the use of influence tactics is associated with the hierarchical relationship between an agent and a target. Thus, managers use tactics differently when they try to influence a subordinate, a colleague, or a superior. The five studies that investigated the relationship between influence tactics and hierarchical position found considerable support for the hypotheses presented later.

Accompanying each hypothesis is a brief summary of the underlying reasoning as put forward by Yukl and Tracey (1992). This reasoning is mainly founded on the hierarchical equality or inequality of the influencing agent and the influenced target, their mutual dependency, or the vagueness of their formal relationship. Furthermore, we describe results for five agent samples that showed additional support for these hypotheses. The combined agent and target sample from the study of Yukl et al. (1993) is treated as an agent sample because they

found their agent and target data to be consistent and therefore did not present them separately.

*Hypothesis 1: Rational Persuasion is Used More in an Upward Direction Than in a Downward or Lateral Direction.*    Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that this more frequent upward use of rational persuasion is the effect of a manager's weaker power base and role expectations, which discourage the use of some other tactics. This hypothesis is supported by results from four agent samples (Erez et al., 1996; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl et al., 1993; Yukl & Tracey, 1992), but results from another agent sample (Yukl & Falbe, 1990) showed no such directional differences.

*Hypothesis 2: Inspirational Appeals are Used More in a Downward Direction than in a Lateral or Upward Direction.*   Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that the use of inspirational appeals is especially appropriate for gaining another person's commitment to work on a new task or project. Such requests are mostly made in a downward direction. The results of two agent samples supported this hypothesis (Yukl et al., 1993; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). A third study showed a slightly different result in the agent sample in that the lateral use of this tactic did not differ significantly from its use in the other two directions; still, inspirational appeals were found to be used significantly more in a downward direction than in an upward direction (Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

*Hypothesis 3:    Consultation is Used More in a Downward and Lateral Than in an Upward Direction.*    We reformulated the original hypothesis of Yukl and Tracey (1992) because it was only partially supported by two of the three studies that investigated it. Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that the use of consultation is especially appropriate when the agent has the authority to plan a task or project but relies on the target to help implement it. This authority is usually downward (thus, the original hypothesis was downward use > lateral and upward use). Yet, the results of two studies showed that consultation is also used more frequently in a lateral direction (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993). A third study found no directional differences for the use of consultation (Yukl & Tracey, 1992). We agree that the authority to plan a task or project is usually downward. However, consulting hierarchically equal colleagues about plans or projects is common practice in organizations. Thus, we expect consultation to be used more frequently in both a downward and a lateral direction than in an upward direction.

*Hypothesis 4: Ingratiation is Used More in a Downward and Lateral Direction Than in an Upward Direction.*    Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that ingratiation is used least in an upward direction because compliments and flattery are more credible when the status and power of the agent is greater than that of the target. Three studies supported this hypothesis (Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl &

Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993). One study found no directional differences in the use of this tactic (Erez et al., 1986).

*Hypothesis 5: Personal Appeals are Used More in a Lateral Direction Than in a Downward or Upward Direction.*   Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued tentatively that the use of personal appeals might be most suitable in a lateral direction because an agent often needs to ask favours of his or her hierarchical equals but lacks the authority to ensure compliance with a formal request. This hypothesis was tested and supported in only one study using an agent sample (Yukl et al., 1993).

*Hypothesis 6: Exchange is Used More in a Downward and Lateral Direction Than in an Upward Direction.*   Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that the use of exchange requires that the agent has something to offer that the target considers desirable and appropriate. Upward use of exchange will be least frequent because of the absence of control over resources and lateral task interdependence in that direction. The results for all four agent samples showed support for this hypothesis (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993).

*Hypothesis 7: Coalition Tactics are Used More in a Lateral and Upward Direction Than in a Downward Direction.*   Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued tentatively that coalition tactics are used least in a downward direction because hierarchically superordinate individuals have substantial power over subordinates, which makes the support of others redundant. However, the evidence for this hypothesis is mixed. It has been supported in one study (Yukl et al., 1993) and partially supported in another; Erez et al. (1986) found that their targets used coalition tactics more in a lateral direction than in an upward or downward direction. Two other studies found no directional differences in the use of coalition tactics (Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe 1990).

