INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS IN THE WORKPLACE: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION BASED SCALE OF OFFICE POLITICS

by

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(Under the Direction of Jerold L. Hale)

ABSTRACT

Many researchers originating from in the fields of Organizational Behavior and Industrial / Organizational Psychology have empirically examined the phenomenon commonly referred to as organizational politics, workplace incivility, deviant workplace behaviors, or "office politics". One shortcoming of the existing literature is a failure to acknowledge or recognize the inherent communicative nature of the political behaviors which researchers attempt to measure. This trend has manifested a research gap by neglecting to recognize and examine office politics as a set of communicative behaviors. This dissertation seeks to address this gap by constructing a scale of office politics based upon the communicative act.

Three hundred and seventy seven participants completed various scales constructed to measure observed political behaviors. Results of the investigation found relationships between organizational level, in-group and out-group status, perceived motives, and political behavior. Results were interpreted as a call for organizational leaders to increase their information sharing efforts with those at lower levels in the organization and to de-emphasize group differences.

INDEX WORDS: Office Politics, Interpersonal Dynamics, Scale Development, Workplace Relationships, Identity Management

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DEDICATION

To my mother. Thank you for always supporting my efforts to better myself. You're the only one that really knows what all was sacrificed to achieve this goal. We did this together.

I'd also like to dedicate this document to my father Perry Townsend, III, Ann Giglio, Tiffany Youngs, and my grandfather, Perry Townsend, Jr.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Page

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, AND RATIONALE

In April of 2007, four female coworkers from Hooksett, New Hampshire made headlines when they were fired after discussing a rumor involving an alleged romantic affair between their boss, Town Administrator David Jodoin, and a female employee identified in court documents as "A" (Gomez, 2007). Both David Jodoin and "A" were married to others at the time. The four women -- former Tax Assessor Sandra Piper, her administrative assistant Joanne Drewniak, Code Enforcement Officer Michelle Bonsteel, and assistant Jessica Skorupski, now known in the media as "The Hooksett Four" -- fought an unsuccessful battle to get their jobs back via multiple legal appeals to the Hooksett City Council. Town officials later released a statement through an attorney stating:

> "It was clear to the council that the issue was not one of idle gossip but a conscious and concerted effort to damage reputations, to spread untrue stories with the knowledge that they were not true and evidently to retaliate for some perceived preferential treatment." (Associated Press, 2007)

The women reportedly stated that what upset them about the rumor was the perception of impropriety by the public and the preferential treatment "A" was receiving, including higher pay than Drewniak and Skorupski despite having less seniority and experience. Thus, the women felt insulted by this perceived favoritism due to their comparison with another employee regarding organizational tenure, level of service, and prior work evaluations (Associate Press, 2007).

Hooksett officials indicated that the issue was not one of idle gossip and publicly stated that: "The rumors, were they believed credible, could have been cause for removal of the administrator and could have forced the basis for a sexual harassment suit against the town"

(Associated Press, 2007). One notably strange outcome included Jodoin receiving a salary increase of $18,000 spread across the next three years of his service to the town in return for his professional handling of the situation. Critics of the town have boiled their arguments down to one question: is there an employee anywhere who isn't guilty of gossiping about coworkers?

Harsh penalties for gossip are rare, but not unheard of. Employees at state liquor stores in Cumberland County, N.C., can be fired for gossiping under a rule enacted in 2006 (Russell, 2007). In Maryland, an aide to the Republican governor was fired in 2005 for spreading rumors that the mayor of Baltimore, a Democrat, had cheated on his wife (Russell, 2007).

While elements of gossip, rumor, favoritism, slander, ingratiation, and accusations of unfair compensation may be commonplace in the workplace, often employees will rationalize these behaviors as honest attempts to sort through a confusing situation. Many researchers have indicated that gossip may originate from rivals in cutthroat competitive workplace environments (DiFonzo & Bordia, 2000; Foster, 2004; Rosnow, 1988; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1998). However, further research is necessary to address these common workplace phenomena as one single, higher order construct.

Office Politics

Many researchers originating from the fields of Organizational Behavior and Industrial / Organizational Psychology have empirically examined the phenomenon commonly referred to as organizational politics (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999; Vigoda, 2000), workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, Anderson, & Porath, 2000), deviant workplace behaviors (Babiak & Hare, 2006; Robinson & Bennett, 1995), or "office politics"(OP) (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Hochwarter, Kacmar, Treadway, & Watson, 2003; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999; Vigoda, 2000). Historically, these branches of academia

have conceptually defined "office politics" as the inexplicable influence of certain individuals to strategically advance their own motives and/or hinder others (Cohen & Vigoda, 1999; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Hochwater, Kiewitz, Castro, Perrewè, & Ferris, 2003; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Kirchmeyer, 1990; Vigoda, 2000). Thus, existing research assumes that an individualistic motive is inherent to all behaviors associated with office politics. This study will attempt to address this shortfall of assumption by investigating the perceived motives behind political behavior.

A second shortcoming of the existing literature is a failure to acknowledge or recognize the inherent *communicative* nature of the political behaviors which researchers attempt to measure. For example, the disciplines of Organizational Behavior and Industrial / Organizational Psychology study the phenomenon at the macro level as a set of organizational variables which impact profit margins or are based upon psychological processes inherent to job analysis, performance appraisals, and employee selection. Recent research focusing on office politics has tested the moderating effect of age on perceived office politics (POP) and organizational commitment (Witt, Treadway, & Ferris, 2004), examined the effect of POP on job satisfaction, absenteeism, burn-out, perceived organizational support, and job-induced tension, (Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewe, & Johnson, 2003). Other reviews of literature have linked POP with a host of additional outcomes (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). Therefore, existing literature identifies office politics as a variable to be measured at the collective or organizational level. For example, pre-existing measures of office politics (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) (see Appendices C & D) address the phenomenon as part of a company's culture rather than a function or result of specific communicative behaviors conducted by individual employees. This trend has manifested a

research gap by neglecting to recognize and examine office politics as a set of specific *communicative* behaviors conducted at the individual level.

While the study of organizational politics as a communicative process and the underlying motives for such behaviors has escaped extensive scrutiny, it is important for two reasons. First, by conceptualizing and measuring the phenomenon as a set of communicative behaviors we can begin to provide insight into what are the perceived motives behind certain workplace behaviors. Attribution theory explains that people base their strategies for interacting with others on the perceived motives attributed to the observed communicative behaviors of those around them (Harvey, Orbuch, & Weber, 1992; Heider, 1958; Martinko, 1995; Ross & Fletcher, 1985; Weiner, 1986). Similarly, goals and motives are theorized to guide aspects of message production ranging from general message development strategies (Berger, 1997) to micro-level message features (Samp & Solomon, 2005). From a message production standpoint, perceived goals and motives are critical to interpreting meanings assigned to communicative practices as well as the choices individuals make when electing which messages they use in response to others. Thus it is expected that perceived motive in the context of the workplace should predict behavioral communicative choices. With respect to this previous research regarding attribution theory and goals / motives research, we can begin to understand and explain certain communicative acts as reactions to the phenomenon of perceived office politics.

Second, despite the construction of several noteworthy pre-existing models of office politics (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995; Vigoda & Cohen, 1998) and a political theory of leadership (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002), the study of organizational politics is lacking in useful theoretical frameworks created to explain the process of political

communicative acts which are encountered in the workplace. Since attribution theory seeks to explain why and how people interpret the events and phenomenon encountered in their lives (Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967), the theory seems to be the most likely fit for beginning to analyze and interpret political behavior in the workplace.

In order to address both of these issues, the goals of this research are threefold. The first goal is to attempt to identify and define the tactics of political behavior that occur in the workplace as a set of communicative behavioral acts performed at the individual level. The function of this goal is to confirm what communicative behaviors are widely perceived as political. This goal will be accomplished by conceptually defining both "office politics" and political behavior, justifying the logic that these behaviors are inherently communicative, and constructing a new scale of organizational politics to emphasize how the phenomenon is inherently a communicative process. Achievement of this objective will also involve participants comparing and contrasting the behaviors of those they believe practice or do not practice office politics. In addition, in-group / out-group status (of the self and other) will be measured and used to predict contextual levels of perceived office politics in the workplace.

The second goal is to determine what motives employees associate with the communicative behaviors they interpret as or perceive to be political. Unfortunately, researchers typically either fail to address the motives, goals, and intentions underlying office politics, or they automatically assume that people engage in office politics for personal gain, individual achievement, or advancement of their own career. However, there seems to be an infinite number of potential motives for political behavior. Some examples include: boredom, high need for drama, the desire to simultaneously advance one's own career while also achieving organizational goals, high need for power, egocentrism, altruistic goals of aiding the careers

goals of others (i.e.: nepotism), inhibiting the progress of others, revenge, or even spite. These motives can more easily be categorized by examining goal achievement in relation to whom is the beneficiary (i.e.: the individual, the organization, another employee, or no one at all). With regard to the extensive research performed in regards to self-enhancing goals, no published investigations currently exist which study the motives for political behaviors. The assumption is always made that political behaviors are done for individual achievement. This assumption is evidenced in how previous researchers have defined office politics.

The third goal is to use attribution theory to help explain how people are making sense of the behaviors they identify as political. Attribution theory is commonly defined as the way in which individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior (Harvey, Orbuch, & Weber, 1992; Heider, 1958; Ross & Fletcher, 1985; Weiner, 1986). Thus, it would seem to be a useful springboard for understanding how individuals associate certain motives as the driving force behind specific political acts.

More concisely, the focus of this research will be on emphasizing intra-organizational politics as a communicative act, identifying specific communicative behaviors as accurate measures of office politics, and identifying the perceived motives of such behavior. This research is key to furthering the understanding of how people communicate in the organizational context because research that systematically investigates interpersonal behaviors conducted at work is valued for what it reveals about the state of the contemporary workplace (Cheney & Carroll, 1997).

Defining "Office Politics"

Many researchers from various fields of study have defined office politics in many different ways. As a result, certain trends or concepts emerge amongst these definitions that

seem to contribute to a larger order construct comprised of various interpersonal skills (persuasive power or ability to influence, perceived sincerity, networking ability, etc.) and which combine to form the phenomenon of office politics. These recurring concepts and contrasting themes are described herein along with their corresponding schools of thought, an explanation of political skill, and finally a set of specific political behaviors accompanied by the description of a popular measure for office politics.

Researchers have consistently referred to office politics as an inherent, unavoidable, and inevitable part of any organization, group, or team with three or more members (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Kiewitz, Hochwarter, Ferris, & Castro, 2002; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999; Reardon, 2005; Zhou & Ferris, 1995). Mintzberg (1985) definitively claims that all organizations are inherently political arenas. The consensus is that all organizations are effected by office politics and thus it seems to be an inherent part of any society, association, collection of individuals, workplace, group, or team that has limited resources and a collective goal or objective. Therefore, if office politics is an inescapable quality of the organizational dynamic which impacts all aspects of the workplace environment, then this study is necessary to better understand a phenomenon that already pervades every aspect of our organizational lives.

Office Politics as Persuasion and Influence

As was previously stated, the phenomenon of office or intra-organizational politics is collectively described throughout multiple bodies of literature as the inexplicable influence of certain individuals to strategically advance their own motives and/or hinder others (Cohen & Vigoda, 1999; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Castro, Perrewè, & Ferris, 2003; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Kirchmeyer, 1990; Vigoda, 2000). For example, ingratiation tactics seem to be one form of persuasion commonly used in the workplace. Jones (1964)

defines ingratiation as “a class of strategic behaviors illicitly designed to influence a particular other concerning the attractiveness of one’s personal qualities” (p. 11). Ralston (1985) stated that ingratiatory tactics “are means that individuals use to exert upward influence in the organization in order to attain personal goals” (p.478). Ingratiation, closely related to Machiavellianism, represents “a broad set of assertive strategies, purposely used to gain the approval of others who control rewards” (Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin, 1995, p. 35).

Other researchers refer to the construct of office politics as a collection of influence activities organizational members resort to in order to maximize their interests and goals in the workplace (Vigoda & Cohen, 1998). Dubrin (1990) defines office politics as the “subtle and informal methods of gaining any type of power or advantage” (p.1). While Ferris, Davidson and Perrewe (2005) define the phenomenon as the ability to understand others at work and use that knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal or organizational objectives.

Conversely, Mintzberg (1983) defines organizational politics as behaviors that are intended to promote self interest and are acted out without regard to or even at the expense of institutional objectives. Other researchers state that organizational politics refers to all behaviors that occur on an informal basis within an organization and involve intentional acts of influence that are designed to protect or enhance individuals’ professional careers (Drory, 1993; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981). Thus, there seems to be a common element of persuasion or influence in how researchers are collectively defining office politics. Most, but not all, scholars posit that office politics includes the receipt of benefits, gaining a competitive advantage, or achieving one’s own individual objectives. In other words, while most researchers agree that there are

elements of persuasion and influence inherent to office politics, there is less agreement as to whom is the beneficiary of such behaviors (e.g.: individualistic, collectivistic, altruistic, or null).

Office Politics as Reward Distribution

Some researchers (typically those who study business management and organizational behavior) have chosen to contextually define office politics by describing it as an environment where people are rewarded based on personality instead of merit (Serven, 2002). This exhibits a tendency to define office politics based on the distribution of rewards, promotions, or other scarce resources. Dobson and Dobson (2001) define office politics as the informal and sometimes emotion-driven process of allocating limited resources and working out goals, decisions, and actions in an environment of people with different and competing interests and personalities. Several significant concepts are addressed in this definition. The motive of the behavior is defined as emotion, not reason or the achievement of individual or organizational goals. Also noteworthy is the concept of reward structures and the allocation of scarce resources which is weighted heavily in Kacmar and Ferris's (1991) widely cited and comprehensively tested measure entitled: the Perception of Office Politics Scale (or POPS) (See Appendix C).

How organizations distribute rewards should be considered communicative in the sense that it sends a message to members regarding what conduct, behaviors, norms, values, and performance levels are valued (Seibold & Shea, 2001). Therefore, it is conceivable that people who play by the organizational rules and adhere to bureaucratic policy would visibly succeed in a hypothetical environment that is free of office politics. But if office politics is omnipresent, then in reality it is much more important *who* you are or more accurately *how you are perceived*, as opposed to what you think or how you perform in the political organization. Here, promotions are more likely based upon establishing rapport with key decision makers or even the elimination

of eligible competitors instead of active selection based upon merit and objective measures of production (Servin, 2002). For example, when learning of an impending downsizing effort by the employer, peers or subordinates might use political behavior as a competitive advantage to obtain the few remaining positions. Thus, there will be politics whenever departments or individuals compete within a single organization.

Office Politics as a Metaphor

Thackaberry (2003) states that the phrase "office politics" is itself a metaphor that directs our attention toward the seamy, agonistic side of life in the workplace. The author focused her analysis around the popular CBS reality television competition named "Survivor" as a definitive metaphor exemplifying the key components (i.e.: influence, power, coalition building, gossip and rumor, deception, and undermining) of office politics (Thackaberry, 2003). Clair (1996) argues that everyday colloquialisms about work help to shape meanings and expectations for work, particularly for young people who are in the anticipatory socialization phase for work (see also Jablin, 2001). Metaphors for work, in particular, are worth paying attention to because they have the power to define reality (Deetz, 1995). As Putnam, Phillips, and Chapman (1996) explain, metaphors help to explain the unfamiliar by linking it to the familiar. But metaphors have a dual nature: they illuminate by drawing our attention toward some aspects while drawing our attention away from other aspects of a phenomenon (Putnam, et. al., 1996). Typically, the use of this metaphor focuses on the social behaviors performed in the workplace perceived to be unethical, negative, or inappropriate (Thackaberry, 2003).

Political metaphors for work also call attention to organizations as "arenas wherein different groups and coalitions use various types of power to protect their diverse and often competing self-interests" (Vande Berg & Trujillo, 1989, p. 250). And, according to Morgan

(1997), political metaphors for organizing also help us to notice "competing interests among task, career, and extramural interests in individual lives" (p. 162). Political metaphors for organizing also raise our awareness about how organizations are designed to engender competition for scarce resources among competing groups (Lazega, 1992). As Morgan (1997) puts it, "the system more or less ensures the kind of competitive struggle on which organizational politics thrives" (p. 168). More recent scholarship on the political dimensions of work-life draws our attention to how discourse sustains disparities between privileged and marginalized interests in the workplace (Deetz, 1992; Mumby, 1987, 2001). Thus, the idea of competition between different individuals or interest groups holding varying levels of power with opposing goals and objectives becomes a key element in defining office politics.

Despite the frequency of the political metaphor in organizational communication research, Morgan (1997) points out that office politics can still be a taboo topic for many people. Part of the reason company politics are frowned upon stems from the great respect our society has for science and logic. Individuals, especially those in managerial positions, are expected to act objectively and rationally. However, reality is often far from this desired state of objective decision making. The impact of internal bias on subjective evaluations are often downplayed or not acknowledged as existing at all. Thus, for the rationalist, political behavior is unwarranted maneuvering and considered to be manipulation (Newman, 1982).

In regards to the phenomenon of political behavior, Morgan (1997) states that "it breaks all rules of organizational etiquette to impute private motive to organizational acts" which therefore makes it "extremely difficult for organizational members to deal with this crucially important aspect of organizational reality" (p. 209). The belief that organizations are rational also blinds us to the possibility that decisions and actions may be made for "political" reasons.

As Vande Berg & Trujillo (1989) note, conceiving of organizations as political arenas runs counter to the "longstanding idea that organizations are rational enterprises which employ one large collectivity of workers who share a limited set of common goals" (p. 250). This inconsistency or false duality between individual and organizational goals necessitates an investigation into the motives which drive political behavior.

A Balanced Definition of Office Politics

Early researchers of office politics defined the concept with very negative connotations that reflected people using their interpersonal skills to mask their abuse of position and authority (Drory & Romm, 1988; Kirchmeyer, 1990; Mintzberg, 1985). The strategic use (or lack thereof) of bureaucratic policy was perceived as an unethical tool for masking subjective evaluations as rational, objective, and justified political behaviors necessitated by the context, situation, or negatively perceived actions of a coworker. More recently however, the research trend on the topic has attempted to reflect a more neutral or balanced approach to defining office politics (Dobson & Dobson, 2001; Reardon, 2005; Vigoda, 2003). For example, Ferris et al (2005) emphasize office politics as the ability to know when and how to position oneself in the proper place and stance on an issue to take advantage of and even create opportunities. Other researchers have noted this approach and have adopted a decidedly neutral, nonpejorative view of politics, characterizing politics as neither inherently good nor bad, but rather a fact of life and a feature woven into the very fabric of organizations (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002).

