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Positive vs. Negative Politics and Behavioral Intentions: An Experimental Examination

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Positive vs. Negative Politics and Behavioral Intentions:

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Abstract

Despite research showing that politics can be beneficial, a commonly held perception is that politics are negative, harmful, and associated with adverse outcomes. The qualitative differences between positive and negative politics perceptions and their results are still mostly elusive.

This research adds clarity by examining perceptual processes surrounding positive and negative politics perceptions. Using an experimental manipulation, behavior was held constant while political actor motivation was varied. The positive or negative inferred motives and attributions made of the actor related logically to the positive or negative nature of the politics perceptions. Further, attribution type was related to positive or negative political behavior intentions through politics perceptions.

These results expand understanding of positive and negative political behavior and subsequent perceptions, giving emphasis to the importance of perceived motivation and attributions. It further demonstrates how these perceptions relate to political behavior intentions by the observers. In total, it indicates the importance of actor motivations, individual differences within the perceiver, and the political behavior itself in the processes surrounding positive and negative politics perceptions.

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The negative view of organizational politics has driven politics research and scale development, resulting in a cycle in which research instruments are developed based on a preconceived notion of the deleterious nature of politics which then provide results supporting this view. As stated by Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter and Ammeter (2002), "In effect, this has left an entire aspect of politics perceptions (i.e., the neutral or positive side) virtually unexplored" (p. 219). Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, and Bettenhausen (2008) asserted that positive politics "…has not been well studied, much less integrated with perceptions of negative politics. As a result, researchers in this area have not captured the extent to which positive political behavior can affect important, organizationally related responses" (p. 80).

There have been calls for an integrative theory of political behavior that considers its' multidimensionality and delineates when it is functional, dysfunctional, and neutral (Vigoda, 2003). Kacmar and Carson (1997) went as far as to say that "Only when consensus is reached about what organizational politics is and how it should be measured will the field be advanced" (p. 656). The lack of consensus and fragmentation in the literature has not only affected what is studied, it has blocked productive theoretical debate of the organizational politics construct itself (Bacharach & Lawler, 1998). This includes true understanding and clarity surrounding the ethics of politics (Provis, 2004; 2006). Gotsis and Kortezi (2010) assert that definitional issues are the primary limitation of current research.

One important aspect of organizational politics that has received inadequate examination is its qualitative nature. Despite an overwhelming perception that politics are

inherently negative, there is a body of research that indicates that politics can also be a positive force. The question of what delineates positive and negative politics, however, is still a matter of debate. As asserted by Fedor et al. (2008), an important distinction between positive and negative politics may be the motivations behind the behavior. To be more specific, the perception of behavior as political may lie in the motivations the perceiver infers of the actor. To best explicate this line of reasoning, I will rely on the social psychology and social cognitive psychology research of attribution theory (e.g., Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967; Weiner, 1985, 1986), with particular attention to the work of Weiner (1986), which provides a theoretical grounding for this investigation. Strongly based in attribution theory, the multiple inference model (MIM) by Reeder (2009) offers a useful framework for understanding how perceptions become attribution. Post attribution, Weiner's social conduct theory (1995, 1996, 2000) provides explanation for how perceivers move from their attributions of the actor to their own behavioral intentions (and likely behavior) towards the actor.

Despite numerous investigations into the definition of organizational politics, political behavior, and the relationship between the two, large gaps in the literature remain. This research fills one of those gaps by examining how positive and negative politics are perceived and how they affect behavioral intentions. Fedor and Maslyn (2002) posed the question: if there are positive politics perceptions, do they relate to political behavior, and if so, what moderates the relationship? This study addresses this question by developing an understanding of perceptual processes and identifying the inferred motives and attributions made by perceivers of positive and negative political behavior. It then asked the perceivers what they would intend to do if they worked in the

political environment, again with an eye toward identifying differences in behavior

intentions for positive and negative politics. As such, this research is important as it helps

to map the way individuals perceive the politics enacted by those around them, and

extends the literature in an important and meaningful way.