*Hypothesis 8: Legitimating Tactics are Used More in a Lateral Direction Than in a Downward or Upward Direction.*   Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that legitimating tactics are most appropriate for unusual requests of doubtful legitimacy. These requests are mostly made in a lateral direction where ambiguity about authority and task responsibilities is greatest. The only study with an agent sample that tested this hypothesis found it to be partially supported. Legitimating tactics were used more in a lateral and downward direction than in an upward direction (Yukl et al., 1993).

*Hypothesis 9: Pressure is Used More in a Downward Direction Than in a Lateral or Upward Direction.*   Yukl and Tracey (1992) argued that the use of pressure involves an agent's coercive power, which is greatest in a downward

direction. This last hypothesis regarding directional differences was supported by all four studies (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993).

## METHOD

### Participants

The study was conducted with participants from 14 medium-sized organizations (about 500 employees) involved in constructive change processes such as re-designing of strategy, establishing new methods of co-operation, and business process re-engineering. The criterion for inclusion of an organization in the study was involvement in a constructive change process with far-reaching consequences for the whole organization or at least several divisions. To verify whether an organization met this requirement, information on the specific change process was obtained through interviews and by analysis of internal reports. Layoffs, change processes leading to large cutbacks, and so on were not investigated. Participating organizations were provided with feedback on the outcome of the research in the form of a report and an averaged influence tactics profile of the organization or relevant divisions. Individual participants received a summary of the report and a personal influence tactics profile.

Employees within the organizations were invited to take part in an investigation of the use of influence tactics during organizational change. Within every organization the questionnaires were distributed among all line managers, staff specialists, consultants, and works council delegates dealing with the change. More than 1000 questionnaires were handed out. A stamped envelope was enclosed so that the participants could return their questionnaires directly to the researchers.

### The Influence Behaviour Questionnaire

The use of influence tactics was measured with an adapted Dutch version of the Influence Behaviour Questionnaire (IBQ). We decided to work with the IBQ because the proactive influence behaviours it measures are relevant for directing constructive change processes. Moreover, it allows us to compare our results with data available from previous research with the IBQ. The questionnaire includes scales for measuring the nine influence tactics (Table 1). Each influence tactic is measured by five to nine items. An item consists of a description of an influence attempt and participants were asked to indicate how frequently they had performed the given behaviour during the last six months. An example of an item describing the use of inspirational appeals is "I develop enthusiasm for an activity by appealing to the person's pride in performing a challenging task successfully."

The adapted version of the IBQ used in this study differed from the original in the following respects. First, instead of instructing participants to describe their influence behaviour in a given direction, we asked them to choose the person who was the primary object of their influence attempts in the change process. Providing this instruction would keep results comparable and probably contributed to the value of the data because participants had the opportunity to portray their most salient influence relationship. Second, to be able to assess direction of influence, we asked each participant to indicate their position in the organization as well as the position of their target.

For practical reasons we decided to use the agent version of the IBQ. One of the limitations of using the agent version or any self-report questionnaire is that it is difficult to control for social desirability (Judd, Smith, & Kidder, 1986). Participants could, for instance, overrate the use of desirable tactics such as inspirational appeals and consultation and underrate the use of undesirable tactics such as pressure. Results of three studies that compared agent and target data showed that the issue of social desirability does not pose a great threat to the value of agent data. Erez et al. (1986) found significant differences in the reported frequency of tactic use for all tactics they investigated. These differences seemed to be attributable to differences in need for control: Agents reported more frequent use of so-called strong tactics than targets; targets, on the other hand, reported being influenced most by weak tactics, in an apparent effort to attenuate the feeling of being bossed around. Most interactions between direction and perspective (agent versus target) were not significant. These findings suggest that studies which use only agent or target data (slightly) over- or underestimate the frequency of tactic use, but that the directional patterns found will not be biased. Moreover, two other studies that compared agent and target data showed most results to be consistent (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993).

## The variables

The two independent variables in this study are function in the change process and direction of influence. Function in the change processes was indicated by the respondents by ticking one of four categories (line manager, staff specialist, works council delegate, or consultant). A total of 479 questionnaires was received which included 199 line managers, 101 staff specialists, 65 consultants, and 114 work council delegates. Given the pressure of working in a changing organization, the response rate can be considered quite high, ranging from 45% to 61% over the 14 organizations.