For the purposes of this research, office politics will be defined with a similar balanced perspective, reminiscent of these recent research trends. Formally, I define the phenomenon of office politics as a naturally occurring social phenomenon where people use a covert set of

influence tactics where the motives remain hidden and the person(s) are perceived to be sincere. Note that this definition purposefully neglects assuming a specific motive while emphasizing the previously noted concepts of pervasiveness, influence, hidden motives, and apparent sincerity. Therefore, office politics could metaphorically be described as a double edged sword or a neutral construct which does not assume or imply a beneficiary of the political efforts.

Political Skill

Another noteworthy facet of defining office politics is how political skill is differentiated from other psychological constructs such as intellect or task oriented expert power. To explicate this contrast, expert power was originally defined as special knowledge or expertise of specific task objectives (French & Raven, 1959). Political skill is independent from task type intelligence or cognitive ability, because it is a different sort of competency and does not depend on mental acuity for its effectiveness (Ferris, et al, 2005). Those considered high on political skill are more likely in possession of what French and Raven (1959) described as referent power, essentially the power of charisma or trait admiration. Social leaders and those high on political skill can also use referent power for coercion. One of the things people fear most is social exclusion, and all it takes is a word from a social leader for us to be shunned by others in the group. Thus, people low on political skill may potentially be considered high performing individuals when evaluated on objectively measured task performance (knowledge, skills, and abilities which create measurable output), yet fail subjective organizational standards of contextual performance (exhibited through organizational citizenship behaviors, cooperation, and the following of implicit rules or norms) and interpersonal effectiveness (or the extent to which one can maintain good relationships with their fellow coworkers).

Political skill is frequently described and defined as a collection of various interpersonal abilities (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewe, 2005). It seems almost a higher order construct of various social skills such as self-monitoring, emotional intelligence, ego-resiliency, and social self-efficacy (Ferris, et al, 2000). Throughout more recent research, typically there are four key facets or dimensions of political skill: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, apparent sincerity.

Social astuteness. Ferris et. al (2000) define political skill as an interpersonal style construct that combines social astuteness with the ability to communicate well, and demonstrate situationally appropriate behavior in a disarmingly charming and engaging manner that inspires confidence, trust, sincerity, and genuineness. More than just an element of self-monitoring or self-awareness, this concept is defined by behaviors involving shrewd observation and the ability to accurately predict how they themselves, as well as others, are being perceived. The politically skilled employee possesses an intuition concerning what communicative behaviors to publicly demonstrate in particular situations (Ferris et, al, 2000). High self-monitoring individuals are constantly watching other people, what they do and how they respond to the behavior of others (Snyder, 1974; Snyder & Gangestad, 1982). Such people are very self-conscious and like to "look good" and will hence usually adapt well to differing social situations. In contrast, the socially astute are not only sensitive to the cues and reactions of others but also are accurate predictors of how others will interpret their behavior.

Interpersonal influence. The politically skilled are able to covertly exert a powerful persuasive force on those around them by appropriately adapting and calibrating their behaviors to each situation so as to elicit particular responses from others (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewe, 2005). This involves more than an aware intention to persuade ones coworkers. For example,

Miller (1980) defines persuasive communication as any message that is intended to shape, reinforce, or change the responses of another or others. This definition was criticized for "limiting persuasive activity to intentional behavior" as well as volitional behavior (Stiff & Mongeau, 2003, p. 4). Thus, persuasion in the organizational context can be intentional or unintentional as is observed in French and Raven's (1959) concept of referent power where people (or coworkers) desire to identify with others based upon a general attraction or admiration of the individual and their core values. Those high on interpersonal influence appear to coworkers as pleasant and productive to associate with. They are not always overtly political and are viewed as organizational leaders that seem to effortlessly manipulate a situation without detection from others.

Networking ability. Some organizational members possess the ability to network or build social capital by developing strategic alliances and coalitions. These bonds can come in the form of informal advice networks, a chosen mentor who already possesses a strong power base in the organization, or even formally sanctioned committees. The purpose here is to develop friendships and build trust with others while simultaneously gathering information, gaining favorable reactions to their ideas, and taking advantage of upcoming opportunities that others may not yet be privy to. They know when to call on others for favors and are perceived as willing to reciprocate. Well networked individuals may even go out of their way to do favors for powerful others in order to create feelings of personal obligation or unspoken reservoirs of implied debt.

Apparent sincerity. People who practice political skill behave in a disarmingly charming and engaging manner that inspires confidence, trust, and sincerity (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999). They are perceived to be trustworthy and genuine when they interact with

others (Ferris, Perrewe, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2000). The key element though is that these individuals *appear* or are *perceived* to be forthright, regardless of the actual communicative behavior or underlying motive. Perceived intentions are what determine apparent sincerity.

To put this element of political skill in context, it is useful to look at an organizational illustration. For example: if you stay after hours and work late, your superior can interpret this in one of two ways. If the superior thinks you really care about completing the project or achieving the organizational goal, then the behavior is labeled in a positive fashion as "organizational citizenship." However, if the behavior is interpreted only as a Machiavellianistic attempt to gain some future reward, then the behavior is labeled negatively as "political." This effect is both common sense and supported by research (Bolino, 1999).

Interestingly, individuals seen as having ulterior motives are not very successful at influence attempts (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). They are low in real political skill even though they may see themselves as highly sophisticated political operators (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewe, 2005). This element of covert versus overt (or detectable versus non-detectable) motive seems key in determining who is politically skilled and who is not. It is the individuals who come across as or are *perceived to be* genuine, sincere, and authentic in their communicative behaviors who are actually high in political skill (Ferris et al, 2005). Those truly skilled at office politics are those individuals who do not appear to be trying to influence or manipulate people at all. As a result, it is possible for someone to have positive, altruistic, or noble motives and intentions but still be unable to inspire comfort and trust because of low levels of perceived sincerity or a lack of political skill. Conversely, those high in political skill are able to manufacture perceived authenticity or feign sincerity in a believable fashion for superiors, coworkers, or message receivers regardless of actual motives, goals or intent. Thus, people high

in political skill not only know precisely what communicative behaviors will be perceived as appropriate in different social situations at work, but they also know exactly how to covertly perform the behaviors in a sincere manner that disguises any potentially manipulative motives and renders the influence attempt successful.

Building on the these key concepts identified in previous researchers' definitions, I define political skill as a set of covert interpersonal abilities comprised of ingratiation, coalition building or networking, undermining, self-promotion, and perceived sincerity or covert deception which when combined operate effectively together to create an environment where trust and relationship building are the norm regardless of the underlying motive. The key concept here is that the motive is masked and undetectable, not the political behavior itself.

Political Behaviors

In a strictly neutral sense, the phrase "political behavior" denotes communicative acts designed to influence outcomes, evaluations (social and professional), and others' behaviors beyond those formally prescribed by the organization (Sussman, Adams, Kuzmits , & Raho, 2002). Throughout the organizational literature, there is a core set of behaviors that are commonly referred to as "political" in the organizational context. These communicative behaviors include: forming alliances or strategic coalitions, withholding information from targeted coworkers (or the lack of communication), undermining the credibility or integrity of other colleagues via gossip / rumor and negative innuendo, doing of favors with the implicit or unspoken expectation that the favor will be returned, sabotaging the efforts of others, deception, agreeing with powerful others or telling superiors what they want to hear, and withholding criticism of the ideas or efforts of superiors. These are the behaviors which will be empirically measured in this study. Strangely, many of these communicative acts are not present in the most

widely cited measure of perceived office politics, specifically Ferris and Kacmar's Perception of Office Politics Scale (POPS) (See Appendix D) (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997).

Measuring Political Behavior. This measure, which became popular amongst organizational behaviorists in the early 1990s, is significant because it focused on employees' subjective perception of organizational politics rather than actual political behavior or influence tactics. Concentration on the perception of politics instead of actual political behavior appeared to stem from the fact that the former is more easily defined, explained, and empirically measured in lieu of the social-desirability effect and the unethical stigma commonly associated with political behaviors. Ferris and Kacmar (1991, 1992) suggested that the perception of organizational politics represents the degree to which respondents view their work environment as unjust, unfair, or political in nature from the individual viewpoint. The approach was rooted in Kurt Lewin's argument that people respond to their perception of reality, not to reality itself (Lewin, 1948). In other words, politics in organizations should be understood in terms of what people think of it rather than the behaviors which embody the actual phenomenon (Lewin, 1936). Later on, Porter (1976) argued in reference to organizational environments, that perceptions are important to study and understand even if they are misperceptions of actual events.

The POPS eventually evolved into a more refined version of itself after Kacmar and Carlson (1997) extended previous studies by using structural equation modeling to re-evaluate the measure's reliability and validity (see Appendix C). The researchers tested and revised the original scale while conducting three different studies using nine different samples for a total of 2758 respondents in order to produce a more refined version of the POPS. The resulting items were divided into three factors: (1) general political behavior, (2) go along to get ahead, and (3) pay and promotion policies (see Appendix D). Despite its popularity, the POPS did face some

criticism regarding its ability to represent the entire political environment in a given organization (Vigoda & Cohen, 1998). Specifically, the measure is heavily weighted towards measuring pay and promotion strategies (or reward structures) while neglecting the elements of persuasion, networking ability, and perceived sincerity. However, a consensus does exist in research that the scale accurately measures an important dimension of the intra-organizational climate created by power struggles and influence tactics performed by all organizational members.

Covert Behaviors. One behavior which seems benign on the surface but has major organizational implications involves the exchange of favors resulting in implied obligations. This building of reservoirs of obligation means assisting others or breaking policy with the expectation that when the need arises, others will reciprocate in your favor by overlooking deviations of organizational policy or providing unwarranted positive evaluations. Here, employees are creating temporary coalitions or strategic alliances which are implied but never openly recognized. Cialdini (2001) describes this rule of reciprocation as one of the most potent weapons of persuasion. The rule states that people should repay, in kind, what another person has provided them (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Those who are talented at office politics will often exploit this rule of reciprocation by doing favors for powerful others in order to facilitate implicit compliance and manipulate future decisions in their favor. This is one good example of how employees are able to covertly influence decisions in their favor through the use of power derived from favor exchange.

The element of plausible deniability or strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984) is a common thread between these political communicative acts. This commonality reveals an even darker side of office politics**.** A defining moment in the office politics phenomenon exists when those who use these political tactics deny that politics are playing a role in their decisions and

behaviors. Similarly, Eisenberg's (1984) concept of strategic ambiguity describes the way people intentionally communicate in an unclear fashion while still accomplishing their goals. Another important property of strategically ambiguous communication is deniability. This characteristic is especially useful for preserving future options (Eisenberg, 1984), allowing people to save face, delaying conflict, testing reactions to ideas, and avoiding personal responsibility (Clampitt, 1991). This strategic-control perspective downplays the ethical concerns of the decision to manipulate others while emphasizing the resulting actions it produces as mutually satisfying for both parties (Eisenberg, Goodall, & Tretheway, 2007). Plausible deniability is attainable by making decisions or performing interpersonal guerilla tactics in such a way as to mask or conceal their motives as being in favor of organizational goals, when in reality individual motives have been the driving force. This tendency of using covert political tactics reveals how political pressures are more influential than we would like to admit.

Political Behaviors Conceptually and Operationally Defined

For the purposes of this study, the concept of "political behaviors" will be defined as a set of interpersonal communication behaviors which are used to serve one's own power gaining strategy within the organization. More specifically, this research will seek to measure the following political behaviors: forming strategic alliances, engaging in gossip, spreading rumor or hearsay, Machiavellianistic behaviors, coalition building, undermining the credibility of other coworkers, undermining the integrity of others, doing favors with the expectation that the favor will be returned, sabotaging the efforts of others, deceiving others, re-framing or re-interpreting a situation, selectively presenting information, disguising one's agenda, inappropriate reward distribution, using strategic ambiguity, sabotaging the work efforts of others, agreeing with superiors, telling superiors what they want to hear, self-promotion, and taking credit for the

output of others. Thus, office politics is the act of engaging in political behaviors in the workplace.

Political behaviors will be studied as the result of the dialectic tension found between the goals of the organization versus the goals of individuals. Accordingly, Servin (2002) defines office politics as acting in one's own self interest instead of what is in the best interest of the organization. Contextual implications involve institutional dynamics and company culture permitting these political actions and sometimes even encouraging them. Although this phenomenon will be examined based upon the individual as the unit of analysis, the observed behaviors of fellow coworkers will also be examined in regards to their responsibility for providing the context or backdrop wherein political behaviors are viewed as either healthy competition or unethical.

Motivation

One way to understand organizations and the process of organizing via communication is by understanding the motives, desires, and actions of the people in that structure and the responses to those actions (Perrow, 1979; Weick, 1979). Thus, it is not surprising that the complexity and dynamics of this process have been studied from multiple disciplinary perspectives, and through a variety of metaphorical lenses (Morgan, 1997). One perspective generating considerable research interest focuses on the motives and behaviors of organizational members through a political lens. In this series of studies, I adopt such a perspective and seeks to examine the organization as a political system, or a network of interdependent members using power, influence, and political maneuvering to achieve their individual and organizational goals (Pfeffer, 1981; Mintzberg, 1983; Ferris et al., 2000).

Existing research has proven that the particular achievement goal orientation that an athlete adopts may be affected by organizational or situational factors present within the setting (Duda, 1992). Mastery and performance oriented climates within the classroom have been linked to task-involved and ego-involved motives, suggesting that motivational climate plays an influential role in the development of individual goal orientations among students (Ames & Archer, 1988). A mastery climate tends to promote positive affect toward the class, more adaptive learning strategies, and greater challenge-seeking behaviors among its students, whereas a performance climate encourages normative or other-referenced standards of success that typically produce lower perceived ability in students subsequent to failure outcomes (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988). A similar comparison can be made when we apply these academic context principles to the context of the workplace. McClelland's (1975) achievement motivation theory stated that a person has need for three things (achievement, power, and affiliation) but that people differ in degree in which the various needs influence their behavior. Although contextual structure represents one of many situational factors of achievement motivation theory, specific information regarding its relative influence on both individual motives and perceptions of organizational climate may assist in clarifying the developmental aspects of workplace motivation among individual employees and designing effective intervention strategies at the organizational level (Ryska & Yin, 1999).

A comprehensive review of literature on defining the term "motivation" would find that there are no singular definitions of the term because there are so many aspects of it (Pinder, 1998). However, for the purposes of this study, work motivation will be defined as:

> "a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration" (Pinder, 1998, pp 11).

One noteworthy concept within this definition includes the idea of "energetic forces." This seems reminiscent of the notion of persuasive power or influence in regards to one's ability to stimulate or induce themselves (or others) to achieve a predetermined goal. The phrasing that the source of motivation may originate from external parties or "beyond an individual's being" speaks to the ability to understand how certain messages and communicative behaviors will be received, interpreted, and acted upon by other parties in the external environment. This definition is critical because it emphasizes the effect on one's individual work motivation from the implicit relationship between the external organizational environment one works in and the internal self.

The Motives of Political Behavior

A review of the literature summarizing the communication effects of power and status differentials in organizational hierarchies results in a well-documented conclusion: Because of the inherent tension in superior-subordinate relations, candor, openness, and authenticity are often compromised (Stohl & Redding, 1988; Sussman, Adams, Kuzmits , & Raho, 2002). When communicating upward, subordinates tend to encode and decode from a guarded, defensive posture; when communicating downward supervisors tend to encode and decode from a command and control posture (Jablin, 1979; Falcione et al., 1988; Stohl & Redding, 1988). More specifically, politically motivated behaviors are "those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization" (Farrell & Peterson, 1982,

p. 405). In short, organizational members engage in strategic message encoding/decoding for purposes of (1) protecting their ego, (2) enhancing their image, and / or (3) increasing the probability of receiving favorable treatment. This strategic communication behavior, enacted for self-serving and self aggrandizement purposes is typically defined as the essence of political behavior.

Acknowledging the trend that most researchers define political behaviors as some form of message produced to create self-serving benefits or to ultimately achieve individualistic goals, it then becomes crucially important to begin to question this assumption of individualistic motives. Is it possible that some political behaviors could also benefit the individual and the organization simultaneously? If all organizations are political arenas (Mintzberg, 1985) and all organizational members conduct political behaviors that are defined as benefiting the individual, then how are organizations ever able to achieve collectivistic goals? For example, organizational members must somehow simultaneously achieve both individualistic goals (through political behavior) and collectivistic goals (through cooperation) in order to sustain the organization while also advancing their own careers. Similarly, the perceived motives behind political behaviors could be viewed as having no real benefit to any parties and does not aid in the achievement of any goals. For example, some may perceive the gossip of others as merely an attempt to pass the time or entertain themselves during breaks. Thus, the key idea here is that existing research has created a false duality between the achievement of organizational (collectivistic) goals versus individual goals via political behavior and a flawed logic which states all organizations are political, and all political behaviors are performed to achieve individualistic goals.

Since the majority of existing research has collectively defined office politics as behaviors used to achieve individual goals and behaviors motivated by individual gain, this study

seems critical to furthering our understanding of what are the specific motives behind these communicative acts. The determination of motivational forces behind this social phenomenon has been widely overlooked during researchers' attempts to understand its effect upon outcome variables which are perceived to impact profit margins and organizational development efforts. To clarify, there are countless different motives for political behaviors which have only anecdotal evidence to support their existence. Examples include: boredom, high need for drama, the desire to simultaneously advance one's own career while also achieving organizational goals, high need for power, egocentrism, altruistic goals of aiding the careers goals of others (i.e.: nepotism), inhibiting the progress of others, revenge, and spite. However, for the purposes of this research, these specific motives are generalized into four categories in regards to who is perceived to be the beneficiary of the behaviors: (1) the individual performing the political behavior, (2) the organization, (3) another individual, or (4) no one benefits from the behavior.