Review of Organizational Politics Definitions

There have been almost as many attempts to define organizational politics as there

have been articles written about it, yet the definition continues to be debated and

developed (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). The ways to classify definitions of

organizational politics are almost as voluminous as the definitions themselves. A

definitional review is seemingly obligatory in academic articles about organizational

politics, and many efforts have been made to chronicle the ever-evolving definitions in

industrial-organizational psychology (e.g., Drory & Romm, 1990; Ferris et al., 2002;

Gunn & Chen, 2006; Hill, Thomas, & Meriac, 2016; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Lepisto &

Pratt, 2012). A single, unifying definition of organizational politics remains elusive, but

the literature has produced useful ways of assessing both politics and our definition of it.

Across the multitude of definitions and descriptions, three primary conceptual themes

have developed (Hill et al., 2016; Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010): (1) influence tactics

(Drory & Romm, 1990, Ferris et al., 2002; Vigoda, 2003), (2) perceptions of politics

(e.g., Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Zhou & Ferris, 1995), and (3)

social effectiveness constructs like political skill (Ferris et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007).

Influence tactics have been a main component of definitions of organizational

politics (Vigoda, 2003). A review spanning 40 years of definitions finds that the majority

contain explicit or implicit references to influence (see Table 1). The centrality of

influence in conceptions of organizational politics conveys its importance in how we interpret politics. Vigoda (2003) stated that across situations and manifestations, influence may actually be the "best common denominator" of organizational politics, and it can be wielded by individuals, groups, in vertical or lateral directions, based in formal or informal power, and it is seen within and across organizations. At its base, politics are a manifestation of social influence processes (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2010), and as such they are endemic to organizational life.

In a broad sense, one could view organizational politics as the processes used to accomplish the actor's goals and as the outcomes gained through those processes. The dimensions of politics proposed by Vigoda and Cohen (2002) highlight this conception. This two-dimensional description states that political behaviors are (a) acts of influence (b) toward the individual's long- or short-term goals. This view of politics has been referred to as the *means* (influence processes) and *ends* (the outcomes; Gunn & Chen, 2006). The process model presented by Vrendenburgh and Maurer (1984) is a good example of a process, or *means*, focus. In their model, antecedent conditions like individual and organizational characteristics combine with operating mechanism (e.g., political goals, tactics, and style) to produce both intended and unintended outcomes. While recognizing the importance of outcomes, they were especially focused on the operating mechanisms and processes that produce those outcomes.

A means and ends focus can also be seen in Gunn and Chen's (2006) analysis of politics definitions. They reported that research regarding means emphasizes the use of influence tactics which can be directed horizontally or laterally within the organization (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984).

A definition emblematic of means and ends is that by Valle and Perrewé describing politics as "...the exercise of tactical influence by individuals which is strategically goal directed, rational, conscious and intended to promote self-interest, either at the expense of or in support of others' interests" (2000, p. 351).

A deeper look at ends and means definitions reveals other useful themes. The first theme is that political behavior is typically self-serving and most aligned with the actor's goals for themselves (e.g., Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris, Russ et al., 1989; Cropanzano, Kacmar & Bozeman, 1995). The implication is that political behavior is at base a selfish act. For instance, the description by Harrell-Cook, Ferris, and Dulebohn (1999) declares that political behavior may oppose the organization's interests and results from the actor's self-serving motives. Some definitions go beyond simply describing selfishness and include a lack of concern on the actor's part for damage caused to others or the opposition they present to organizational goals (e.g., Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Schein, 1977; Valle & Witt, 2001). An excellent example of this view comes from Kacmar and Baron's definition which says politics are "actions by individuals that are directed toward the goal of furthering their own self-interests without regard for the well-being of others within the organization" (1999, p. 4).

A closer look at the process side of definitions reveals another important theme; that politics are non-sanctioned and harmful to others and the organization. Another way to envision this is that political behaviors are contrary to acceptable behaviors within the organization as they run counter to organizational and societal norms. This perspective has been fairly rampant throughout the politics literature, as shown by many definitions displayed in Table 1. When combined with the view of politics as having self-serving

ends, political behavior is relegated to a negative force, and therefore efforts to behave politically must be concealed. Mintzberg's oft-cited definition is a good example of the non-sanctioned aspect of politics as "informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate—sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise…" (1983, p. 172).