Direction of influence represents the hierarchical relationship between the agent and the target and could be assessed in 442 cases. We asked respondents to indicate who they would keep in mind while filling out the questionnaire. In most cases, it was easy to determine the direction of influence. For example, when a

line manager had chosen an employee this was coded as a downward influence attempt and when a staff specialist had chosen a CEO this was coded as an upward influence attempt. More complex cases, such as a consultant who had chosen a staff specialist, were coded if there was sufficient information about the situation in the organization during our study. The 37 ambiguous cases were coded as missing. Downward influence attempts were described by 217 participants, lateral influence attempts by 151 participants, and upward influence attempts by 74 participants.

Finally, the dependent variables were the nine influence tactics. In the questionnaire, after each description of an influence tactics respondents were asked to indicate whether they displayed that behaviour "never", "seldom", "occasionally", "regularly", or "often" in the past six months.

## RESULTS

### The Questionnaire

Several studies have performed psychometric tests on the Influence Behaviour Questionnaire and found the instrument to be reliable and valid (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Nevertheless, we found that a number of influence tactics were moderately correlated (Table 2). Yukl and Tracey (1992) found similar results and explained them by referring to the fact that some tactics are used together in the same influence attempt fairly often. Still, results from their descriptive research and factor analyses support the decision to treat the influence tactics as distinct forms of behaviour. Scale reliabilities, in terms of Cronbach's alpha, were satisfactory, ranging from .70 to .83 (Table 2).

TABLE 2
Scale Reliabilities and Intercorrelations of Influence Tactics

| Tactic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Rational persuasion | (.72) | | | | | | | | |
| 2.  Inspirational appeals | .43 | (.83) | | | | | | | |
| 3.  Consultation | .30 | .45 | (.77) | | | | | | |
| 4.  Ingratiation | .34 | .35 | .29 | (.78) | | | | | |
| 5.  Personal appeals | .33 | .39 | .26 | .47 | (.76) | | | | |
| 6.  Exchange | .33 | .38 | .19 | .38 | .48 | (.77) | | | |
| 7.  Coalition tactics | .31 | .25 | .15 | .38 | .32 | .35 | (.76) | | |
| 8.   Legitimating tactics | .28 | .17 | .07 | .20 | .23 | .25 | .35 | (.70) | |
| 9.  Pressure | .30 | .27 | .13 | .17 | .30 | .24 | .28 | .32 | (.74) |

*Note*: Alpha coefficients are in parentheses.

## The MANOVA

We performed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) as a first step in answering our research questions. The MANOVA with function in the change process and direction of influence as independent variables, and the nine influence tactics as dependent variables produced the following results. For function in the change process a significant main effect was found, $F(27, 1127) = 5.90$, $P < .001$. This result shows that line managers, staff specialists, works council delegates, and consultants use the influence tactics differently. For direction of influence a significant main effect was found, $F(18, 752) = 2.09$, $P < .01$. This result shows that influence is exercised differently in a downward, lateral, and upward direction. The Function × Direction interaction effect was also significant, $F(54, 2252) = 1.46$, $P < .05$. This means that we must check whether agents with different functions have specific ways of exercising influence in any of the three directions. Closer analysis showed that only the univariate interaction effect for personal appeals was significant, $F(6, 385) = 3.47$, $P < .01$. Staff specialists use personal appeals more frequently in a lateral direction than line managers, works council delegates, and consultants. Since the other eight univariate interactions effects were not significant, we limit our discussion of the results to the univariate analyses of variance that clarify the main effects.

## INTERPRETATION

### Function in the Change Process and Use of Influence Tactics

The first objective in this study was to determine how influence tactics are used by line managers, staff specialists, consultants, and work council delegates. We started by inspecting the relative frequency of the nine influence tactics for each group. Table 3 shows the rank order of tactic use for each separate group and averaged over groups. Line managers, staff specialists, and consultants used the same tactics almost equally frequently. Works council delegates displayed a somewhat different pattern, which was mainly attributable to the higher ranking of pressure for this group. Kendall's coefficient of concordance among the rankings was .71 ($P < .01$), which indicates that rank orders were comparable. For three of the four groups, rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation received the highest rankings; personal appeals, exchange, and coalition tactics received the lowest rankings. Our first conclusion is that line managers, staff specialists, and consultants try to get their proposals and requests carried out by (1) explaining their necessity, (2) creating enthusiasm for them, and (3) letting others participate in these proposals and requests. The pattern for works council delegates looks slightly different because their relatively more frequent use of pressure.