Attribution Theory

Heider originally defined the term attribution as the process of drawing inferences about the behaviors of others (1944, 1958). Kelley (1967) uses the metaphor to define attribution theory when he states that people are scientists trying to gather information in a reasonably rational way and reach decisions regarding the causes of others behavior. Thus upon observing a person's actions, we tend to immediately reach conclusions that go beyond mere sensory information. These inferences or conclusions are snap-judgments which are limited by the observer's perception, involve a general lack of information, are based on personal bias, and founded on mere speculation (Young, 2000).

At its core, attribution is a three stage process. First the behavior is observed or the action is perceived. Second, a judgment of intent is made where the behavior is determined to be

deliberate / malicious or accidental / unintentional. Finally, the behavior is attributed to internal or external causes (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2003). Reasons for making causal inferences about the behaviors of others include a need for clarity and a need to know what to expect of others (Weiner, 1986). Accordingly, by making an attribution one satisfies these two goals by (a) fulfilling a general desire to understand the world in which one lives, and (b) by gaining the perceived ability to predict and thus control similar events in the future (Harvey, Orbuch, & Weber, 1992; Martinko, 1995; Ross, 1977; Weiner, 1986; Young, 2000).

Attribution theory is commonly conceived of as the way in which individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior (Harvey, Orbuch, & Weber, 1992; Heider, 1958; M. Ross & Fletcher, 1985; Weiner, 1986). Ross (1977b), who first coined the term "attribution error," states that "attribution theory, in its broadest sense, is concerned with the attempts of ordinary people to understand the causes and implications of the events they witness" (Ross, 1977). For the purposes of this research, attribution theory will be defined as judgments which are made in order to explain the unknown motives for certain political, communicative behaviors, or inferences that explain why difficulties are being experienced in the workplace.

Three basic assumptions underlie this theory. The first is that is that people seek to interpret and understand the behaviors and outcomes they observe in terms of causes or motives (Manusov, Floyd, & Kerssen-Griep, 1997). Thus people will try to determine why people do what they do and determine the cause behind certain outcomes. The second assumption is that people create inferences in a logical and orderly fashion, thus assigning causes systematically (Manusov et. al, 1997). The third assumption is that these inferences and attributions play an important role in determining reactions to the given outcomes or behaviors (Manusov et. al,

1997). Accordingly, a person seeking to understand why another person did something may attribute one or more causes to that behavior.

According to Heider, a person can make one of two attributions in regards to their locus of control (Heider, 1944, 1958). The first is described as internal attribution. This is the inference that a person is behaving in a certain way because of some controllable factor or inherent personality trait such as attitude or character (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2003; Martinko, 1995). Here the assumption is made which assigns personal responsibility to the party involved. The second option is external attribution. This is the inference that a person is behaving a certain way because of their uncontrollable external environment (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2003; Martinko, 1995). In this scenario, the inference is that the person involved was unable to affect the outcome.

Ross (1977) suggests that people tend to make inaccurate attributions about others' behavior by "overestimating the importance of personal or dispositional factors relative to environmental influences" (pp. 179). In short, people tend to mistakenly make internal attributions about others' negatively perceived behavior or outcomes when the other had little or no control of the outcome, while often erroneously making external attributions to their own (controllable) negative behavior / outcomes. Conversely, people tend to attribute the positive outcomes / behaviors of others to external factors while maintaining that the positive outcomes / behaviors experienced in their own lives are due to internal forces. Ross (1977) calls this mistake the fundamental attribution error.

Much research has recently been published which uses attribution theory and attribution error to explain the motives for certain communicative behaviors and how people make sense of these interpersonal acts (Daly, 1996; Floyd, 1999; Lewis & Daltroy, 1990; Manusov, Floyd, &

Kerssen-Griep, 1997; Yan & Gaier, 1994; Young, 2000). However, no research exists which uses attribution theory to help explain the phenomenon of organizational politics. This study seeks to fill this void by empirically examining "office politics" as a set of *communicative* behaviors. The goal in measuring these behaviors is to (1) determine what variables affect one's perception of political behavior observed in the workplace, and (2) to explore how the attribution theory begins to explain the how people make sense of the motives or goals which drive the observed political behaviors of other coworkers in the workplace.

In-group and Out-group Bias

When people belong to a group, they derive our sense of identity, at least in part, from that group. People enhance this sense of identity by making comparisons with out-groups. In-group bias is the preferential treatment people give to whom they perceive to be members of their own groups (Tajfel, 1970). Out-group bias is the negative associations applied to those excluded from the in-group (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For example, during play children can be observed spotting "differences" so that they are able to exclude someone from a circle of friends or a group. Children will even invent imaginary or artificial attributes such as "cooties" and verbally project them on someone in order to leave them out of the play group or in-group. This is the marked beginning of in-group / out-group bias. Adults continue this behavior throughout life in the form of political behaviors in the workplace (i.e.: spreading negative rumors or innuendo about a professional rival, associating themselves with powerful others, disassociating themselves from out-group members, etc.).

In an attempt to explain why people behave in this fashion, Tajfel and Turner (1979) identified three variables which contribute to the emergence of in-group / out-group bias or favoritism: (1) the extent to which individuals identify with an in-group to internalize that group

membership as an aspect of their self-concept, (2) the extent to which the prevailing context provides a grounds for comparison between groups, and (3) the perceived relevance of the comparison group which itself will be shaped by the relative and absolute status of the in-group. Thus, individuals are likely to display favoritism when an in-group is central to their self-definition and a given comparison group is meaningful or the outcome of (work) efforts are contestable.

Social Identity Theory

This explanation of in-group / out-group bias led to the concept of self-categorization and the development of the social identity theory (SIT). Originally, Tajfel et al (1971) attempted to identify the minimal conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favor of the in-group to which they belonged and against another out-group. As a result, social identity theory was developed. Social identity theory focuses upon the role of self-categorization into the in-group or out-group and attempts to show how a sense of mere distinctiveness can lead people to act in a discriminating way (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The theory posits that individuals strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity, defined as:

> "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63).

Often, this positive valence can be achieved through an appropriate intergroup social comparison. As presented, social identity theory is primarily a motivational theory that posits that self-esteem drives individual behavior in intergroup settings.

Experiments in psychology have shown that group members will award one another higher payoffs even when the "group" they share seems random and arbitrary, such as having the same birthday, having the same final digit in their U.S. Social Security Number, or even being assigned to the same flip of a coin (Cote, 2002). The same conclusions can be drawn if the concept of in-group bias is expanded and applied to the organizational level. Employees who identify strongly with their organization are more likely to show a supportive attitude toward it (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and to make decisions that are consistent with organizational objectives (Simon, 1997: 284). Organizational identification may induce employees to behave in accordance with the company's identity, reputation and strategy (Ashforth & Mael, 1996). So essentially, the theory asserts that group membership creates in-group self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group (Tajfel, 1982). Moreover, social identity theory shows that the crafting of a mere cognitive distinction between in- and out-groups can lead to subtle effects on their evaluations of others. (Cote, 2002)

From social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), two basic motives for group identification can be derived (Pratt, 1998): (a) the need for self-categorization (Turner, 1987) which requires the differentiation between an in-group and an out-group, and (b) the need for self-enhancement which requires that group membership is rewarding. The first motive involves clarifying in-group / out-group boundaries, which may help defining "the individual's place in society" (Tajfel, 1981: 255). Turner and Tajfel (1986) showed that the mere act of individuals self categorizing themselves as group members was sufficient to lead them to display in-group favoritism. After one categorizes themselves into a group membership, individuals seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from a comparison out-group on some valued dimension. Thus, we consider in-group / out-group identification to be a

crucial and feasible instrument to affect these underlying motives for political communicative behaviors.

Hypotheses

In a challenge to both theory and methodology in the area of organizational communication, Allen (1993) argued that researchers must develop more complex research designs that take account of social and contextual factors affecting organizations and their communication processes. Putnam and Fairhurst (2001) urged researchers to complicate their analyses by giving context a focal position in research. To date, the response from organizational communication researchers has been lacking. This research seeks to address this contextual element by analyzing how attribution theory, in-group bias, and social identity theory can explain perceptions of contextual phenomena such as office politics.

Self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) and its forerunner, social identity theory (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), propose that when people categorize themselves as members of a group, they also may identify with that group, positively associating themselves with its contextual attributes and organizational norms. For example, according to the concept of "in-group bias", in-group members are typically judged more positively than similarly behaving out-group members (Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). Thus, given the negative ethical association people make towards political behaviors such as deception, gossip, and sabotage, it seems that if one considers themselves to be an organizational insider (or in-group member) then they might perceive lower levels of overall office politics in the organizational context. This makes intuitive sense given that an employee who engages in political behavior in a political arena will likely view their own behavior as the organizational norm. Therefore, people who

view themselves as part of the in-group will perceive lower levels of office politics than those who self-categorize themselves as part of the out-group.

Conversely, if someone considers themselves to be an organizational outsider, they may perceive higher levels of office politics in their workplace due to their needs not being met on a regular basis or their need for an external attribution of failed persuasive attempts, poor work evaluations, unsuccessful interpersonal relationships, or the lack of understanding or agreement with organizational norms. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: As one's self-categorized perception of in-group status increases, levels of perceived office politics will decrease.

H1b: As one's self-categorized perception of out-group status increases, levels of perceived office politics will increase.

Strangely, the reverse of this logic seems to coherently apply to the perception of *other* coworkers as organizational insiders or outsiders given the social desirability effect and participants desire to disassociate themselves with political behavior. Therefore, employees considered to be organizational outsiders will likely be perceived as less skilled at office politics and less likely to engage in political behaviors. For example, if one considers another person to be an organizational insider (or in-group member) then they might be perceived to be more highly skilled at office politics or more likely to engage in certain political behaviors. Alternatively, if one considers another coworker to be an organizational outsider (or out-group member) then they might be perceived as less skilled at office politics or less likely to engage in certain political behaviors. Hence, in regards to frequency of political behaviors it is proposed that:

H2a: As perception of in-group status increases for other coworkers, the frequency of observed political behaviors will increase.

H2b: As perception of out-group status increases for other coworkers, the frequency of observed political behaviors will decrease.

Based on previous conceptual definitions of office politics, it can be predicted that the perceived motives of certain political behaviors will likely be the achievements of individual goals. However, it seems that many political behaviors might also simultaneously aid in the achievement of organizational goals. Some political behaviors may even be perceived as not contributing towards any goals at all. Thus, it is proposed that:

H3: When employees observe the political behaviors of cohesion / coalition building, they will associate the motives of both individual and organizational achievement to those behaviors more so than any other motive.

H4: When employees observe the political behaviors of deception, they will associate those deceptive behaviors with individual achievement more so than any other motive and disassociate those behaviors with the organizational achievement motive.

H5: When employees observe the political behaviors of self-promotion, they will associate those behaviors with the null achievement motive more so than any other motive.

H6: When employees observe the political behaviors of gossip and rumor, they will associate those behaviors with the null achievement motive more so than any other motive.

Table 1

Summary of Hypotheses

H1a:	As one's self-categorized perception of in-group status increases, levels of perceived office politics will decrease.
H1b:	As one's self-categorized perception of out-group status increases, levels of perceived office politics will increase.
H2a:	As perception of in-group status increases for other coworkers, the frequency of observed political behaviors will increase.
H2b:	As perception of out-group status increases for other coworkers, the frequency of observed political behaviors will decrease.
H3:	When employees observe the political behaviors of cohesion / coalition building, they will associate the motives of both individual and organizational achievement to those behaviors more so than any other motive.
H4:	When employees observe the political behaviors of deception, they will associate those deceptive behaviors with individual achievement more so than any other motive and disassociate those behaviors with the organizational achievement motive.
H5:	When employees observe the political behaviors of self-promotion, they will associate those behaviors with the null achievement motive more so than any other motive.
H6:	When employees observe the political behaviors of gossip and rumor, they will associate those behaviors with the null achievement motive more so than any other motive.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Two separate data collections were required to address the aforementioned hypotheses and research goals. Study #1 would determine what communicative behaviors are most closely associated with office politics. A factor analysis determined which items pulled together and thus the specific behavioral dimensions of office politics which would then be later referenced in the second data collection. Study #2 utilized the resulting analysis from study #1 to confirm the dimensions of office politics were loading correctly, test the hypotheses, and determine what motives (individual, organizational, or null achievement) are associated with each dimension of political communicative behavior.

Study #1

Participants

Participants included 193 working adults who were employed at the time they completed the survey questionnaire. Studies (Fabringer, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 2005; MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999) have revealed that adequate sample size is partly determined by the nature of the data. In other words, the stronger the data, the smaller the sample can be for accurate analysis. Additionally, the sample size ($N = 193$) was considered acceptable for exploratory factor analysis based upon a greater than 2:1 subject to item ratio (subjects = 193, items = 90) (Fabringer, et. al., 2005). However, alternate theories exist on adequate sample size (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003). If one applies the more conservative 5:1 respondent to item ratio which is somewhat common in scale development research, this sample size leaves much to be desired.

The sample consisted of both part-time (7.3%, *n* = 14) and full time (92.7%, *n* = 179) employees. The forty hour work week standard was indicated on the survey (see Appendix A) and was used to help participants determine how to categorize their employment status. This particular criterion was used because U.S. firms that request or require wage laborers to work over 40 hours a week are required by law to pay overtime or 1.5 times the worker's hourly base wage, for each hour of work beyond this standard (McCann, 2005).

Overall, the sample consisted of both male (35.6%, n = 68) and female (64.3%, *n* = 123) participants with a mean age of 42.08 years (*SD* = 11.21, *range* = 23 to 64 years). While the initial target sample was ages 25 to 65, an exception was made to include twelve participants under the age of 25 who reported maintaining full-time positions with their current employer for a time period of greater than twelve months. The decision to include these younger participants was based on the logic that they were able to thoroughly experience the phenomenon of office politics in their full-time positions over a somewhat substantial duration of organizational tenure.

In addition, 85.3% of the sample classified themselves as White/Caucasian, 8.4% indicated that they were Black/African American, 2.6 % reported that they were Asian, 2.1% were Hispanic, 1% was Native American, and a single participant reported they were Pacific Islander. The most frequently indicated education level was "graduated from four year college with undergraduate degree" (30.2%, *n* = 58), followed by "completed graduate school" (18.8%, *n* = 36), "some college" (12.5%, *n* = 24), "some graduate school" (12.5%, *n* = 24), and "some professional training / two year college" (7.8%, *n*=15). This reflected a fairly well educated sample with 64.6% of all participants reporting an education level of "graduated from 4 year college" or higher. The average organizational tenure was 10.13 years (*SD* = 9.20 years, *range* = 2 months to 38 years). The majority of participants categorized their level within the

organization as "staff / front line employee" (48.2%, *n* = 92), followed by "team leader / supervisor" (19.4%, *n* = 37), "manager" (15.2%, *n* = 29), "executive" (9.9%, *n* = 19), and "senior management" (7.3%, *n* = 14). Finally, 90% (*n* = 175) of respondents were willing to report their yearly income. Results indicated an average annual income of $59,959 (*SD* = $42,765, *range* = $8,000 to $350,000) which seems somewhat consistent with the median U.S. household income of $60,728 (*M* = $78,181, *SD* = $825) for persons between the ages of 40 and 44 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Procedure

Research participants for both data collections were recruited using a modified snowball (or referral) sampling method. Respondents completed an online questionnaire (see Appendix A) via the online survey data collection website *SurveyMonkey.com* after receiving a prompting electronic mail message from the researcher. This sample was a convenience sample of friends, neighbors, family members and the extended network of the researcher. These individuals were also prompted to forward this survey to other coworkers, friends, and family members in their own extended networks whom they thought may be willing to participate in the study.

After reading the consent form and agreeing to participate voluntarily without incentive, respondents were asked to think of a specific coworker that is considered an "effective communicator." Anticipating that respondents may be tempted to give the socially desirable response rather than accurately describe their own behaviors in the workplace, a decision was made to frame the survey items from the perspective of the other (thus measuring the participant's perception of another coworker's behavior). Participants then provided the initials of this coworker and were asked to respond to ninety behavioral items (see Appendix A) while keeping this same individual in mind. In an effort to emphasize a balanced portrayal and

measurement of this phenomenon, the phrase "office politics" was purposefully omitted from the directions in study #1 to minimize the effect of any negatively biased attitudes or pre-conceived notions towards the political behaviors being measured. After reporting on the frequency of ninety political behaviors which they had directly observed the "effective communicator" engaging in, a series of demographic items were completed (describing the self). Finally, participants were debriefed regarding the research goals of the study.

To ensure accuracy, the researcher randomly selected thirty percent of the surveys and directly contacted the participants via electronic mail or telephone to verify their participation. The anonymity of results was ensured by immediately separating and re-sorting the contact information from the survey responses upon receipt of the raw data files from the *SurveyMonkey.com* website. This method of survey collection has been successfully used before by field researchers in organizational settings (Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2004). Additionally, all research procedures were approved by the institutional review board and human subjects committee of two different universities (University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, and Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, Louisiana).

Measures

Eight dimensions of office politics were predicted based upon previous research and thus measured for in the first study. These a priori dimensions included: (1) ingratiation, (2) Machiavellianism, (3) reward distribution, (4) cohesion / coalition building, (5) gossip & rumor, (6) undermining others, (7) self-promotion, and (8) deception. Each of these dimensions was measured using 7-point Likert scales to measure frequency of the observed behavior ranging from 1 (Never at all) to 7 (Very frequently). The behavioral items associated with each factor (dimension) are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Data Collection One -- Study #1:

Measures for each Dimension of Office Politics (Item #, item)

Ingratiation	
#2	considers it wise to flatter important people
#4	doing favors with the expectation that the favor will be returned
#12	sucks up to superiors
#31	tells superiors what they want to hear
#55	feigns or fakes agreement with superiors
Machiavellianism	
# 39	believes that the ends justify the means
# 56	gets ahead by cutting corners
#67	tells people what they want to hear
Inappropriate Reward Distribution	
#9	distributes rewards fairly *(r.c.)*
#15	distributes rewards based upon merit *(r.c.)*
#26	withholds opportunities from those who deserve it
#42	makes opportunities available to everyone equally *(r.c.)*
#49	withholds rewards from those who have earned it
#52	withholds positive feedback from those who deserve it
#60	makes opportunities available based upon merit *(r.c.)*

Table 2 (cont.)