However, the degree of social acceptability may not be a good indication of how much a given behavior is used. In a study by Zanzi and O'Neill (2001) the rated acceptability of a tactic did not correspond to its use, and in fact, certain non-sanctioned tactics (e.g., blaming, manipulation) saw higher use than their social desirability would predict. Conversely, certain sanctioned tactics had desirability ratings higher than their frequency of usage. This lack of correspondence between desirability and use implies that acceptance of political behavior and the need for politics are different from objective ratings of its desirability. Hence, politics is seen as necessary and useful, but somewhat unsavory (Buchanan, 2008; Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1980).

Definitional Concerns

As previously noted, there is a predisposition to see organizational politics as a negative phenomenon in organizations. If politics are illegitimate and performed without regard for the interests of the organization or others, a logical conclusion is that they are inherently negative. This is evidenced in several definitions, such as Drory and Romm's (1990) which refers to political behavior as having a "definitely antisocial property" (p. 1141) and is frequently associated with conflict (e.g., Mintzberg, 1985; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 198). Others have essentially defined organizational politics as conflict with an emphasis on resistance to exchange tactics (Frost & Hayes, 1979). Porter et al. (1981)

characterized political behaviors as fundamentally competitive and in opposition to organizational unity. There is substantial research to further bolster the negative view; politics has been linked to poor performance (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008), reduced job satisfaction, and reduced organizational commitment (e.g., Miller et al., 2008). It has been characterized as dysfunctional and opportunistic (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Voyer, 1994), and some have argued that it should be eradicated, as evidenced by Stone (as cited by Buchanan, 2008).

This perspective is not universally held, however, and some research has found that politics can result in improved debate and decisions (Butcher & Clarke, 1999), be useful in career building (Gandz & Murray, 1980), and help with organizational change (Buchanan & Badham, 1999; Gargiulo, 1993; Pichault, 1995). Echoing the sentiment of Provis (2004), it is likely that the negative view is too simplistic and should be revised to recognize the positive side of politics. In surveying managers, Buchanan (2008) found that political behavior is seen as ubiquitous, with the potential to be beneficial or harmful, and a substantial amount of research agrees (e.g., Drory, 1993; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Gandz and Murray, 1980). Clearly, the negative aspect of politics is not a straightforward matter, and there are important things to consider before consigning organizational politics to the negative column.

One concern with definitions that rely heavily on influence tactics is that they open the door to a great deal of behavior that is not regarded as political. When we engage in routine social exchange it is highly likely that some degree of mutual influence is involved (e.g., Astley & Sachdeva, 1984), and yet many exchanges are not seen as political at all. This means that influence-based definitions do not adequately differentiate

between political and nonpolitical behavior (Buchanan, 2008). Most scholars would agree that using the exchange influence tactic (e.g., asking for help from a coworker by offering them assistance at a later date; Kipnis et al., 1980) is not necessarily a political act, and that using impression management is not inherently unethical. However, the negative conceptions of politics based on influence tactics do not capture this more granular view. Another common description of political behavior is that it is covert and actors endeavor to hide the political motivations behind their actions. If perception is the bottom line in experiencing organizational politics, it begs the proverbial tree-falling-in-the-forest question; if the actor is skilled enough to hide his or her motivations and the perceiver misses the self-serving intent, is it actually political? One would hope that our science could better integrate our understanding of behavior and perception. I would argue that it is not sufficient to classify behavior strictly by the perceptions of others; the context and actor motivations are also important.

The differing definitions used across research have made comparison and reconciliation of findings regarding the positive or negative nature of politics elusive (Ferris et al., 2002). Beyond definitional confusion, research has found that while people perceive both positive and negative politics, this differentiation varies in how it manifests at different levels of the organization (Fedor et al., 2008). In essence, scholars disagree about what the positive, negative, or neutral aspects of politics are and what constitutes politics across hierarchies and organizations. The result of this confusion has been many calls for examination of the possible neutral and positive aspects of politics (e.g., Fedor et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 2002; Hall, Hochwarter, Ferris, & Bowen, 2004). Research indicates that it is possible for individuals to see positives in politics (Fedor et al., 2008;

Gandz & Murray, 1980), thus a strictly negative conception may be short sighted. As Hall et al. (2004) stated, organizational politics can exhibit a "dark side," but this is only one side, and research needs to better elucidate both sides and their differences.