TABLE 3
Rank Order of Frequency of Use of Influence Tactics by the Four Groups

| Tactic | Line Managers | Staff Specialists | Consultants | Works Council Delegates | Other Groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rational persuasion | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Inspirational appeals | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Consultation | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Ingratiation | 6 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| Personal appeals | 7 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| Exchange | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| Coalition tactics | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Legitimating tactics | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Pressure | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 |

*Note*: Kendall's coefficient of concordance, $W = .71$, $P < .01$. For line managers, staff specialists, and consultants, as well as for the sample as a whole, the first three rankings are based on practically equal means (Table 4).

We also tested whether the four groups differed in the use of influence tactics. The rankings showed that three of the four groups use the influence tactics about equally frequently. However, rankings demonstrate the *relative* frequency of tactic use. We tested for differences by comparing the *absolute* frequencies. The means for tactic use by the four groups are presented in Table 4, together with the results of the univariate *F* tests. A more specific analysis of these results was made by Duncan's multiple-range test.

For seven of the nine tactics, reported frequencies differed significantly between groups. Line managers, staff specialists, and consultants reported to use rational persuasion, consultation, personal appeals, and exchange more frequently than works council delegates. Furthermore, staff specialists and consultants reported to use ingratiation and coalition tactics more frequently than line managers and works council delegates. Therefore, our second conclusion is that the frequency of tactic use is different for line managers, staff specialists, works council delegates, and consultants.

## Directional of Influence and the Use of Tactics

Our second research objective was to replicate previous findings concerning directional differences in the use of influence tactics. We attempted to determine whether the results that were obtained in relatively stable situations would also hold when a study was conducted during constructive change processes. The means for tactics use in different directions are presented in Table 5, together with the results of the univariate *F* tests. Univariate *F* tests showed significant

TABLE 4
Means and Standard Deviations of Influence Tactics, Divided by Group

| Tactic | Line Managers (n=195) | Staff Specialists (n=101) | Consul-tants (n=65) | Works Council Delegates (n=114) | Other Groups (n=479) | F(3, 476) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rational persuasion** | | | | | | |
| M | 2.5a | 2.5$_a$ | 2.5$_a$ | 2. l$_b$ | 2.4 | 13.80*** |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.6 | |
| **Inspirational appeals** | | | | | | |
| M | 2.6$_a$ | 2.5$_a$ | 2.6$_a$ | 1.8$_b$ | 2.4 | 44.11*** |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.7 | |
| **Consultation** | | | | | | |
| M | 2.6$_a$ | 2.6$_a$ | 2.7$_a$ | 1.8$_b$ | 2.4 | 56.32*** |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.7 | |
| **Ingratiation** | | | | | | |
| M | 1.1$_b$ | 1.3$_a$ | 1.4$_a$ | 0.9$_c$ | 1.2 | 16.36*** |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | |
| **Personal appeals** | | | | | | |
| M | 1.0$_a$ | 1.1$_a$ | 1.0$_a$ | 0.8$_b$ | 1.0 | 4.66** |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | |
| **Exchange** | | | | | | |
| M | 0.8$_a$ | 0.8$_a$ | 0.8$_a$ | 0.6$_b$ | 0.7 | 3.67* |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | |
| **Coalition tactics** | | | | | | |
| M | 0.9$_b$ | 1.2$_a$ | 1.3$_a$ | 1.1$_b$ | 1.1 | 9.83*** |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | |
| **Legitimating tactics** | | | | | | |
| M | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.4 | *1.5* | 1.4 | 1.24 |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | |
| **Pressure** | | | | | | |
| M | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.55 |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | |

*Note*: Within rows, different subscripts indicate significant pairwise differences for means on Duncan's multiple-range test. The response choice "never" was coded as 0. Thus, 4 was the maximum possible mean for the use of each tactic. *$P < .05$; **$P < .01$; ***$P < .001$.

directional differences for five of the nine tactics. Pairwise comparisons with Duncan's multiple-range test generated unexpected results, diverging considerably from results that were obtained in previous studies.