Cohesion

(1) Team orientedness

#13 is a team player

#25 forms strong ties with his / her coworkers

#68 has a strong sense of belonging to their team or work group

#76 is only concerned with his / her own individual achievement *(r.c.)*

#81 is surrounded by others who seem glad to work with them

#85 plays a pivotal or important role in his / her work group

#86 maintains strong bonds with his / her coworkers

(2) In-group status

#1 makes friends easily

#8 is often excluded from the rest of the group at work *(r.c.)*

#33 is an outcast *(r.c.)*

#45 is considered a loner *(r.c.)*

(3) Alliance forming (or coalition building)

#37 forms alliances with other coworkers

#57 enhances his/her career by creating a social network

(4) Individuation

#19 works independently *(r.c.)*

#40 attempts to stand out by being an individual *(r.c.)*

Table 2 (cont.)

Gossip & Rumor	
#5	avoids those who gossip *(r.c.)*
#34	refuses to speak poorly about any coworker behind their back *(r.c.)*
#41	engages in gossip, rumor, and hearsay
#46	listens carefully to gossip and rumor
#58	actively spreads gossip and rumor
#69	purposefully seeks out gossip and rumor
Undermining Others	
#18	downplays the successes of other coworkers
#22	undermines the credibility of other coworkers
#28	sabotages the work efforts of others
#71	undermines the integrity of other coworkers
Self-Promotion	
#6	takes credit for the output of others
#17	downplays his / her own successes *(r.c.)*
#35	takes credit for the ideas of others
#38	attributes blame of their own failed efforts to other employees
#48	voluntarily points out his / her own flaws or mistakes *(r.c.)*
#51	glorifies his / her own successful work efforts

Table 2 (cont.)

Deception

(1) Information accuracy

#23 communicates the absolute truth *(r.c.)*

#27 speaks the painful truth when others do not *(r.c.)*

#36 truthfully describes past events, no matter the consequences *(r.c.)*

#53 ensures that information is accurate before disseminating it *(r.c.)*

#61 accurately portrays events *(r.c.)*

#84 accurately portrays events as they have actually occurred *(r.c.)*

(2) Reframing reality

#7 tells the truth regardless of the outcome *(r.c.)*

#32 avoids sending messages that contain false information *(r.c.)*

#54 distorts information

#73 engages in spin-doctoring

(3) Selective disclosure

#14 uses strategic ambiguity

#20 withholds information from other coworkers

#29 selectively presents facts

Table 2 (cont.)

Insult

(1) Insults superiors

#74 insults superiors privately

#75 insults superiors publicly

(2) Compliments coworkers

#47 publicly compliments other coworkers *(r.c.)*

#59 publicly praises other coworkers *(r.c.)*

#77 publicly compliments the successes of other coworkers *(r.c.)*

#78 privately compliments the successes of other coworkers *(r.c.)*

(r.c.) = Reverse coded items.

Study #2

Participants

Participants included 184 adults, the majority of whom were employed at the time they completed the survey questionnaire. The sample consisted of unemployed (*n* = 5, 2.7%), part-time (*n* = 9, 4.9%), and full time (*n* = 169, 92.3%) employees. The forty hour work week standard was replicated from study #1 and indicated on the survey (see Appendix B) to help participants determine how to categorize their employment status. The sample consisted of both male (*n* = 70, 38.3%) and female (*n* = 113, 61.7%) participants with a mean age of 43.8 years (*SD* = 10.53, *range* = 24 to 67 years). While the initial target sample was ages 25 to 65, again, an exception was made to include two participants who reported maintaining full-time positions with their current employer for a time period of greater than 12 months. The decision to include these younger participants was based on the logic that they were able to thoroughly experience the phenomenon of office politics in their full-time positions over a somewhat substantial duration of organizational tenure.

In addition, 80.9% (*n* = 148) of the sample classified themselves as White/Caucasian, 14.2% (*n* = 26) indicated that they were Black/African American, 1.6% (*n* = 3) reported that they were Native American, 1.1% (*n* = 2) were Hispanic, 1.1% (*n* = 2) were Asian, and two participants chose not to report their ethnicity. The most frequently indicated education level was "graduated from four year college (undergraduate degree)" (*n* = 44, 24%), followed by "completed graduate school" (*n* = 33, 18%), "some college" (*n* = 28, 15.3%), "some professional training / two year college" (*n* = 20, 10.9%), and "high school diploma (or GED equivalent)" (*n* = 16, 8.7%). This reflected a fairly well educated sample with 57.9% (*n* = 106) of all participants reporting an education level of "graduated from 4 year college" or higher. The

average organizational tenure was 8.52 years (*SD* = 7.92 years, *range* = 1 month to 32 years). The majority of participants categorized their level within the organization as "staff / front line employee" (41.4%, *n* = 88), followed by "team leader / supervisor" (24.2%, *n* = 44), "manager" (13.7%, *n* = 25), and "executive" (13.7%, *n* = 25). Note that no participants categorized themselves as senior managers in study #2. Finally, 91.8% (*n* = 168) of respondents were willing to report their yearly income. Results indicated an average annual income of $56,668 (*SD* = $42,161, *range* = $300 to $300,000).

Procedures &Measures

Procedures for study #2 mirrored study #1 with few exceptions. One of these exceptions involved the format of study #2. Specifically, study #2 was divided up into the following four sections: (1) describing the behaviors of a coworker that participants perceive to *engage* in office politics, (2) describing the behaviors of a coworker that participants do *NOT* perceive to engage in office politics, (3) scales measuring the adjusted POP scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997), perceptions of motives for various dimensions of office politics, and self-perceptions of in-group / out-group status, and finally (4) a demographic section.

In the directions for the first two sections of study #2, participants were directed to envision two different coworkers when responding to the 146 behavioral items used to measure each dimension (see Table 3 for a list of items and the dimensions they measured). First, participants were asked to "think of a specific coworker that (they) think engages in office politics." Participants were then asked to respond to 73 behavioral items while keeping this same individual in mind. Next, in the directions for the second section of study #2, participants were asked to "think of a specific coworker that (they) think does *NOT* engages in office politics" and were then asked to respond to those same 73 behavioral items. The majority of

these 73 behavioral items were adapted directly from study #1 and were developed by the researcher based on previous research. However, the scale used to measure Machiavellianistic behavior in study #1 was removed due to poor reliability scores (See Table 4) and replaced with a pre-existing scale developed by Allsopp, Eysenck, & Eysenck (1991) which was later confirmed to be reliable by Mudrack & Mason (1995).

The third section of study #2 included a collection of various items used to measure the participant's perception of how political they perceived their working environment via the adjusted POP scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997 -- see Appendix D), perceptions of motives for various dimensions of office politics, and self-perceptions of in-group / out-group status. The POP scale, (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Kacmar & Calrson 1997) was inserted for comparison purposes to see which measure fit the data better, which would later be determined via a confirmatory factor analysis in LISREL (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993). Initial exploratory factor analyses found the POP scale (Kacmar & Calrson, 1997) to possess weak reliability scores (Chronbach's alpha ranging from .60 to .77) and was statistically divided into four components by SPSS as opposed to the three original components conceptualized by Kacmar and Carlson (1997). However, these flaws were eventually overlooked after a confirmatory factor analysis in LISREL (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993) confirmed that their model fit the data appropriately.

Table 3

Study #2:

Measures for each Dimension of Office Politics (Item #, item)

Ingratiation	
#7 / #80	feigns or fakes agreement with superiors
#22 / #95	tells superiors what he/she thinks they want to hear
#24 / #97	sucks up to superiors
#63 / #136	does favors with the expectation that the favor will be returned
#65 / #138	considers it wise to flatter important people
Machiavellianism	
#10 / #83	enjoys manipulating others
#14 / #87	believes that the ends justify the means
#20 / #93	thinks that the most important thing in life is winning
#27 / #100	acts in a cunning way to get what they want
#35 / #108	walks all over people to get what he/she wants
#50 / #123	is ruthless in order to get ahead in their job
#52 / #125	would like to be very powerful
#53 / #126	would do a bad turn to someone in order to get something they wanted
#58 / #131	would completely deceive someone if it were to their advantage to do so
#62 / #135	does most things with an eye to their own advantage

Table 3 (cont.)

Inappropriate Reward Distribution

(1) Withholding rewards

#32 / #105	withholds positive feedback from those who deserve it
#34 / #107	withholds opportunities from those who deserve it
#72 / #145	withholds rewards from those who have earned it

(2) Perceived fairness

#31 / #104	makes opportunities available based upon merit *(r.c.)*
#33 / #106	makes opportunities available to everyone equally *(r.c.)*
#67 / #140	distributes rewards based upon merit *(r.c.)*
#68 / #141	distributes rewards fairly *(r.c.)*

Cohesion

(1) Team oriented-ness

#4 / #77	has a strong sense of belonging to their work group
#6 / #79	forms strong ties with his/her coworkers
#29 / #102	maintains strong bonds with his/her coworkers
#30 / #103	makes friends easily
#48 / #121	plays an important role in his/her work group
#49 / #122	is surrounded by others who seem glad to work with them
#51 / #124	is only concerned with his/her own individual achievement *(r.c.)*
#70 / #143	is a team player

Table 3 (cont.)

(2) In-group status	
#55 / #128	is often excluded from the rest of the group at work *(r.c.)*
#60 / #133	is considered a loner *(r.c.)*
#71 / #144	is an outcast *(r.c.)*
(3) Alliance forming / Coalition building	
#8 / #81	forms alliances with other coworkers
#11 / #84	enhances his/her career by creating a social network
Gossip & Rumor	
#15 / #88	avoids those who gossip *(r.c.)*
#26 / #99	actively spreads gossip and rumor
#28 / #101	listens carefully to gossip and rumor
#40 / #113	refuses to speak poorly about any coworker behind their back *(r.c.)*
#45 / #118	purposefully seeks out gossip and rumor
#76 / #149	engages in gossip, rumor, and hearsay
Undermining Others	
#39 / #112	sabotages the work efforts of others
#42 / #115	undermines the integrity of other coworkers
#43 / #116	undermines the credibility of other coworkers
#75 / #148	downplays the successes of other coworkers

Table 3 (cont.)

Self Promotion	
#5 / #78	glorifies his/her own successful work efforts
#18 / #91	attributes blame or their own failed efforts to other employees
#23 / #96	takes credit for the output of others
#54 / #127	takes credit for the ideas of others
#57 / #130	is humble *(r.c.)*
#61 / #134	downplays his / her own successes *(r.c.)*
Deception	
(1) Information Accuracy	
#9 / #82	ensures that information is accurate before disseminating it *(r.c.)*
#12 / #85	accurately portrays events *(r.c.)*
#13 / #86	communicates the absolute truth *(r.c.)*
#17 / #90	avoids sending messages that contain false information *(r.c.)*
#21 / #94	tells the truth regardless of outcome *(r.c.)*
#25 / #98	accurately portrays events as they have actually occurred *(r.c.)*
#37 / #110	speaks the painful truth when others do not *(r.c.)*
#44 / #117	truthfully describes past events, no matter the consequences *(r.c.)*
#56 / #129	is honest *(r.c.)*
#66 / #139	distorts information

Table 3 (cont.)

(2) Reframing reality	
#36 / #109	strategically withholds information from other coworkers
#38 / #111	selectively presents facts
#41 / #114	uses strategic ambiguity
#74 / #147	engages in spin-doctoring
Insult	
#16 / #89	insults coworkers on their same level of the organization
#69 / #142	insults superiors
#73 / #146	insults subordinates

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Study #1

All ninety items were initially entered in a principle component (orthogonal) exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation, performed utilizing the SPSS statistical program. Items that loaded high on one factor (factor loadings greater than .600) and low on all other factors (loadings less than .400) were selected. Factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted from the items remaining to create the final factor pattern matrix. Only five of the original eight a priori factors were clearly distinguishable and found to be strong in terms of uniformly high communalities without cross loadings with several items loading on each of the following factors: gossip & rumor, ingratiation, reward distribution, deception, and cohesion / coalition building (see Appendix E). In addition, two other meaningful dimensions were discovered which were not originally predicted: positive workplace behaviors, and insulting others.

The following section explicates how each of the original a priori dimensions were measured and evaluates the items used to measure each factor in terms of validity and reliability. Then Cronbach's alpha reliability was assessed for the composite measures at each of the subsequent measurements. The behavioral items associated with each factor are shown in Table 2 and reliability scores for the factors across dimension are found in Table 4.

Only one of the reliability coefficients (Machiavellianism) fell below .70, which Nunnally (1978) suggested generally represents an adequate level of reliability. Means,

Table 4

Study #1

Dimensions of Office Politics: Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

Participant Describing the Behaviors of Other Coworker that is Described as an Effective Communicator

	M	*SD*	α	Eigenvalue
Ingratiation	3.38	1.32	.791	54.72%
Machiavellianism	3.03	1.15	.668	60.99%
Inappropriate Reward Distribution	2.31	1.01	.858	54.04%*
Cohesion	5.57	.742	.799	61.75%*
Gossip & Rumor	2.73	1.15	.822	56.35%
Undermining Others	1.83	1.02	.842	70.99%
Self-Promotion	2.66	1.12	.797	51.09%
Deception	2.70	.861	.816	54.64%*

* = *Cumulative variance explained including all components / subscales.*

standard deviations, and intercorrelations are reported in Table 4. Kaiser criterion (all factors with eigenvalues greater than one) was used to for deciding the number of factors to be retained for varimax rotation. The final unanticipated factor of insult was subsequently addressed in a similar fashion.

Ingratiation. Ten items were originally created and used to measure how frequently participants observed the "effective communicator" engaging in ingratiation behaviors. Items were developed from a review of impression management literature. For example, items were reworded and adapted from Kumar and Beyerlein's (1991) measure of ingratiatory behaviors in organizational settings (MIBOS) scale, a measure which has received support and was proven reliable by other researchers (Harrison, Hochwarter, Perrewe, & Ralston, 1998; Kacmar & Valle, 1997). The ingratiation dimension of Jones and Pittman's (1982) impression management taxonomy was also referenced for the development of certain items. In addition, some items were generated by the principal investigator. Sample items included: "considers it wise to flatter important people," and "tells superiors what they want to hear."

Five of the original ten items were omitted (items number 44, 62, 66, 74, and 75) to increase reliability or for validity reasons. Items 74 and 75 ("insults superiors publicly" and "insults superiors privately") were omitted after varimax rotation indicated these items measured a separate component of office politics. This made sense when the researcher considered that even when reverse coded, these items still did not seem to be *valid* measures of ingratiation. For example, if an employee does *not* engage in insulting coworkers or superiors, this would not necessarily be indicative that ingratiation behaviors have or have not occurred. However, this new component was noted and later developed to create a new dimension of office politics (i.e.: "insults other coworkers") in study #2. Thus, a total of five items were ultimately used to

measure the ingratiation dimension (α=.791). A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that these items pulled together forming a single component accounting for 54.7% of the variance.

Machiavellianism. Five items were initially created and used to measure how frequently participants observed their envisioned coworker engaging in Machiavellianistic behaviors. All five items were developed by the researcher based upon a review of notable Machiavellianism research (Christie & Geis, 1970; Geis & Moon, 1981; Mudrack, 2000; Shea & Beatty, 1983; Williams, Hazelton, & Renshaw, 1975). Sample items included "believes that the ends justify the means" and "gets ahead by cutting corners."

Two of the original five items were omitted (items number 11 and 21) to increase reliability or for validity reasons. Thus, a total of three items were ultimately used to measure the Machiavelliansm dimension (α=.668). A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that these items pulled together forming a single component accounting for 60.9% of the variance. In an effort to address the low reliability (or Chronbach's alpha) associated with this dimension, a completely different set of items was used to measure this dimension in study #2. These new items were adapted almost entirely from a pre-existing Machiavellianism scale constructed by Allsopp, Eysenck, & Eysenck (1991) which was later confirmed to be reliable by Mudrack & Mason (1995).

Reward distribution. Ten items were originally created and used to measure how frequently participants observed the "effective communicator" engaging in behaviors associated with reward distribution. Items were developed from a review of literature regarding organizational reward distribution tactics (Kim, Park, & Suzuki, 1990; Lawler, 1990; Weinstein & Holzbach, 1973; Abernathy, 1996; Heneman, & Von Hippel, 1995). Sample items included

"withholds rewards from those who have earned it" and "distributes rewards fairly" which was later reverse coded during analysis. Therefore, a more accurate label for this dimension might be "*inappropriate* reward distribution."

Three of the original ten items were omitted (items number 24, 30, and 50) to increase reliability or for validity reasons. Thus, a total of seven items were ultimately used to measure the inappropriate reward distribution dimension (α=.858). A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that these items pulled together forming a single component accounting for 54.1% of the variance.

Cohesion / Coalition building. Sixteen items were originally created and used to measure how frequently participants observed their coworker engaging in cohesive or coalition building behaviors. Items were developed from a review of networking and alliance building literature (Monge, Fulk, Kalman, Flanagin, Parnassa, & Rumsey, 1998; Baumgartner & Leech, 2001; Monge, & Contractor, 2003). Only one of the original sixteen items was omitted (item number 70, "is sufficiently acknowledged in meetings") for validity reasons. The remaining fifteen items were used to measure the dimension of cohesion (α=.799) and accounted for 61.7% of the cumulative variance.

To further establish the factor structure of the cohesion measures, all fifteen items were initially entered in a principle axis exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation. Items that loaded high on one factor (factor loadings greater than .600) and low on all other factors (loadings less than .400) were selected. Factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted from the items remaining to create the final factor pattern matrix. Four clearly distinguishable and meaningful factors were identified, consisting of all fifteen items. These components

included: (1) team orientedness, (2) in-group status, (3) alliance forming (or coalition building), and (4) individuation.