Despite research largely describing politics as detrimental, those in organizations still recognize it as necessary and even beneficial. Political behavior may not be solely for the individual's benefit or fundamentally negative. Survey results from Buchanan (2008) shed some light: (1) managers perceive politics as the result of organizational and individual factors, (2) behaviors associated with politics can be more or less covert, and the more "social" tactics may be more acceptable, and (3) most managers do not see political behavior as unethical. In other words, political behavior is a result of the person and the environment, is not always hidden, and is not the "evil" alternative it is cast as. Additionally, when respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "political behavior is unethical," only 12% agreed while 67% intensely disagreed. Simultaneously, almost two-thirds indicated that they accepted the politics incumbent to their position, but preferred to avoid it. It is important to note that these results are strictly opinions from experience surveys; results were not based on validated scales or experimental manipulation. However, they are useful in indicating general understandings of politics and its manifestations from a managerial point of view; politics are not perceived all negatively or all positively. Additionally, research by Gandz and Murray (1980) showed that roughly 90% of respondents felt that politics were a common occurrence, 89% agreed with the statement that executives must be skilled politicians, while only 55% felt politics hampered organizational functioning and less than half felt it should be eliminated entirely from organizations. This clearly illustrates that there is a

mismatch between research and those actually experiencing organizational politics, and further supports the argument that the strictly-negative definition is inconsistent with the experience and understanding of the very individuals to whom we want to generalize this research.

Despite evidence to the contrary, the predominant view that has emerged is that organizational politics is essentially harmful, threatening, selfish, and resulting in negative outcomes (e.g., Ferris, et al., 2002; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010; Hall et al., 2004; Vigoda, 2003). Vigoda (2003) and Provis (2006) highlight two primary defects of negative politics definitions. The first is that they limit the ability of researchers to see the full range of behaviors and dynamics of organizational politics. The second defect is that negative definitions have become a distraction from actual ethical issues because negative definitions connote an ethical attitude. Thus, the implied ethical and moral stance of negative politics definitions negate any functional interpretation, and it is not possible for political acts to be construed positively or ethically. With this essentially ends-based position, actual behaviors become moot. As Kurchner-Hawkins put it, this view of organizational politics "diminishes the opportunity to view politics as a force for good" (2006, p. 348). This has resulted in a view of politics that is skewed (Hall et al., 2004) and inherently incomplete (Provis, 2006). Politics are seen as black and white, when in fact, they are often gray. It appears that definitions have driven our understanding, rather than the other way around. Provis (2006) described this as a body of research using circular logic to examine politics, a phenomenon noted in the literature (e.g., Ferris, et al., 2002; Hall et al., 2004). This circular logic and skewed perspective has affected our ability to measure organizational politics. Thus, the challenges inherent to

measuring politics and political behavior are relevant to the discussion of organizational politics, politics perceptions, and political behavior.

Challenges of Measurement

In describing the perceptions of politics construct, Ferris, Harrell-Cook, and Dulebohn (2000) specifically noted that it is a perceptual process in which witnessed behaviors are ascribed to self-serving intent. It is from this position that most instruments to measure politics have been designed. Obviously, scales designed with a focus on self-serving behavior will, by definition, not measure any behaviors with more altruistic intentions. While several scales have been developed, the perceptions of politics scale (POPS; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) is the most frequently used (Ferris et al., 2002). It has 15 items, many of which emphasize the inimical aspects of politics (e.g., Ferris et al., 2002). Items like, "People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down" or "It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind" (p. 656) are good examples of this negative focus. While other items in the scale could be interpreted as neutral, none really tap the positive potential of political behavior. The three subscales of the POPS (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) are general political behavior, go along to get ahead, and pay and promotion policies. As noted by Albrecht (2006), these dimensions have substantial overlap with negative, non-sanctioned influence tactics like Zanzi and O'Neill's (2001) intimidation, blaming or attacking others, manipulation, and control of information tactics.