Consistent with hypothesis 2, inspirational appeals was used more in a downward direction than in an upward or lateral direction. Consistent with hypothesis 7, coalition tactics were used more in a lateral and upward direction than in a downward direction. Inconsistent with hypothesis 3, consultation was used more in a downward direction than in a lateral and upward direction. Inconsistent with hypothesis 4, ingratiation was used more in an upward direction than in a lateral

TABLE 5
Means and Standard Deviations of Use of Influence Tactics by
Direction of Influence

| Tactic | Downward (n-217) | Lateral (n=151) | Upward (n=74) | F(2, 440) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rational persuasion | | | | |
| M | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 1.86 |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.5 | |
| Inspirational appeals | | | | |
| M | $2.6_a$ | $2.1_c$ | $2.3_b$ | 17.95*** |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.8 | |
| Consultation | | | | |
| M | $2.6_a$ | $2.1_b$ | $2.3_b$ | 26.51*** |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.8 | |
| Ingratiation | | | | |
| M | $1.2_{ab}$ | $1.0_b$ | $1.2_a$ | 3.21* |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | |
| Personal appeals | | | | |
| M | $1.0_a$ | $0.8_b$ | $1.0_a$ | 5.22** |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | |
| Exchange | | | | |
| M | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 2.59 |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.7 | |
| Coalition tactics | | | | |
| M | $0.9_c$ | $1.1_b$ | $1.3_a$ | 16.66*** |
| SD | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | |
| Legitimating tactics | | | | |
| M | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.42 |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | |
| Pressure | | | | |
| M | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 0.61 |
| SD | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | |

*Note*: Within rows, different subscripts indicate significant pairwise differences for means on Duncan's multiple-range test. The response choice "never" was coded as 0. Thus, 4 was the maximum possible mean for the use of each tactic. *$P < .05$; **$P < .01$; ***$P < .001$.

direction. The use of this tactic in a downward direction did not differ significantly from its use in either of the two other directions. Inconsistent with hypothesis 5, personal appeals were used more in a downward and upward direction than in a lateral direction. No significant directional differences were found for the use of rational persuasion, exchange, legitimating tactics, and pressure, which is inconsistent with hypotheses 1, 6, 8, and 9, respectively. These results lead to our third conclusion: The directional pattern found in relatively stable situations does not apply to organizations undergoing constructive change

processes. Caution is needed with regard to this conclusion because other explanations can not be ruled out. We will return to this issue in the following section.

## DISCUSSION

This is the first study conducted on the influence behaviour of four important groups in organizations undergoing constructive change. The first objective of this study was to determine how influence tactics are used by line managers, staff specialists in business administration, consultants, and works council delegates. Looking at the overall rankings we find that the three most frequently used influence tactics are rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation. These three tactics are most effective for gaining commitment. Commitment to proposals and requests, as well as to the change process in general, is a very important factor in the successful proceeding of constructive change processes. Hence, the frequent use of effective tactics may have contributed positively to the outcomes of the investigated change processes. However, it should be noted that the present study only focused on constructive change processes, that is, processes that are intended to develop and improve organizations. Presumably, different results would have been found in organizations faced with large cutbacks, retrenchment, or other downsizing processes.

Incidentally, the same "top three" is reported in other studies of influence behaviour. Apparently, people prefer the use of rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation over other tactics. Compared to other studies, a salient finding in our study was the more frequent use of inspirational appeals and pressure. This finding could be the result of the context of our study. Inspirational appeals may be needed more frequently in constructive change processes than in stable situations because people have to do things that are not required under normal conditions. Similarly, pressure may be used more frequently to keep the process going and to include people who do not want to change.

When comparing the means of reported tactic use it was found that line managers, staff specialists, consultants, and works council delegates used almost all of the nine tactics differently. We think these differences can be explained in two ways. First, there may be relationship between the use of influence tactics and the specific tasks and roles of the four groups in change processes. For example, we argued that line managers are typically implementors and that implementors have to translate strategic decisions and general goals of the top management to their units, departments, or teams. On the contrary, works council delegates represent the interests of employees. This difference can explain why line managers use inspirational appeals more than works council delegates.