Team orientedness consisted of items 13, 25, 68, 76, 81, 85, and 86 (α=.903). Sample items included "is a team player" and "has a strong sense of belonging to their team or workgroup." The in-group status component was comprised of items 1, 8, 33, and 45 (α=.729). Example items included "is often excluded from the rest of the group at work" and "is considered a loner", both of which were reverse coded. The final two components of the cohesion dimension possessed weak reliabilities but are included here for the sake of diligence. Note the items used to measure these dimensions seem to reflect powerful aspects of the office politics phenomenon. Alliance forming or coalition building was comprised of item 37 ("forms alliances with other coworkers") and item 57 ("enhances his/her career by creating a social network") (α=.181). The poor reliability within this sub-scale seems to make sense given that behavioral item 37 (*M*=5.00, *SD*=1.66) was likely interpreted by the participants as a positive construct which could be associated with friendliness, while item 57 (*M*=4.21, *SD*=1.94) may have been conceptualized as a manipulative or negative behavior. The individuation component included items 19 ("works independently") and 40 ("attempts to stand out by being an individual") (α=.427). All fifteen items were carried forward to study #2 in hopes that the low reliability issues would be resolved after explicitly stating the phrase "office politics" in the survey directions (as opposed to the "effective communicator" descriptor used in study #1). The less sophisticated alternative here would be to oversimplify the dimension, rename it "coalition building" and delete all but seven core items (13, 25, 68, 76, 81, 85 and 86) resulting in one single component that was found highly reliable (α=.903) and accounted for 64.6% of the variance.

Gossip & rumor. Six items were initially created and used to measure how frequently participants observed their coworker engaging in gossip or rumor spreading behaviors. Items were developed by the researcher based upon a review of literature and research regarding common gossip behavior in both the social and professional contexts (Spitzberg, & Cupach, 1998; DiFonzo & Bordia, 2000 / 2002; Rosnow, 2001). Sample items included "actively spreads gossip and rumor", "listens carefully to gossip and rumor", and "avoids those who gossip", this last item being reverse coded. All six of the original items were included and used to measure the gossip and rumor dimension (α=.822). A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that these items pulled together forming a single component accounting for 56.3% of the variance.

Undermining others. Ten items were created by the researcher to measure the undermining others dimension. Exemplary items for this dimension include "undermines the credibility of coworkers", "downplays the successes of other coworkers", and "sabatoges the work efforts of others." Two of the original ten items were omitted (items 10 and 82) to increase reliability and improve validity. A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that the remaining eight items split into two separate components (α=.894).

These two subscales could best be described as: (1) positive (or complimentary) behaviors which were all reverse coded, and (2) negative (or intentionally detrimental) behaviors. Positive behaviors were measured using items 47, 59, 77, and 78. Sample items included "publicly compliments other coworkers" and "publicly praises other coworkers".

Recall that the researcher's original intent was to depict a balanced portrayal when conceptually defining and creating the items for each dimension of office politics. Hence, items were intentionally worded to reflect both a positive and negative portrayal of each dimension.

Despite these efforts to portray a balanced perspective of each dimension, it seems that participants dichotomized the behaviors within this particular dimension into two conceptually different variables (positive and negative) rather than opposites (or reverse scored measures) of the same variable. These complimentary (or positive) items still did not seem to be *valid* measures of undermining even when reverse coded. For example, if an employee fails to publicly compliment a coworker after a successful work effort, this would not necessarily be indicative that undermining behaviors have occurred. Therefore the positively worded items measuring undermining behavior were conceptualized differently than the negatively worded items intended to measure that same variable. As a result, the positively worded (or complimentary) items were removed entirely to increase validity. These items (47, 59, 77, and 78) were retained, reverse coded, and later utilized for the non-predicted dimension of insult. Thus, a total of four items were used to measure the undermining dimension (α=.842). Factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that these four items pulled together forming a single component accounting for 68.9% of the variance.

Self-promotion. Six items were constructed to measure self-promotion behaviors. Items were developed by the researcher from a review of impression management literature (Arkin & Sheppard, 1989; Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1991; Gardner, 1992; Rao, Schmidt, & Murray, 1995). Sample items included: "takes credit for the output of others" and "glorifies his/her own successful work efforts." All six of the original items were used to measure the self-promotion dimension (α=.797). A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation indicated that these items pulled together forming a single component accounting for 51.1% of the variance.

Deception. A total of nineteen items were assembled to measure deception. Many were adapted directly from McCornack & Levine's (1990) typology of deception. Others were

constructed based upon previous deception research (Buller & Burgoon, 1996; Ekman, & O'Sullivan, 1991; Ekman, 1992; Feeley, DeTurck, & Young, 1995; McCornack & Parks, 1986; Miller & Stiff, 1993). Six of the original nineteen items were omitted (items 3, 16, 43, 65, 79, and 80) to increase reliability and improve validity. Thus, a total of thirteen items were ultimately used to measure deception (α=.816).

A principal component factor analysis using varimax rotation revealed that the remaining thirteen items split into the following three separate components: (1) information accuracy, (2) reframing reality, and (3) selective disclosure. Information accuracy was measured using items 23 ("communicates the absolute truth"), 27, 36, 53 ("ensures information is accurate before disseminating it"), 61, and 84, all of which were reverse scored (α=.785). Reframing reality utilized items 7 ("tells the truth regardless of outcome" -- reverse scored), 32, 54, and 73 ("engages in spin-doctoring") (α=.721). Selective disclosure was measured using items 14, 20 ("withholds information from other coworkers"), and 29 ("selectively presents facts") (α=.500). Unfortunately, these subscales were not completely consistent with McCornack & Levine's (1990) typology of deception.

Insult. A ninth dimension of office politics called "insult" was discovered and thus created after examining the a priori factors. This new factor consisted of six items (α=.840). Sample items included "insults superiors privately" and "publicly compliments the successes of other coworkers." Consistent with some of the previously described a priori dimensions, this dimension split into two distinct components after being subjected to a principal components analysis using varimax rotation. One sub-scale was negative and could be described as insulting superiors (items 74 and 75) (α=.744), while the other subscale was positive and could be described as complimenting others (items 47, 59, 77, and 78 -- all of which were reverse scored)

(α=.878). Similarly phrased items were later constructed and used to further develop and measure this dimension in study #2.

Positive workplace behaviors. Finally, a factor best described as "positive workplace behaviors" was discovered after running the initial exploratory factor analysis using all 90 items (principal components analysis, varimax rotation). This unanticipated dimension was comprised of nine of the positively worded items which were originally created in an effort to measure the predicted dimension of office politics from a balanced perspective. Sample items were pulled from various a priori dimensions and included "thinks that honesty is the best policy", "distributes rewards based upon merit", "is a team player", and "publicly compliments other coworkers." Interestingly, the existence of this factor in addition to how many of the originally conceived dimensions split out into two distinct subscales (one positive and one negative) seems to indicate that participants simply dichotomized the various behaviors observed in the other coworker. Despite reverse coding these positively phrased items, participants still seemed to conceptualize the negatively worded political behaviors differently than the negatively phrased items intended to measure the same variable.

For example, when measuring for the dimension of gossip, all six of the items were found to be reliable (α=.822) and to load into a single component. Two of these six items were reverse coded (item 5 "avoids those who gossip" and item 34 "refuses to speak poorly about any coworker behind their back"). All six items seem to carry a negative connotation inherent to the gossip behavior yet are still valid measures of the factor. In comparison, when we examine the items used to measure alliance forming (a sub-scale of cohesion), efforts to simply reverse code the items to improve the reliability failed because the two items seem to measure different

variables (one positive and one negative) instead of opposing levels of the same variable which could be addressed by reverse scoring the items as found in the gossip dimension.

The researcher predicts that this effect is due to the association of the behavior to the other. Therefore, gossip and rumor can be engaged in freely amongst coworkers and enjoyed thoroughly without guilt, yet simultaneously conceived of as a negative construct when those same behaviors are observed in others. For example, if employee X overhears a group of other coworkers making fun of him / her, laughing about him / her, pointing at him / her, and gossiping about him / her, then employee X would predictably consider such behavior unprofessional, inappropriate, and inherently negative given the workplace context. However, if employee X engages in those exact same behaviors when speaking of another coworker, the act becomes enjoyable, light-hearted, stress-relieving, or harmless fun that is conceived of quite positively.

This seems to provide empirical evidence that people perceive the various behaviors of office politics as distinctly negative since all of the positively phrased items seemed to measure something different from the intended variable. Thus, the researcher's attempt to measure office politics by using positively phrased items which were later reverse scored failed because these items seemed to measure different variables or constructs that participants do not associate with office politics.

Study #2

Measures. Table 3 indicates which items were used to measure each factor and sub-scale for study #2. The resulting measures of reliability (Chronbach's alpha) and percentages of total variance explained (Eigenvalues) for each dimension are detailed for coworkers identified as engaging in office politics in Table 5 and for coworkers identified as *not* engaging in office politics in Table 6.

Some minor differences should be noted between the exploratory factor analysis results for study #1 and study #2. Specifically, the dimension of reward distribution split loaded into the following two components: (1) withholding rewards, and (2) merit based reward structure, in study #2 instead of loading into one single subscale as was found in the study #1. For the dimension of cohesion, items 19 and 59 were thrown out because they lacked validity. Thus only two items were used to measure the coalition building sub-factor while eleven items were used to measure how team oriented the other coworker was considered to be. Also, the deception dimension split cleanly into the following two components: 1) information accuracy, and 2) reframing reality. The insult factor also split into two components: 1) compliments / positive, and 2) insults / negative. The following items thrown out for validity reasons despite attempts to reverse code them: items 46 & 119 "publicly praises other coworkers", items 47 & 120 "publicly compliments other coworkers", and items 64 & 137 "compliments the successes of other coworkers."

Finally, both the scales of self-assessed measures for in-group / out-group status and the POP scale were tested for internal consistency and reliability. The items used to measure these variables are reflected in Table 7 and Appendices D, while the descriptive statistics and results for the tests of reliability are reported on Table 8.

Table 5

Study #2

Dimension of Office Politics: Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

Participant Describing the Behaviors of Other Coworker that Engages in Office Politics

	M	*SD*	Chronbach's α	Eigenvalue
Ingratiation	4.66	1.72	.887	69.08%
Machiavellianism	4.33	1.71	.948	69.11%
Inappropriate Reward Distribution	4.13	1.34	.879	73.92%*
Cohesion / Coalition Building	4.56	1.12	.867	65.29%*
Gossip & Rumor	4.52	1.68	.930	74.12%
Undermining Others	3.67	1.85	.933	83.36%
Self-Promotion	4.54	1.59	.885	63.61%
Deception	4.08	1.44	.948	71.05%*
Insulting Others	3.45	1.64	.760	67.62%

Note: All means were found to be significantly different ($p < .01$) in comparison to a that same behavioral dimension performed by a coworker identified as NOT engaging in office politics (Table 6).

* = Cumulative variance reported including all components / subscales.

Table 6

Study #2

Dimension of Office Politics: Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

Participant Describing the Behaviors of Other Coworker that Does Not Engage in Office Politics

	M	*SD*	α	Eigenvalue
Ingratiation	2.91	1.42	.851	62.94%
Machiavellianism	2.41	1.25	.920	61.43%
Inappropriate Reward Distribution	2.57	1.16	.872	77.34%*
Cohesion / Coalition Building	5.23	1.08	.892	70.48%*
Gossip & Rumor	2.93	1.32	.849	60.42%
Undermining Others	1.97	1.22	.850	71.02%
Self-Promotion	2.62	1.17	.801	51.97%
Deception	2.55	1.16	.920	62.80%*
Insulting Others	2.09	1.37	.845	76.54%

Note: All means were found to be significantly different ($p < .01$) in comparison to a that same behavioral dimension performed by a coworker identified as engaging in office politics (Table 5).

* = Cumulative variance reported including all components / subscales.

Table 7

Study #2:

Measures for In-group / Out-group Scale (Item #, item)

In-Group	
#158	I feel strong ties with my workgroup
#159	I experience a strong sense of belonging to the organization I now work for
#160	I feel proud to work for my specific work group
#161	I am sufficiently acknowledged in this organization
#162	I am glad to be a member of my specific work group
#165	I am surrounded by coworkers that seem glad to work with me
Out-Group	
#163	I am often excluded from the rest of the group at work
#164	I consider myself an outcast or loner at work

Table 8

Study #2

Other scales: Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

	M	*SD*	α	Eigenvalue
In-group / Out-group Status				
	5.67	1.12	.898	77.52%*
(1) In-group status				
	5.66	1.20	.927	73.89%
(2) Out-group status				
	5.71	1.48	.825	85.09%
Adjusted Perceptions of Office Politics Scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997)				
	3.44	.899	.771	65.97%*
(1) General political behavior				
	3.67	1.56	.632	73.21%
(2) Go along to get ahead				
	3.65	1.03	.664	66.34%
(3) Pay and promotion policy				
	3.06	1.18	.601	55.36%

* *= Cumulative variance explained including all components / subscales.*

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A total of five scales were evaluated with structural equation modeling (SEM) using LISREL statistical software, Version 8.80 (Joreskog & Sorbum, 1993). First, the original data files in SPSS were converted to PRELIS (Joreskog & Sorbum, 1993) system files in order to generate the covariance matrices. Path diagrams of each of the five models were then constructed using standardized solution estimates. The output for each CFA analysis are reflected in Table 9.

Model #1 yielded the following result: χ^2 (*df* = 1979, *N*=129) = 3951, *p*=0.0., thus suggesting a less than adequate fit of the data to the hypothesized model. However, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .078 was reasonable (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was acceptable given that it fell below .10, and the normed fit index (NFI) of .85 fell just short of the .9 threshold (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Overall, model #1 maintained the best fit characteristics based upon the lowest Akaike's (1987) information criteria (AIC) score of the three political behavior models.

Strangely, Model #2a (χ^2 (*df* = 2174, *N*=184) = 4770, *p*=0.0) & 2b (χ^2 (*df* = 2108, *N*=184) = 4584, *p*=0.0) reflected adequate fit characteristics based solely on the normed fit index (NFI) and incremental fit index (IFI) values exceeding the .90 and .95 respective cutoff values advocated by Bentler (1990). All other values indicated a poor fir for these two models.

Mixed results were also found for the various other models tested. Based upon the fit indices of alone (i.e.: the goodness of fit index [GFI] and adjusted goodness of fit index [AGFI]), the POP scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) (χ^2 (*df* = 87, *N*=184) = 301.91, *p*=0.0) and the scale measuring self assessed in-group / out-group status (χ^2 (*df* = 19, *N*=184) = 97.42, *p*=0.0) were the only two models to even approach a satisfactory fit using the criteria of GFI values greater

than .9 and AGFI values greater than .8 advocated by Cole & Maxwell (1985). Given the large number of dimensions for political behavior (nine including insults coworkers) and the substantially inadequate sample size, it is apparent that stable parameter estimates were not achieved.

Table 9

Results for Confirmatory Factor Analysis -- LISREL Version 8.80 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993)

Model:	Model #1 (Study #1)	Model #2a -- Engages in O.P. (Study #2)	Model #2b -- Does NOT Engage in O.P. (Studv #2)	POP scale -- Kacmar & Carlson (1997) -- (Study #2)	In-group / Out-group Scale -- (Study #2)
GFI	.54	.51	.54	.83	.87
AGFI	.50	.47	.50	.77	.75
PGFI	.50	.48	.50	.60	.46
NFI / BBI	.85	.95	.93	.86	.94
PNFI	.81	.91	.89	.72	.64
CFI	.92	.97	.96	.90	.95
IFI	.92	.97	.96	.90	.95
RFI	.84	.95	.93	.83	.91
RMSEA	.078	.097	.091	.11	.16
AIC	3866.92	6258.31	5655.16	345.16	146.05
CAIC	4507.64	6983.28	6371.70	484.25	217.70
ECVI	30.21	34.20	30.90	1.89	.80
RMR	.21	.35	.26	.31	.11
SRMR	.091	.097	.100	.087	.058

Preliminary Analyses

Initial preliminary analyses were run on the second data set to explore what relationships might exist between the demographic variables and perceived office politics as well as each factor of POP. These analyses were run across all cases as well as by limiting the analyses to specific cases via categorical demographic items. For example, within group analyses were run selecting only cases where respondents had indicated a particular work environments (item 218, response options included: "office setting, my home or residence, onsite providing service to the client"), gender, industries, etc., as well as between group comparisons among the different ethnicities, genders, states, religions, income-levels, and industries. Only one unpredicted significant ($p < .05$) covariate relationship with POP was revealed, organizational level. This same variable was observed to have a significant effect on the frequency of observed political behaviors, when preliminary analyses were run on study #1.

Organizational Level

The *organizational level* variable was measured in study #1 using item 98; stated as "Which category best describes the level of your position within the organization you currently work for?" Response options included the following: (1) front line employee / staff / associate [$n = 92$, 47.7%], (2) team leader / supervisor [$n = 37$, 19.2%], (3) manager [$n = 29$, 15%], (4) senior management [$n = 14$, 7.3%], or (5) executive / CEO / CFO / owner / partner [$n = 19$, 9.8%].

To assess the relationship between organizational level and the frequency of observed political behaviors from the other coworker, a series of one-way ANOVAs were run using all five (dummy coded) organizational levels as the independent variable while overall observed political behavior was used as the dependent variable. A significant relationship was observed between these variables (see Table 10). Specifically, frontline employees observed significantly

higher levels of political behavior (specifically gossip and rumor) than employees at other levels within the organization ($F(1,189) = 4.65$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$), while senior management observed significantly lower amounts of political behavior (specifically ingratiation, Machiavellianistic behaviors, and undermining) than those employees at all other organizational levels ($F(1,189) = 4.43$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$).

In addition, each organizational level was analyzed against each of the nine dimensions of political behavior to determine exactly which behavioral dimensions were effected (See Table 9). Specifically, senior managers observed significantly lower levels of ingratiation behaviors ($F(1,189) = 6.23$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$), Machiavellianistic behaviors ($F(1,189) = 6.67$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$), and undermining behaviors ($F(1,189) = 3.245$, $p < .08$, $\eta^2 = .02$) than employees at other levels in the organization. Front line employees observed significantly higher levels of gossip and rumor ($F(1,189) = 3.09$, $p < .09$, $\eta^2 = .02$) than all other organizational levels.