Second, the differences in tactic use by line managers, staff specialists, works council delegates, and consultants could be related to the power sources of these groups. Power sources form an important base for exercising influence. Usually,

works council delegates have less power than line managers, staff specialists, and consultants. This could explain why works council delegates exercise less influence that the other groups (i.e. when looking at the absolute frequencies). At the same time we see that works council delegates use pressure relatively more frequently than the other groups. This finding may originate from the most important power source of works councils: their legal rights. Such theoretical reasoning of course needs an empirical basis. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between power sources and influence behaviour in future studies.

Our second research objective was to replicate previous findings concerning directional differences in the use of influence tactics in a different context. Results from our study diverged considerably from results that were obtained in previous studies. As expected, inspirational appeals was used more in a downward direction than in an upward or lateral direction. This tactic is associated with task assignment and the initiation of projects. Apparently, constructive change processes do not affect the directional pattern for assigning tasks and initiating projects that was found in relatively stable situations. Gaining commitment and needing help or assistance was more directed at persons in a hierarchically lower position, as found in prior research. The pattern also remains the same for the use of coalition tactics. In constructive change processes this tactic is used least in a downward direction, indicating that referring to the support of others continues to be relatively unusual in this hierarchical situation.

Besides these two expected results, we also found unexpected directional patterns for three tactics and an unexpected absence of directional differences for four tactics. For instance, ingratiation was not expected to be used more in an upward direction than in a lateral direction because that is not in line with power relations or role expectations. We do not wish to discuss explanations for unexpected results for all individual tactics. At this point it is preferable to consider two general explanations for the unexpected results.

First, the justification of the hypotheses was mainly founded on power relations between hierarchically equal or unequal agents and targets, and their mutual dependency. The modification of power relations often is an explicit change issue which can lead to temporarily obscured responsibilities, dependencies, and hierarchies. Thus, the unexpected results could be a consequence of the situation in an organization during a constructive change process. Second, the unexpected results could be a consequence of cultural differences in influence behaviour between the Netherlands and the United States (cf. Hofstede, 1980). Exercising pressure on a superior for instance, might be more accepted in the Netherlands than in the US. In the future, comparison of data from different countries could help us understand how cultural differences are related to influence behaviour.

We already mentioned a limitation of this study: the absence of empirical data on power sources of the four groups. A second limitation is the absence of a

"control group". We could have been more certain of our assumption that the unexpected results for direction of influence are related to the context of our study if we would have been able to compare these results with data collected in an organization not involved in a constructive change process. A third limitation pertains to groups that were not included in this study. Though difficult to investigate, the influence behaviour of, for instance, CEOs and board members is of considerable importance in change processes (cf. Pettigrew & McNulty, this issue).

Despite these limitations, this study contributed to our knowledge of power and influence in constructive change processes. First of all, we found that people working in an organization undergoing constructive change have to deal with specific and complex patterns of influence behaviour. It was argued before that commitment is a very important factor in constructive change processes. Rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation are effective tactics for gaining commitment. Our observation that most of the investigated change processes proceeded relatively smoothly supports the idea that influence behaviour is one of the factors that contributes to the outcome of these processes. Second, this study shows that it is important not to limit our investigations to the influence behaviour of line managers. Other groups of organizational members are also actively trying to exercise influence on others and on the change process. Further research of the behaviour of these groups is necessary and we should measure their power sources too. Finally, the survey method proved to be valuable for different groups in changing organizations. It gave us the opportunity to provide these groups with feedback about, for instance, their relatively frequent use of the ineffective influence tactic pressure. This might prevent unnecessary resistance to change, or, more generally speaking, feedback about influence tactics can contribute to a thoughtful and skilful use of the behavioural repertoire.

## REFERENCES

Axelrod, D. (1992). Getting everyone involved: How one organization involved its employees, supervisors, and managers in redesigning the organization. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, *28*, 499–509.

Beer, M., Eisenstat, R.A., & Spector, B. (1990). *The critical path to corporate renewal.* Boston*:* Harvard Business School Press.