The *organizational level* variable was measured in the second data set using item number 210. This item was identical to item 98 used in study #1, however the groups were different in size. For example: (1) front line employee / staff / associate [$n = 88$, 47.8%], (2) team leader / supervisor [$n = 44$, 23.9%], (3) manager [$n = 25$, 13.6%], (4) senior management [$n = 0$, 0%], or (5) executive / CEO / CFO / owner / partner [$n = 25$, 13.6%].

To assess the relationship between POP and organizational level, an association among variables was examined through a series of one-way ANOVAs where the three dimensions of POP were listed as the dependent variables and self-categorized level within the organization

Table 10

Study #1 --

Relationship between Organizational Level and Political Behaviors

	Dependent Variable				
	Overall Political Behavior	Ingratiation	Machiavellianism	Inappropriate Reward Distribution	Cohesion / Coalition Building
I.V.: Organizational Level					
(1) Front Line	3.02*	3.53	3.13	2.42	5.57
(*n* = 92)	(0.78)	(1.33)	(1.17)	(1.10)	(0.77)
(2) Supervisor	2.81	3.19	2.76	2.23	5.43
(*n* = 37)	(0.73)	(1.35)	(1.24)	(1.02)	(0.72)
(3) Manager	2.83	3.50	3.23	2.20	5.61
(*n* = 29)	(0.52)	(1.34)	(0.98)	(0.81)	(0.62)
(4) Senior Management	2.53*	2.55*	2.27*	2.06	5.82
(*n* = 14)	(0.48)	(1.05)	(0.87)	(0.68)	(0.42)
(5) Executive	2.95	3.54	3.30	2.18	5.70
(*n* = 19)	(0.68)	(1.14)	(1.11)	(0.95)	(0.63)

Note: * Means were found to be significantly different at the $p < .05$ level compared to all other organizational levels in that column, † = $p < .1$.

Table 10 (cont.)

Study #1 --

Relationship between Organizational Level and Political Behaviors

	Dependent Variable				
	Gossip & Rumor	Undermining Others	Self-Promotion	Deception	Insulting Others
I.V.: Organizational Level					
(1) Front Line	2.87†	1.93	2.81†	2.81†	2.10
(*n* = 92)	(1.25)	(1.14)	(1.18)	(0.92)	(1.32)
(2) Supervisor	2.59	1.76	2.51	2.62	2.22
(*n* = 37)	(1.11)	(0.96)	(1.15)	(0.85)	(1.18)
(3) Manager	2.57	1.72	2.44	2.50	1.66
(*n* = 29)	(1.06)	(0.78)	(0.89)	(0.75)	(0.74)
(4) Senior Management	2.46	1.35†	2.22	2.47	1.53
(*n* = 14)	(0.76)	(0.36)	(0.65)	(0.73)	(0.66)
(5) Executive	2.67	1.18	2.80	2.78	1.73
(*n* = 19)	(1.12)	(0.88)	(1.21)	(0.78)	(0.93)

Note: * Means were found to be significantly different at the $p < .05$ level compared to all other organizational levels in that column, $^{\dagger} = p < .1$.

was the independent variable. Preliminary analysis uncovered multiple significant differences between the organizational levels in regards to POP (see Table 11). Specifically, frontline employees observed higher levels of POP ($F(1,175) = 7.61$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$), while executives reported lower levels of POP ($F(1,175) = 5.94$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$). In addition, post-hoc Bonferrroni analysis indicated that executives perceive significantly lower levels of the *pay and promotion policy* form of office politics than do front line employees ($F(1,174) = 4.03$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$). There were no significant differences between the groups in the other factors (*general political behavior* and *go along to get ahead*) of POP. Table 11 provides a summary of means, standard deviations, and significant differences among *organizational level* and *type of POP*. Given these differences, organizational level was treated as a covariate within the relevant test of hypotheses.

Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1a predicted a negative relationship between self-categorized perception of *in-group status* (M=5.65, $S.D.$=1.21) and perceived levels office politics (or *POP*). Hypothesis 1b predicted a positive relationship between self-categorized perception of *out-group status* (M=2.28, $S.D.$=1.48) and *POP*. These hypotheses were tested using items from study #2. The association between these variables was examined via linear multiple regression, where perceived office politics (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997 -- see Appendix D) was the dependent variable and both self assessed in-group and out-group status were the independent variables.

Table 11

Study #2 --

Relationship between Organizational Level and Perceived Office Politics

	Dependent Variable			
	Perceived Office Politics	Dimension #1: General Political Behavior	Dimension #2: Go Along to Get Ahead	Dimension #3: Pay & Promotion Policy
Organizational Level				
(1) Front Line	3.61*	3.82	3.82	3.28*
(*n* = 88)	(0.95)	(1.67)	(1.12)	(1.24)
(2) Supervisor	3.38	3.65	3.61	3.02
(*n* = 44)	(0.75)	(1.27)	(0.86)	(1.08)
(3) Manager	3.25	3.44	3.41	2.93
(*n* = 25)	(0.93)	(1.61)	(1.09)	(1.18)
(4) Executive	3.03*	3.24	3.34	2.44*
(*n* = 25)	(0.71)	(1.43)	(0.82)	(0.96)

Note: No respondents categorized themselves as senior management in study #2.

* Means in the same column with asterisk superscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level

Based on preliminary analyses, all four *organizational levels* were dummy coded and entered as covariates when attempting to build the optimal regression model using a stepwise variable selection strategy. Recall that only the *front line* and *executive* organizational levels were significantly associated with POP. Results suggested that both self assessed in-group and out-group status were significantly associated with perceived office politics as well as each of the three factors within the POP scale (See Tables 12, 13, 14, and 15). The overall model using the POP scale and all four independent variables (in-group status, out-group status, in-group x out-group, and the dummy coded organizational level of executive) was statistically significant, R (4, 172) = .539, R^2 = .291, p < .001 (see Table 12). Zero order correlations confirmed that as self-assessed in-group status increased, perceived office politics decreased, $R(4,172) = -.426$, $p < .001$, and as self-assessed out-group status increased, perceived office politics increased, $R(4, 172) = .401$, $p < .001$. Thus, support was found for both H1a and H1b.

Hypotheses 2

Hypothesis 2a and 2b examined the relationship between perceived in-group and out-group status of another coworker and their level of engagement in specific political behaviors. These hypotheses were tested using items from study #1. The association between these variables was again examined via linear multiple regression, where observed political behavior (as well as all nine dimensions therein) was the dependent variable and coworker in-group / out-group status was the independent variable.

Since these hypotheses were tested using the first data set, it can be predicted that there is an interaction effect occurring due to the survey directions indicating that respondents would think of an "effective communicator." Thus, it would seem rare that a coworker who is identified to be an "effective communicator" would also be perceived as being a member of the

Table 12

Hypotheses #1

Summary of the Stepwise Regression Model Analysis of Self Assessed In-Group / Out-Group Status and Perceived Office Politics

DV: Perceived Office Politics (POP)	β	F	R^2	$R^2\,\Delta$
Model 1:		38.74^{***}	$.181^{***}$	$.181^{***}$
In-Group (IG)	$-.426^{***}$			
Model 2:		30.66^{***}	$.261^{***}$	$.079^{***}$
IG	$-.418^{***}$			
IG x Out-Group (OG)	$.282^{***}$			
Model 3:		22.16^{***}	$.278^{*}$	$.017^{*}$
IG	$-.409^{***}$			
IG x OG	$.272^{***}$			
Org. Level: Executive‡	$-.131^{*}$			
Model 4:		17.63^{***}	$.291^{\dagger}$	$.013^{\dagger}$
IG	$-.608^{***}$			
IG x OG	$.695^{**}$			
Org. Level: Executive‡	$-.124^{\dagger}$			
OG	$-.485^{\dagger}$			

Note: For model one, $df = (1, 175)$; for model two, $df = (2, 174)$; for model three, $df = (3, 173)$; for model four, $df = (4, 172)$.

$^{\dagger} = p < .1$, $^{*} = p < .05$, $^{**} = p < .01$, $^{***} = p < .001$, ‡ Dummy coded categorical variable

Table 13

Hypotheses #1

Summary of the Stepwise Regression Model Analysis of Self Assessed In-Group / Out-Group Status and the General Political Behavior factor of Perceived Office Politics

DV: General Political Behavior (GPB)	β	F	R^2	$R^2\,\Delta$
Model 1:		33.003^{***}	$.159^{***}$	$.159^{***}$
Out-Group (OG)	$.398^{***}$			
Model 2:		30.804^{***}	$.193^{**}$	$.079^{**}$
OG	$.309^{***}$			
In-Group (IG)	$-.206^{**}$			

Note: For model one, $df = (1, 175)$; for model two, $df = (2, 174)$.

$^{\dagger} = p < .1$, $^{*} = p < .05$, $^{**} = p < .01$, $^{***} = p < .001$

Table 14

Hypotheses #1

Summary of the Stepwise Regression Model Analysis of Self Assessed In-Group / Out-Group Status and the Go Along To Get Ahead factor of Perceived Office Politics

DV: Go Along To Get Ahead (GA2GA)	β	F	R^2	$R^2\,\Delta$
Model 1:		36.919^{***}	$.174^{***}$	$.174^{***}$
In-Group (IG)	$-.417^{***}$			
Model 2:		20.960^{***}	$.194^{*}$	$.079^{*}$
IG	$-.413^{***}$			
IG x OG	$.141^{*}$			

Note: For model one, $df = (1, 175)$; for model two, $df = (2, 174)$.

$^{\dagger} = p < .1$, $^{*} = p < .05$, $^{**} = p < .01$, $^{***} = p < .001$

Table 15

Hypotheses #1

Summary of the Stepwise Regression Model Analysis of Self Assessed In-Group / Out-Group Status and the Pay and Promotion factor of Perceived Office Politics

DV: Pay & Promotion (PAY)	β	F	R^2	$R^2\,\Delta$
Model 1:		19.804^{***}	$.103^{***}$	$.103^{***}$
In-Group (IG)	$-.320^{***}$			
Model 2:		17.312^{***}	$.168^{***}$	$.065^{***}$
IG	$-.314^{***}$			
IG x OG	$.255^{***}$			
Model 3:		15.029^{***}	$.209^{**}$	$.041^{**}$
IG	$-.666^{***}$			
IG x OG	1.000^{***}			
OG	$-.856^{**}$			
Model 4:		12.973^{***}	$.234^{*}$	$.025^{*}$
IG	$-.638^{***}$			
IG x OG	$.954^{***}$			
OG	$-.815^{**}$			
Org. Level: Executive‡	$-.160^{*}$			

Note: For model one, *df* = (1, 173); for model two, *df* = (2, 172), for model three, *df* = (3, 171), for model four, *df* = (4, 170).

† = p < .1, * = *p* < .05, ** = *p* < .01, *** = *p* < .001, ‡ Dummy coded categorical variable

out-group. Unfortunately, no items were included on the first data set measuring exactly how effective the coworker's communication behaviors were. Thus, this interaction effect was unable to be quantified.

Results suggested that coworker *in-group* and *out-group* status were significantly associated with each dimension of *political behavior* (see Tables 15 & 16). The overall model using all of the behavioral items in each dimension of O.P. and three independent variables (in-group status, out-group status, and the front line employee organizational level) was found significant, R (3, 185) = .682, R^2 = .465, $p < .05$. Zero order correlations found that as the in-group status of other coworkers increases, the amount of observed political behavior decreases, R (3, 185) = -.625, $p < .001$. In addition, as the out-group status of others increases, the frequency of observed political behavior increased, R (3, 185) = .554, $p < .001$. Each individual dimension of O.P. behavior was also analyzed with these same three independent variables (see Table 16). Note that the cohesion / coalition building behavior maintained significant correlations but in an opposite direction from all other dimensions for both in-group and out-group status. Thus, no support was found for either H2a or H2b. Results indicated that the predicted relationships between the relevant variables were significant, however the directions of these relationships were actually opposite of what were originally predicted.

Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6

The remaining hypotheses tested the relationships between an observed dimension of political behavior and the perceived motive for that behavior. For each analysis reported below, the dimension of political behavior is considered the independent variable while motive is the dependent variable. While this assignment of independent and dependent variables is contrary to existing behavioral motives research which indicates that motives determine behavior (Dillard,

Table 16

Hypotheses #2

Summary of the Stepwise Regression Model Analysis of Other Coworker In-Group / Out-Group Status and the Behaviors of Office Politics

DV: Behaviors of O.P.	β	F	R^2	$R^2\,\Delta$
Model 1:		120.14^{***}	$.391^{***}$	$.391^{***}$
In-Group (IG)	$-.625^{***}$			
Model 2:		76.76^{***}	$.452^{***}$	$.061^{***}$
IG	$-.459^{***}$			
Out-Group (OG)	$.298^{***}$			
Model 3:		53.51^{***}	$.465^{*}$	$.012^{*}$
IG	$-.454^{***}$			
OG	$.295^{***}$			
Org. Level: Front line emp.‡	$.112^{*}$			

Note: For model one, $df = (1, 187)$; for model two, $df = (2, 186)$, for model three, $df = (3, 185)$.

$^{\dagger} = p < .1$, $^{*} = p < .05$, $^{**} = p < .01$, $^{***} = p < .001$, ‡ Dummy coded categorical variable

Table 17

Hypotheses #2

Summary of the Regression Analysis of Coworker In-Group / Out-Group Status and Observed Political Behavior

	In-Group (M=5.75, $S.D.$=1.15)		Out-Group (M=2.01, $S.D.$=1.05)	
	β	R	β	R
Overall Political Behavior‡	-.451**	-.625**	.295**	.554**
Dimensions of Political Behavior				
(1) Ingratiation	-.152†	-.372**	.384**	.471**
(2) Machiavellianism	-.221*	-.400**	.313**	.439**
(3) Inap. Rwd. Dist.	-.622**	-.725**	.180*	.536**
(4) Cohesion / Coal. Bldg.	.695**	.884**	-.330**	-.728**
(5) Gossip & Rumor	-.383**	-.433**	.087	.306**
(6) Undermining Others	-.479**	-.660**	.315**	.590**
(7) Self-Promotion	-.468**	-.606**	.241*	.509**
(8) Deception	-.529**	-.626**	.169*	.472**
(9) Insulting Others	-.340**	-.479**	.243*	.438**

† = p < .1, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .001$

Segrin & Hardin, 1989; Stamp & Knapp, 1990; Samp & Solomon, 2005), the predictor variable of motive changes to the dependent variable given the wording of the hypotheses and that respondents are indicating the motives that they perceive to be causing the behavior after having witnessed a certain political behavior.

These variables were tested using repeated measures items from study #2. For example, item #150 states that "When I observe a coworker distributing rewards inappropriately, I believe they are performing the behavior to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals." Responses were coded on a 1-7 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly disagree). Each of the eight originally predicted dimensions of political behavior (ingratiation, Machiavellianism, inappropriate reward distribution, coalition building, gossip and rumor, undermining, self-promotion, and deception) were applied to each of the four predicted motives for political behavior (achievement of *individual goals*, achievement of *organizational goals*, helping *another coworker*, or *does not benefit anyone*).

Data from study #2 was analyzed using a 8 (dimensions of political behaviors) x 2 (organizational level: *front line* or e*xecutive*) repeated measures analysis of variance with motives as the dependent measure. Mauchly's test of sphericity for all four motives fell below the 0.75 threshold. Since the assumption of sphericity was not met, the Greenhouse-Geisser adjustments were applied (*Epsilon values:* individual achievement, E=.853; organizational achievement, E=.692; coworker achievement, E=.816; null achievement, E=.902) and focus was placed on the tests of within-subjects effects. The multivariate main effect for motive type was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .801$, $F\,(7, 181) = 7.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$. The main effect for organizational level was not significant, $F\,(7, 181) = 0.975$, *n.s.*, and no significant interaction effect between motive and organizational level was found.

Hypothesis 3 stated that employees will associate the motives of individual and organizational achievement to the political behaviors of cohesion / coalition building. As reflected in Table 17, participants reported associating the motive of individual achievement to the behavior of coalition building significantly more so than any other motive. Thus only partial support was found for H3.

Hypothesis 4 stated that employees will associate the motives of individual achievement and disassociate the organizational achievement motive to any observed deception behaviors. As reflected in Table 17, participants reported associating the motive of individual achievement to the behavior of deception significantly more so than any other motive. However, participants did not report a significantly lower association of the organizational achievement motive to deception behaviors. Thus only partial support was found for H4.

Hypothesis 5 stated that employees will associate the motive of null achievement to the political behaviors of self-promotion. As reflected in Table 17, participants reported associating the motive of individual achievement to the behavior of self-promotion more so than any other motive. Therefore, no support was found for H5.

Finally, hypothesis 6 stated that employees will associate the motive of null achievement to the political behaviors of gossip and rumor. As reflected in Table 17, participants reported associating the motive of null achievement to the behavior of gossip and rumor more so than any other motive. Thus, H6 was supported.

Table 18

Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, & 6

Relationship between Political Behavior and Motive (Study #2)

	Motive (D.V.)			
	Achievement of individual goals	Achievement of organizational goals	Assisting a coworker to achieve their goals	The behavior does not benefit anyone
Overall Political Behavior	5.67* (1.07)	2.31 (0.96)	2.75 (1.08)	4.80* (1.39)
(1) Ingratiation	6.17* (1.27)	2.08 (1.29)	2.29 (1.45)	4.61* (2.11)
(2) Machiavellianism	5.88* (1.45)	2.16 (1.36)	2.66 (1.66)	4.98* (2.01)
(3) Inappropriate Reward Distribution	5.58* (1.31)	2.68* (1.55)	3.97*† (1.75)	5.10* (1.78)
(4) Coalition Building	5.12* (1.62)	3.17† (1.73)	3.41† (1.72)	3.88† (1.92)
(5) Gossip & Rumor	4.94* (1.91)	2.08 (1.36)	2.24 (1.43)	5.25* (2.04)
(6) Undermining Others	5.72* (1.58)	1.87† (1.25)	2.40 (1.76)	5.12* (2.10)
(7) Self-Promotion	5.82* (1.45)	2.38 (1.46)	2.39 (1.56)	4.40* (1.98)
(8) Deception	6.10* (1.28)	2.02 (1.33)	2.66 (1.75)	5.06* (2.16)

Note: * Means were found to be significantly different at the $p < .05$ level compared to all other means in that row.
† Means were found to be significantly different at the $p < .05$ level compared to all other means in that column.

Post hoc Analysis

In addition, two interesting post-hoc results were discovered from study #2. First, there was a gender effect for the association of the null achievement motive to political behaviors. Specifically, females ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.41$) are more likely than males ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.32$) to associate the null achievement motive to political behaviors, $t\ (179) = -2.15$, $p < .05$. Second, as the number of coworker's in an employee's department increased, the association of the coworker achievement motive to political behaviors also increased, $R\ (170) = .191$, $p < .05$.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

Existing scales and models regarding office politics and workplace deviance have conceptually defined these phenomena as macro-level constructs akin to organizational culture. These scales have focused on the psychological processes which manifest a political workplace environment or the effects that office politics in general has on large-scale organizational issues such as turnover rates, profit margins, job satisfaction, and burnout. These efforts created a gap in existing research by neglecting to identify the specific individual behaviors of office politics.

The present investigation sought to address this void in the research by developing a micro-level scale of political communicative behaviors. More precisely, this research argues that office politics is a phenomenon comprised of a series of directly observable communicative behaviors which are performed by individuals in the workplace on a frequent and regular basis. To this end, one pilot study (study #1) and one main investigation (study #2) using scales developed by the researcher as well as pre-existing measurement scales were conducted to assess the relationships proposed. Results indicated that perceived in-group / out-group status has a significant effect of both the levels of perceived office politics (macro-level) and the levels of individual political behaviors (micro-level) observed in other coworkers. In addition, results supported the assumption within previous research that when employees observe office politics, they associate those behaviors to individualistic motives.

In order to review and evaluate the models and scales proposed in this research, this chapter discusses the results and implications of the data analysis presented in the previous chapter. Specifically, this chapter contains three sections: (1) a discussion of the various relationships that resulted from preliminary analysis, the testing of each hypothesis, and post-hoc

analyses, (2) a summary of research limitations and directions for future research, and (3) a series of overall concluding remarks regarding the implications of these two studies.

Discussion Results of Hypotheses Testing

Preliminary analyses

Organizational Level and Political Behaviors. Preliminary analysis of the relationships between variables determined that organizational level had a significant effect on both POP and the level of individual political behaviors observed. These between group differences are not contradictory to previous research contrasting organizational behavior and level within the organization (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984; Armstrong-Stassen, 1998; Kidwell, Mossholder, & Bennett, 1997). For instance, it was determined using data from study #1 that: frontline employees were found to observe higher levels of gossip and rumor than all other organizational levels, while senior management observed lower levels of ingratiation, undermining, and Machiavellianistc behaviors than all other organizational levels.

Such evidence posits that certain groups within specific organizational levels are more or less exposed to certain forms of political behaviors. Alternatively, it may be more informed to state that groups at certain organizational levels are more *perceptive* to certain political behaviors. For example, it might be in the best interest of front line employees to observe or engage in higher levels of gossip since this may be the primary (or most socially conducive) method of information transfer. Since gossip and rumor would probably not be considered a core job function for any profession, it is understandable that this behavior would likely occur only when supervisors, managers, senior management, and executives were absent. In addition, it may be in the best interest of senior managers from a liability standpoint to turn a blind eye

toward certain deviant workplace behaviors in their efforts to not be aware of (and potentially later held responsible for) workplace improprieties.

Organizational Level and POP. It was also determined that organizational level had a significant effect on perceived office politics using data from the study #2. Executives were discovered to perceive lower levels of inappropriate reward distribution than all other organizational levels. This is extremely interesting given the recent research addressing exorbitant CEO salaries and the relative inequality of executive compensation packages for executive in comparison to front line employees found in large U.S. based organizations (Brick, Palmon, & Wald, 2006; Kristof, 2007).

If one considers the significant difference between executives and front line employees regarding overall perceived office politics, there seems to be a demystification effect occurring. For example, once an employee reaches the highest levels in an organizational hierarchy, that employee may become privy to certain forms of confidential information which were not previously accessible at lower organizational levels, thus enabling the executive to observe and more accurately understand the various stakeholder groups or multiple perspectives regarding a particular issue. Alternatively, it could be that those who achieve the highest levels in the organizational hierarchy experience a need to legitimate their own political behaviors, or more specifically, their *pay and promotion policies* which are likely to be at least partially based upon their own subjective evaluations of subordinate employees. Thus, those in power must hegemonically maintain and reaffirm their established power base by legitimating the subjective pay and promotion decisions they make. This could be covertly achieved via the creation, endorsement, and maintenance of bureaucratic organizational policy and procedure with the intent of legitimizing their own (potentially flawed) interpretation of reality.

In-Group / Out-group Status

This first two hypotheses (H1& H2) predicted relationships between perception of in-group / out-group status and both levels of political behaviors and POP. Results from both H1 and H2 indicated that as in-group status (either self-assessed or perception of a coworker) increases, both POP and the levels of observed political behavior decreased. Results also indicated that as out-group status (either self-assessed or perception of a coworker) increases, both POP and the levels of observed political behavior increased. Thus, it was determined that in-group / out-group status does have a significant effect on office politics.

Such evidence provides support to existing researchers who have conceptually defines the phenomenon of office politics as inherent to one's own individual perspective of events that occur in the workplace (Pittam & Gallois, 1997; Turner & Reynolds, 2001; Rosenthal & Crisp, 2006). One strategy for managing in-group / out-group differentiation is to minimize real or perceived resource differences between the groups (Hirokawa, Cathcart, Samovar, & Henman, 2003). For example, Brashers and Jackson (1991) argued that the activist group AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) was able to influence government and medical scientific groups about drug-testing procedures because they educated themselves about governmental and medical-scientific methods of drug testing. If we apply this same strategy to the organizational context, organizational leaders may be able to decrease levels of POP within their organization by increasing their information sharing efforts with lower level organizational members or de-emphasizing the in-group and out-group (which may be based on social status, intelligence, income levels, or organizational hierarchy) differences. The outcomes of such efforts could potential reverse any negative effects (i.e.: high turnover rates, low job satisfaction, etc.) of high POP levels. In short, organizational leaders may be able to reduce POP and better facilitate

mutually acceptable solutions to all organizational members by reducing the differences between the in-group and the out-group.

Motives Associated with Office Politics.

Results for H3, H4, H5, and H6 indicated that when employees observe any form of political behavior, they associate those behaviors with either the motive of individual achievement or perceive that the behavior holds no benefit for any organizational party. Interestingly, gossip and rumor was the only political behavior associated more so with the null achievement motive than the individual achievement motive. From a productivity standpoint, this is concerning when one also considers that front line employees observe higher levels of gossip and rumor than do all other organizational levels.

Also noteworthy, was the finding that when political behaviors were observed, they were rarely associated with the organizational achievement motive. The one exception to this rule was coalition building behaviors. Therefore, if there is one political behavior that is perceived of positively (given the results from study #1) as well as being somewhat useful to the organization as a whole, it is coalition building and networking. However, one could predict that this positive association that participants have with the coalition building and strategic alliance behaviors would diminish sharply if the coalition is formed in an effort to collectively penalize, reprimand, or castigate that participant.

Post-hoc Analyses

Post-hoc analysis determined that females are more likely than males to associate the null achievement motive to observed political behaviors. Unfortunately the format of the survey tools did not allow the researcher to determine if any gender differences exist based on how much one actually engages in certain political behaviors. However, if we assume the null

hypothesis is true and that males and females engage in similar levels of political behavior, it is insightful to know which gender understands (or is ultimately more willing to admit) that political behaviors rarely benefit anyone other than the individual engaging in the behavior.

Post-hoc analysis also determined that as the number of coworker's in an employee's department increased, the association of the *coworker achievement* motive to political behaviors also increased. This evidence would lead the researcher to believe that larger departments are more compartmentalized and thus contain multiple (possibly competing) social networks where the need to mutually support and assist fellow coworkers in your own coalition or network is greater.

Finally, given the lack of significant differences found between groups in the preliminary and post-hoc analyses of POP and levels of political behaviors, it can be concluded that many people across various demographic groups (i.e.: gender, ethnicity, industry, regions, socio-economic status, etc.) conceptualize the phenomenon of office politics in much the same way.

Limitations & Directions for Future Research

Although the results from these studies may be insightful to academic researchers, organizational decision makers, or anyone struggling to better understand the phenomenon of office politics, several limitations should be noted. In this section, general methodological and sampling issue will be addressed. This will be accompanied by proposed directions for future research regarding the phenomenon of office politics and interpersonal dynamics in the workplace.

In both studies, participants were asked to think of another coworker and report their levels of various political behaviors. This was done in order to overcome any social desirability effect as it was not originally predicted that respondents would be willing or able to accurately

report their own political behaviors. This data collection procedure was problematic in the sense that retrospective memories of other coworkers' past behaviors are often saturated in the viewer's own personal perspective. Perspectives, attitudes, and opinions of another coworker are often apt to change quickly and frequently over time. Thus, a coworker who was once viewed as an "effective communicator" or someone who "does NOT engage in office politics" on one day, could quickly fall out of favor with the respondent and be considered a "political player" on the next day -- or even halfway through the completion of the survey given the high number of items per study and the likelihood the surveys were completed while at work over multiple days.

Other problems of internal validity included the collection of demographic information. No state of origin data was collected in the study #1, thus the common viewpoints of certain regions throughout the country could not be compared. Also, there was no demographic information collected regarding the other coworker being described by the participant. While the reliability of such information would be predictably low, this was problematic in the sense that there was no way to see if certain demographic groups are perceived of as more or less political.

Another problem that seemed to arise from this data collection methodology is the oversimplification of how one interprets the behaviors of a coworker. Based upon the results from both studies, it seems that participants dichotomized the behaviors associating the *positive* behaviors with the "effective communicator" (study #1) and the coworker who "does NOT engage in office politics" (study #2), while disassociating the *negative* behaviors from the "effective communicator" and associating the *negative* behaviors with the coworker who "engages in office politics." While this evidence does clearly indicate that employees tend to conceptualize political behaviors as negative, this did complicate the researcher's original intent

and desire to portray a balanced perspective of office politics as reflected in more recent literature (Dobson & Dobson, 2001; Vigoda, 2003; Reardon, 2005).

Finally, the sample size of both studies was too small given that one of the main goals of this research project was scale development (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988; Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999; MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). If one applies the conservative rule of five to ten participants per item developed, the estimated sample size for either study should have been approximately 450 respondents for an exploratory factor analysis. The sample size would also need to be substantially larger (*N*= +1000) considering the inadequate fit indices resulting from confirmatory factor analyses. Future utilization of the scale developed herein should collect at least this many participants in an effort to re-evaluate the fit indices performed through a confirmatory factor analysis. Alternatively, the number of items and dimensions in the measure could be reduced to address some of these issues.

External validity was also somewhat concerning from a research ethics standpoint. The population that this research is able to generalize to is a very privileged class in society. It is unlikely that many restaurant wait staff, truck-drivers, migrant agricultural workers, fork-lift operators, or construction workers completed either survey. It seems realistic to assume that only those employees who maintain office environment positions with internet access could participate in this study. Thus, those who were likely excluded from the sample were those individual who maintain manual labor positions or of a typically lower socio-economic status. This makes sense given that anyone who can conceptualize their own or their coworkers' workplace behaviors with a gaming metaphor by stating they are "playing" office politics is

indicative of a higher certain socio-economic status that can afford to conceptualize work as play and not solely a tool that provides pragmatic survival capabilities.

Future research should disregard this social desirability effect entirely and simply ask participants to report their own levels of political behavior in an anonymous format. In addition, future studies should differentiate between skilled and unskilled coworkers who engage in office politics. After having participants complete the survey regarding their own behavior, the future researchers could then prompt the participant to have two peer coworkers evaluate the participant's level of political skill, thus determining how effective that employee was at their political efforts. This would allow researchers to gain a better demographic understanding of who is more or less likely to be engaging in these political behaviors, as well as what political behaviors are interpreted as more or less effective. Interestingly, this self-assessment strategy might also allow researchers to see if the positive negative dichotomization of political behaviors becomes reversed.

Finally, future researchers should consider testing attribution theory as a tool for explicating how employees make sense of perceived hardship that is experienced in the workplace. Many interesting personal narratives regarding this topic have been confidentially forwarded to the researcher by participants who have been exposed to one or more of these surveys. This qualitative data is steeped with the theme that people typically only consider a situation to be office politics if they or a coworker was been negatively effected by some unexplainable hardship. Thus, it would seem appropriate to empirically test this relationship between unexplainable hardship experienced in the workplace and the external attribution of this hardship to office politics.

Conclusion

One of the more pragmatic goals at the heart of this research was to aid the everyday "real world" employee's understanding of the behaviors they encounter at work on a daily basis. By understanding these political behaviors examined in these aforementioned studies, different communicative strategies for workplace interaction can be developed. Employees throughout all levels of an organization should seek to de-emphasize and decrease the differences between the perceived in-groups and out-groups in order to diminish the overall levels of POP as well as the negative effects of office politics. Elements of networking, cohesion, and coalition building should be used in a positive fashion to achieve both organizational and individual goals whenever possible.

Overall, these studies extend existing literature on office politics and prompt other organizational researchers to conceptualize the phenomenon as a set of individual communicative behaviors which can potentially have very negative results in terms of how employees collectively perceive their working environment. These studies advance and test a scale of political behaviors in an effort to emphasize that this macro-level construct is comprised of many individual communicative behaviors which can be observed and measured. While office politics may be a macro-level construct, it has been proven that this phenomenon is conducted via and rooted in communicative behavioral acts. In addition, this work confirms the pre-existing definitions of "office politics" that associate the phenomenon with individual achievement. The relationship between perceived in-group / out-group status has also been proven key in determining how employees identify, define, and interpret both the individual behaviors of office politics and POP. Thus, these studies of interpersonal dynamics in the organizational context advance the field of communication research.

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APPENDIX A

Example of Instrument Used in Study #1

This research in concerned with organizational communicative behaviors that occur in the workplace. During this survey, you will be asked to respond to several items regarding a specific coworker that is considered to be successful and an effective communicator. The survey you are about to complete consists of two parts and should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Part I: The Effective Communicator

Think of a specific person that you work with that is considered an effective communicator. Write the first and last initials of this coworker you are thinking of here: _____. Please respond to the following items while keeping this same individual in mind. Based on your previous observations of this coworker, indicate the frequency of the behaviors listed below that this employee engages in. Use the following scale and circle your responses.

Never at all Very Frequently

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

This coworker...

1) makes friends easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) considers it wise to flatter important people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) discloses information only when necessary.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) does favors with the expectation that the favor will be returned.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5) avoids those who gossip.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6) takes credit for the output of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7) tells the truth regardless of the outcome.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8) is often excluded from the rest of the group at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9) distributes rewards fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10) embarrasses other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11) thinks that honesty is the best policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12) sucks up to superiors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13) is a team player.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14) uses strategic ambiguity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15) distributes rewards based upon merit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16) sends messages containing false information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17) downplays his / her own successes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18) downplays the successes of other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19) works independently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20) withholds information from other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21) only takes action when it is morally correct.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22) undermines the credibility of other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23) communicates the absolute truth.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24) gives credit to those who do not deserve it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25) forms strong ties with his / her coworkers and peers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26) withholds opportunities from those who deserve them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27) speaks the painful truth when others do not.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28) sabotages the work efforts of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29) selectively presents the facts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30) provides positive feedback to those who have not earned it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31) tells superiors what they want to hear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32) avoids sending messages that contain false information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33) is an outcast.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34) refuses to speak poorly about any coworker behind their back.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

35) takes credit for the ideas of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36) truthfully describes past events, no matter the consequences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37) forms alliances with other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38) attributes blame of their own failed efforts to other employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39) believes that the ends justify the means.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40) attempts to stand out by being an individual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41) engages in gossip, rumor, and hearsay.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42) makes opportunities available to everyone equally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43) disseminates false or flawed information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44) expresses genuine agreement with superiors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45) is considered a “loner”.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46) listens carefully to gossip and rumor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47) publicly compliments other coworkers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48) voluntarily points out his / her own flaws or mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49) withholds rewards from those who have earned it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50) uses subjective evaluations to penalize his / her enemies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51) glorifies his / her own successful work efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52) withholds positive feedback from those who deserve it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53) ensures that information is accurate before disseminating it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54) distorts information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55) feigns or fakes agreement with superiors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56) gets ahead by cutting corners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57) enhances his / her career by creating a social network.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

58) actively spreads gossip and rumor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
59) publicly praises other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60) makes opportunities available based upon merit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
61) accurately portrays events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
62) withholds criticism of the ideas of superiors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
63) is considered a “rebel”.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
64) uses subjective evaluations to reward their friends and allies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
65) re-frames past events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
66) compliments the efforts of superiors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
67) tells people what they want to hear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
68) has a strong sense of belonging to their team or work group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
69) purposefully seeks out gossip and rumor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
70) is sufficiently acknowledged in meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
71) undermines the integrity of other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
72) uses subjective evaluations to reward their friends and allies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
73) engages in spin-doctoring.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
74) insults superiors privately	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
75) insults superiors publicly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
76) is only concerned with his / her own individual achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
77) publicly compliments the successes of other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
78) privately compliments the successes of other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
79) strategically portrays past events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
80) avoids vague or ambiguous messages and language.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

81) is surrounded by others who seem glad to work with them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

82) privately points out the flaws or mistakes of other coworkers. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

83) publicly points out the flaws or mistakes of other coworkers. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

84) accurately portrays events as they have actually occurred. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

85) plays a pivotal or important role in his / her work group. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

86) maintains strong bonds with his / her coworkers. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

87) is considered manipulative. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

88) builds strategic coalitions with other coworkers. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

89) withholds criticism of the work efforts performed by superiors. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

90) has been known to bend the truth. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Part II: Demographics

Please answer the following demographic questions regarding you and your working environment.

90) Gender: ____ Male ____ Female

91) Age: ____ years

92) I currently work: ___ Full time (more than 40 hours per week)

___ Part-time (less than 40 hours per week)

___ I am currently unemployed

93) Which category best describes your race or ethnicity?