Bennebroek Gravenhorst, K.M., & Boonstra, J.J. (1997). Beïnvloedingsgedrag van externe en interne adviseurs in veranderingsprocessen [Influence behaviour of external and internal consultants in change processes]. *M&O Tijdschrift voor Management en Organisatie*, *51*, 36–49.

Boonstra, J.J. (1993). *Integrale organisatieontwikkeling: Vormgeven aan fundamentele veranderingsprocessen in organistaties* [Integrated development of organizations: Designing fundamental change processes in organizations] (2nd ed.). Utrecht, The Netherlands: Lemma.

Boonstra, J.J. (1995). Power and influence in organizational change. In *Power dynamics and organizational change: Symposium conducted at the seventh European congress on work and organizational psychology, Györ, Hungary* (pp. 9–2). Leuven, Belgium: EAWOP.

Cummings, T.G. (1994). Self-regulating workgroups: A Sociotechnical synthesis. In W.L. French, C.H. Bell, & R.A. Zawacki (Eds.), Organization development and transformation: Managing effective change (4th ed.) (pp. 268–277). Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin.

Cummings, T.G., & Worley, C.G. (1993). *Organization development and change* (5th ed.). St Paul, MN: West.

Daly, J.P., & Geyer, P.D. (1994). The role of fairness in implementing large-scale change: Employee evaluations of process and outcome in seven facility relocations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *15*, 623–638.

De Sitter, L.U., Den Hartog, J.F., & Dankbaar, B. (1997). From complex organizations with simple jobs to simple organizations with complex jobs. *Human Relations*, *50*, 497–543.

Erez, M., Rim, Y., & Keider, I. (1986). The two sides of the tactics of influence: Agent vs. target. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, *59*, 25–39.

Falbe, C.M., & Yukl, G. (1992). Consequences for managers of using single influence tactics and combinations of tactics. *Academy of Management Journal*, *35*, 638–652.

French, W.L., & Bell, C.H. (1995). *Organization development: Behavioral science interventions for organization improvement* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Greiner, L.E., & Schein, V.E. (1989). *Power and organization development* (Rev. ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Cultures consequences: International differences in work-related values* (pp. 622–641). London: Sage.

Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R., & Kidder, L.H. (1986). *Research methods in social relations.* Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Kanter, R.M., Stein, B.A., & Jick, T.D. (1992). *The challenge of organizational change*. New York: The Free Press.

Kipnis, D., Schmidt, S.M., & Wilkinson, I. (1980). Intraorganizational influence tactics: Explorations in getting one's way. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *65*, 440–452.

Pettigrew, A.M., Ferlie, E., & McKee, L. (1992). *Shaping strategic change: Making change in large organizations*. London: Sage.

Pettigrew, A., & McNulty, T. (this issue). Sources and uses of power in the boardroom. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *7*(2).

Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Managing with power: Politics and influence in organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Schilit, W.K., & Locke, E. (1982). A study of upward influence in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *27*, 304–316.

Schriesheim, C.A., & Hinkin, T.R. (1990). Influence tactics used by subordinates: A theoretical and empirical analysis and refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson subscales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *75*, 132–140.

Van Beinum, H. (1993). The kaleidoscope of workplace reform. In F. Nashold, R.E. Cole, B. Gustavsen, & H. van Beinum (Eds.), *Social science for social action: Toward organizational renewal: 3. Constructing the new industrial society* (pp. 16–202). Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum.

Yukl, G., & Falbe, C.M. (1990). Influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *75*, 132–140.

Yukl, G., Falbe, C.M., & Youn, J.Y. (1993). Patterns of influence behaviour for managers. *Group and Organization Management*, *18*, 5–28.

Yukl, G., Kim, H., & Falbe, C.M. (1996). Antecedents of influence outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *81*, 309–317.

Yukl, G., Lepsinger, R., & Lucia, T. (1992). Preliminary report on development and validation of the Influence Behaviour Questionnaire. In K.E. Clark, M.B. Clark, & D.P. Campbell (Eds.), *The impact of leadership* (pp. 417–427). Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Yukl, G., & Tracey, J.B. (1992). Consequences of influence tactics used with subordinates, peers, and the boss. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *77*, 525–535.