___ Black / African American ___ Asian

___ Hispanic ___ Native American

___ Pacific Islander ___ White / Caucasian

___ Other (Please specify)_____

94) Please indicate the highest level of education earned.

___ elementary school

___ some high school

___ high school diploma (or GED equiv.)

___ some professional training / 2 year college

___ completed 2 year professional training

___ some college

___ graduated from 4 year college (undergraduate degree)

___ some graduate school (Law, MBA, Medical)

___ completed graduate school (Masters, Law, Medical, M.A. or MBA)

___ some doctoral work

___ completion of doctorate (PhD)

95) Please indicate how you would define your sexual identity.

___ heterosexual

___ gay / lesbian

___ bisexual

___ transgender

96) Please indicate your religious affiliation.

_____

97) How long have you been employed with your current organization?

_____

98) Which category best describes the level of your position within the organization you currently work for:

____ front line employee / staff / associate

____ team leader / supervisor

____ manager

____ senior management

____ executive, CEO, CFO, owner, partner

99) How many employees are employed by your organization? _____

100) How many employees are in your specific department? _____

101) How many employees are in your specific team or work group? _____

102) What industry classification *best* describes the organization that you work for?

___ Agriculture	___ Accounting / Audit	___ Banking
___ Education / Academic	___ Manufacturing	___ Energy
___ Food services	___ Pharmaceutical	___ Sales
___ Health care	___ Veterinary / Animal care	___ Consulting
___ U.S. Government	___ Transportation	___ Automotive
___ Dentistry	___ Finance	___ Retail
___ Telecommunications	___ Travel / Tourism	___ Entertainment
___ Insurance	___ Law enforcement	___ Legal
___ Advertising / Marketing	___ News / Media	___ Military
___ Real Estate		

___ Other (Please specify)_____

103) On average, how many hours per workday do you spend in an office setting surrounded by fellow coworkers? _____

104) On average, how many hours per workday do you spend interacting with coworkers in person or face to face? _____

105) On average, how many hours per workday do you spend interacting with coworkers via e-mail or the internet? _____

106) On average, how many hours per workday do you spend interacting with coworkers via the telephone, voicemail, or conference call? _____

107) On average, how many hours per workday do you spend interacting with coworkers via memo or written letter? _____

108) My typical work environment would best be described as (choose one):

___ office setting (office, cubicles, and individual or shared office space)

___ my home or residence

___ onsite providing service to the client or customer

109) On an average workday, I communicate most frequently with: (choose only one)

___ the client / customer

___ my supervisor, manage, boss or superior

___ subordinates or lower level employees

___ other coworkers on a similar level as myself

110) I would estimate my approximate yearly income to be: _____

APPENDIX B

Example of Instrument Used in Study #2

4. Part I: The Coworker Who Engages in Office Politics

Please think of a specific coworker that you think engages in office politics. Respond to the following items while keeping this same individual in mind.

Based on your previous observations of this coworker, indicate your level of agreement regarding the behavioral statements listed below. Use the following scale to indicate your responses.

Strongly Disagree----------Strongly Agree
.....1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6-------7.....

This coworker...

1. has a strong sense of belonging to their work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. glorifies his / her own successful work efforts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. forms strong ties with his/her coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. feigns or fakes agreement with superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. forms alliances with other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. ensures that information is accurate before disseminating it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. enjoys manipulating people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. enhances his/her career by creating a social network.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. accurately portrays events.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. communicates the absolute truth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. believes that the ends justify the means.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. avoids those who gossip.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. insults coworkers on their same level of the organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. avoids sending messages that contain false information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. attributes blame of their own failed efforts to other employees.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. attempts to stand out by being an individual.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. thinks the most important thing in life is winning.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. tells the truth regardless of outcome.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. tells superiors what he/she thinks they want to hear.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. takes credit for the output of others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. sucks up to superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. accurately portrays events as they have actually occurred.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. actively spreads gossip and rumor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. acts in a cunning way to get what they want.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. listens carefully to gossip and rumor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. maintains strong bonds with his / her coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. makes friends easily.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. makes opportunities available based upon merit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. withholds positive feedback from those who deserve it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. makes opportunities available to everyone equally.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. withholds opportunities from those who deserve it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. walks all over people to get what he/she wants.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. strategically withholds information from other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. speaks the painful truth when others do not.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. selectively presents the facts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

36. sabotages the work efforts of others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. refuses to speak poorly about any coworker behind their back.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. uses strategic ambiguity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

39. undermines the integrity of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. undermines the credibility of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

41. truthfully describes past events, no matter the consequences.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. purposefully seeks out gossip and rumor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. publicly praises other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. publicly compliments other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. plays an important role in his/her work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. is surrounded by others who seem glad to work with them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. is ruthless in order to get ahead in their job.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. is only concerned with his / her own individual achievement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. would like to be very powerful.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. would do a bad turn to someone in order to get something they wanted.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

51. takes credit for the ideas of others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. is often excluded from the rest of the group at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

53. is honest.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. is humble.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. would completely deceive someone if it were to their advantage to do so.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

56. works independently.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

57. is considered a "loner."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

58. downplays his/her own successes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

59. does most things with an eye to their own advantage.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

60. does favors with the expectation that the favor will be returned.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

61. compliments the successes of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

62. considers it wise to flatter important people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

63. distorts information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

64. distributes rewards based upon merit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

65. distributes rewards fairly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

66. insults superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

67. is a team player.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

68. is an outcast.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

69. withholds rewards from those who have earned it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

70. insults subordinates.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

71. engages in spin-doctoring.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

72. downplays the successes of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

73. engages in gossip, rumor, and hearsay.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Part II: The Coworker Who Does NOT Engage in Office Politics

Now, please think of a different person that you work with that you think does NOT engage in office politics. Respond to the following items while keeping this same individual in mind.

Based on your previous observations of this coworker, indicate your level of agreement regarding the behavioral statements listed below. Use the following scale to indicate your responses.

Strongly Disagree----------Strongly Agree
.....1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6-------7.....

This coworker...

1. has a strong sense of belonging to their work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. glorifies his / her own successful work efforts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. forms strong ties with his/her coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. feigns or fakes agreement with superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. forms alliances with other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. ensures that information is accurate before disseminating it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. enjoys manipulating people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. enhances his/her career by creating a social network.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. accurately portrays events.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. communicates the absolute truth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. believes that the ends justify the means.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. avoids those who gossip.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. insults coworkers on their same level of the organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. avoids sending messages that contain false information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. attributes blame of their own failed efforts to other employees.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. attempts to stand out by being an individual.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. thinks the most important thing in life is winning.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. tells the truth regardless of outcome.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. tells superiors what he/she thinks they want to hear.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. takes credit for the output of others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. sucks up to superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. accurately portrays events as they have actually occurred.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. actively spreads gossip and rumor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. acts in a cunning way to get what they want.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. listens carefully to gossip and rumor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. maintains strong bonds with his / her coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. makes friends easily.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. makes opportunities available based upon merit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. withholds positive feedback from those who deserve it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. makes opportunities available to everyone equally.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. withholds opportunities from those who deserve it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. walks all over people to get what he/she wants.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. strategically withholds information from other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. speaks the painful truth when others do not.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. selectively presents the facts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

36. sabotages the work efforts of others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. refuses to speak poorly about any coworker behind their back.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. uses strategic ambiguity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

39. undermines the integrity of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. undermines the credibility of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

41. truthfully describes past events, no matter the consequences.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. purposefully seeks out gossip and rumor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. publicly praises other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. publicly compliments other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. plays an important role in his/her work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. is surrounded by others who seem glad to work with them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. is ruthless in order to get ahead in their job.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. is only concerned with his / her own individual achievement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. would like to be very powerful.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. would do a bad turn to someone in order to get something they wanted.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

51. takes credit for the ideas of others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. is often excluded from the rest of the group at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

53. is honest.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. is humble.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. would completely deceive someone if it were to their advantage to do so.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

56. works independently.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

57. is considered a "loner."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

58. downplays his/her own successes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

59. does most things with an eye to their own advantage.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

60. does favors with the expectation that the favor will be returned.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

61. compliments the successes of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

62. considers it wise to flatter important people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

63. distorts information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

64. distributes rewards based upon merit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

65. distributes rewards fairly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

66. insults superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

67. is a team player.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

68. is an outcast.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

69. withholds rewards from those who have earned it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

70. insults subordinates.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

71. engages in spin-doctoring.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

72. downplays the successes of other coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

73. engages in gossip, rumor, and hearsay.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Part III: Self-Assessment

Please respond to the following self-assessment questions based on your own personal experiences in the workplace.

Indicate your level of agreement regarding the statements listed below. Use the following scale to indicate your responses.

Strongly Disagree----------Strongly Agree
.....1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6-------7.....

1. When I observe a coworker distributing rewards inappropriately, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. When I observe a coworker distributing rewards inappropriately, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. When I observe a coworker distributing rewards inappropriately, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. When I observe a coworker distributing rewards inappropriately, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. When I observe a coworker attempting to gain favor by flattering important people and sucking up to superiors, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. When I observe a coworker attempting to gain favor by flattering important people and sucking up to superiors, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. When I observe a coworker attempting to gain favor by flattering important people and sucking up to superiors, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. When I observe a coworker attempting to gain favor by flattering important people and sucking up to superiors, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I feel strong ties with my work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I experience a strong sense of belonging to the organization I now work for.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I feel proud to work for my specific work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I am sufficiently acknowledged in this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I am glad to be a member of my specific work group.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. I am often excluded from the rest of the group at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I consider myself an outcast or a loner at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. I am surrounded by coworkers that seem glad to work with me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. When I observe a coworker using deception, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. When I observe a coworker using deception, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. When I observe a coworker using deception, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. When I observe a coworker using deception, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. When I observe a coworker manipulating others and he/she thinks that the ends justify the means, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. When I observe a coworker manipulating others and he/she thinks that the ends justify the means, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. When I observe a coworker manipulating others and he/she thinks that the ends justify the means, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. When I observe a coworker manipulating others and he/she thinks that the ends justify the means, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. There has always been an influential group in this department / organization that no one ever crosses.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. Employees here are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. It is best not to rock the boat in this organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. Since I have worked in this organization / department, I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

36. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

39. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. When I observe a coworker engaging in gossip and rumor, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

41. When I observe a coworker engaging in gossip and rumor, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. When I observe a coworker engaging in gossip and rumor, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. When I observe a coworker engaging in gossip and rumor, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. When I observe a coworker engaging in alliance or coalition building, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. When I observe a coworker engaging in alliance or coalition building, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. When I observe a coworker engaging in alliance or coalition building, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. When I observe a coworker engaging in alliance or coalition building, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. When I observe a coworker undermining another coworker, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. When I observe a coworker undermining another coworker, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. When I observe a coworker undermining another coworker, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

51. When I observe a coworker undermining another coworker, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. When I observe a coworker engaging in self-promotion, I believe that the behavior does not benefit anyone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

53. When I observe a coworker engaging in self-promotion, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit themselves or to achieve individual goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. When I observe a coworker engaging in self-promotion, I believe they are performing the behavior in order to benefit the entire organization or to achieve collective goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. When I observe a coworker engaging in self-promotion, I believe they are attempting to help another individual or coworker achieve their goals.

. Part IV: Demographics

Please answer the following demographic questions regarding you and your working environment.

1. My gender is:

Male
Female

2. My age is:

3. I currently work:

Full time (more than 40 hours per week)
Part-time (less than 40 hours per week)
I am currently unemployed

4. Which category best describes your race or ethnicity?

Black / African American
Asian
Hispanic
Native American

Pacific Islander
White / Caucasian
Other (please specify)

5. Please indicate the highest level of education earned.

elementary school
some high school
high school diploma (or GED equiv.)
some professional training / 2 year college
completed 2 year professional training
some college
graduated from 4 year college (undergraduate degree)
some graduate school (Law, MBA, Medical)
completed graduate school (Masters, Law, Medical, M.A. or MBA)
some doctoral work
completion of doctorate (PhD)

6. Please indicate how you would define your sexual identity.
heterosexual
gay / lesbian
bisexual
transgender
Other (please specify)

7. Please indicate your religious affiliation.

Muslim
Baptist
Catholic
Methodist
Protestant
Episcopal
Agnostic

Jewish
Spiritual
Atheist
Unitarian
Other

8. How long have you been employed with your current organization?

9. Which category best describes the level of your position within the organization you currently work for:

front line employee / staff / associate
team leader / supervisor
manager
senior management
executive, CEO, CFO, owner, partner

10. How many employees are employed by your organization?

11. How many employees are in your specific department or work group?

12. What industry classification best describes the organization that you work for?

Accounting / Audit
Advertising / Marketing
Agriculture
Automotive
Banking
Consulting
Dentistry
Education / Academic
Energy
Entertainment
Finance

Food services
Health care
Insurance
Law enforcement
Legal
Manufacturing
Military
News / Media
Pharmaceutical
Real estate
Retail
Sales
Telecommunications
Transportation
Travel / Tourism
U.S. Government
Veterinary / Animal care
Other

13. During the average work day, how many hours do you spend in an office setting surrounded by fellow coworkers?

14. During the average work day, how many hours do you spend interacting with coworkers in person or face to face?

15. During the average work day, how many hours do you spend interacting with coworkers via e-mail or the internet?

16. During the average work day, how many hours do you spend interacting with coworkers via the telephone, voicemail, or conference call?

17. During the average work day, how many hours do you spend interacting with coworkers

via memo or written letter?

18. My typical work environment would best be described as (choose one):

office setting (office, cubicles, and individual or shared office space)
my home or residence
onsite providing service to the client or customer

19. On an average workday, I communicate most frequently with: (choose only one)

the client / customer
my supervisor, manage, boss or superior
subordinates or lower level employees
other coworkers on a similar level as myself

20. I currently live and reside in:

Outside of the United States
Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho State
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky

Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

21. I would estimate my approximate yearly income to be:

APPENDIX C

Original Perception of Office Politics Scale (POPS)

(Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992)

1. Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here.
2. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even when it means disagreeing with superiors. (RS)
3. You can get along here by being a good guy, regardless of the quality of your work.
4. Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas. (RS)
5. There are "cliques" or "in-groups" which hinder the effectiveness around here.
6. It normally takes only a couple of months for a new employee to figure out who they should not cross around here.
7. You can usually get what you want around here if you know the right person to ask.
8. When objective standards are not specified, it is common to see many people trying to define standards to meet their needs.
9. There has always been an influencial group in this department that no one ever crosses.
10. Generally, people who have left this organization did so because they realized that just working hard was not enough to get ahead.
11. People here usually don't speak up for fear of retaliation by others.
12. It seems that the individuals who are able to come through in the times of crisis or uncertainty are the ones who get ahead.
13. As long as the actions of others don't directly affect me, I don't care whatthey do.

14. When my supervisor communicates with me, it is to make himself/herself look better, not to help me.
15. The old saying that the "squeaky wheel gets the grease" really works around here when resources are distributed.
16. Rewards come only to those who work hard in this organization. (RS)
17. People who are willing to voice their opinion seem to do "better" here than those who don't.
18. Promotions in this department generally go to top performers. (RS)
19. My co-workers help themselves, not others.
20. I have seen people delibrately disort information requested by other for purposes of personal gain, either by witholding it or by selectively reporting it.
21. Managers in this organization often use the selection system to hire only people that can help them in their future of who see things the way they do.
22. People in this organization often use the selection system to hire only people who can help them in their future or who see things the way they do.
23. I have seen changes made in policies here that only serves the purposes of a few individuals, not the work unit or the organization.
24. Overall, the rules and policies around here concerning promotion or pay are specific and well defined. (RS)
25. The rules and policies concerning promotion and pay are fair; it is how supervisors carry out the policies that is unfair and self-serving.
26. When you need help at work, you can always rely on a co-worker to lend a hand. (RS)
27. Connections with other departments are very helpful when it comes time to call in a favor.

28. Whereas a lot of what my supervisor does around here (e.g., communicates and gives feedback, etc.) appears to be directed at helping employees, it is actually intended to protect himself/ herself.
29. The performance appraisals/ratings people receive from their supervisors reflect more of the supervisor's "own agenda" (e.g., likes and dislikes, giving high or low ratings to make themselves look good, etc.) than the actual performance of the employee.
30. If a co-worker offers to lend some assistance, it is because they expect to get something out of it (e.g., makes them look good, you owe them a favor now, etc.), not because they really care.
31. Pay and promotion policies are generally communicated in this company. (RS)

(Note: RS = reverse scored items)

APPENDIX D

Adjusted Perceptions of Office Politics Scale (POPS)

(Kacmar & Carlson, 1997)

Factor 1: General Political Behavior

1. People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.
2. There has always been an influential group in this department that no one ever crosses.

Factor 2: Go Along to Get Ahead

3. Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas.
4. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors. (RS)
5. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.
6. It is best not to rock the boat in this organization.
7. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.
8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.

Factor 3: Pay and Promotion Policies

10. Since I have worked in this department, I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically.
11. I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies.

12. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.
13. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.
14. When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.
15. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.

(Note: RS = reverse scored items)

APPENDIX E

Rotated Factor Matrix for the Items Measuring Observed Political Behaviors (Study #1)

	Factors						
Items	1	2	3	4	7	12	13
Positive Behaviors							
9	.63	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	.61	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	.71	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	.76	-	-	-	-	-	-
47	.64	-	-	-	-	-	-
59	.77	-	-	-	-	-	-
77	.74	-	-	-	-	-	-
81	.74	-	-	-	-	-	-
86	.77	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gossip & Rumor							
41	-	.75	-	-	-	-	-
46	-	.81	-	-	-	-	-
58	-	.72	-	-	-	-	-
69	-	.55	-	-	-	-	-
Ingratiation							
2	-	-	.82	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	.70	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	.66	-	-	-	-

	Factors						
Items	1	2	3	4	7	12	13
Insults							
74	-	-	-	.62	-	-	-
75	-	-	-	.66	-	-	-
82	-	-	-	.66	-	-	-
Reward Distribution							
64	-	-	-	-	.88	-	-
72	-	-	-	-	.86	-	-
Deception							
7	-	-	-	-	-	.76	-
32	-	-	-	-	-	.56	-
Coalition Building							
37	-	-	-	-	-	-	.79
89	-	-	-	-	-	-	.68