Further, the items are phrased in negative terms resulting in issues with Likert scale responses. Indicating strong agreement on a Likert scale on the POPS implies more negative politics. For instance, strong agreement with the statement "People in this

organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down″ (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997, p. 656) would mean that there is an extreme amount of this political behavior. Strong disagreement is interpreted to mean a lack of politics; thus, in this statement there would be none of this negative political behavior. Assessment of the presence or absence of positive or neutral politics is missed entirely. Ferris et al. (2002) go so far as to say:

> We contend that the one reason that most of the empirical research has concluded that politics is harmful to organizational functioning is because the questions used to tap this construct are inherently negative. For research in this domain to advance beyond its current state, providing respondents the opportunity to note 'functional politics' is a necessity in order to allow for a fuller and more accurate representation of the full domain of the construct. (Ferris et al., 2002, p. 221)

There are also concerns about POPS scale research and its convergence in measurement (Ferris et al., 2002). First, while the most common version of the POPS (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) has three dimensions, some researchers question its dimensionality and use the scale as an indicator of a single dimension. Past research using different scales and varying numbers of items has found one dimension (e.g., Nye & Witt, 1993; Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995), three dimensions (e.g., Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Zhou & Ferris, 1995), and five dimensions (Fedor, Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Russ, 1998). Further, researchers have not consistently published the items in the measures they use (Ferris et al., 2002) and/or the measures cross content with other constructs (e.g., perceived organizational support; Nye & Witt, 1993). Finally, the definitional issues that plague organizational politics are also seen in politics perceptions; validation efforts have used different conceptualizations of the construct as well as

different scales. Ferris et al. (2002) did note some amelioration of these concerns with the

Kacmar and Carlson (1997) POPS, but there has not been a complete reversal of

practices.

Additional concerns lie in the self-report nature of most research and the

retrospective nature of the POPS. As noted by Hill et al. (2016), the ease of use offered

by retrospective and self-report scales makes them very appealing, but the POPS may be

prey to self-report bias due to respondents' desire to depict themselves in a positive light.

Information about a charged topic like organizational politics, particularly when

presented so negatively by the scale items, may result in information filtering or even

dishonest responses. Even when information is gathered from others (e.g., supervisors),

asking respondents to recall information from past events may also compromise the

information they give, as it is common for people to make errors in their recollections

(Golden, 1992).

When the preconceived notion that political behavior is negative and the negative

orientation of our primary scale are considered together, it is not surprising that this

negative conception has been reinforced and grown, robbing the construct of its full

dimensionality and clarity. The use of one's influence to attain selfish ends may simply be

seen as a completely different phenomenon than the same influence being used to benefit

one's unit or organization. Fedor et al. (2008) found support for the idea that, similar to

contextual behaviors, positive and negative politics are actually two separate constructs

rather than two ends of the same pole. However, their conceptualization of positive and

negative politics was based solely on outcomes derived from the behavior. Outcomes are

clearly important in how we evaluate behavior; however, social psychology has provided

substantial evidence that the attributions we make are also highly relevant, and it is possible that we perceive positive and negative politics differently.

Positive Politics

Having reviewed the issues and research regarding the definition and measurement of organizational politics, one must question assertions of politics as being negative when taking a critical look at the outcomes being investigated. The majority of research has been on the relationship between politics perceptions and attitudes. According to Vigoda, "scant empirical evidence exists today that can support the (negative?) effect of internal workplace politics on employees' outcomes and especially on objective performance evaluations" (2003, p. 86). More neutral views have been taken by Ferris, Fedor, Chachere, and Pondy (1989) who defined political behavior as that taken to maximize self-interests, which could be beneficial or harmful to other's interests. It is possible that not all behavior that differs from organizational norms results in negative outcomes for the organization (Warren, 2003), and political behavior may not be merely common; it may be necessary for organizations to progress (Kanter, 1983; Pichault, 1995). Recent literature says that politics can be good and bad (e.g., Landells & Albrecht, 2013; Ferris et al., 2002), but the roots of this perspective go much further back. For example, Ferris, Fedor et al. (1989) and Kumar and Ghadially (1989) argued that organizational politics is a "natural social process" with the ability to be functional or dysfunctional. Research bears this out, showing a variety of positive and negative outcomes (Hochwarter, Ferris, Laird, Treadway, & Gallagher, 2010) including: improved decision making (e.g., Buchanan & Badham, 1999; Drory, 1993; Feldman, 1988; Yang, 2003), communication (Buchanan & Badham, 1999), innovation (e.g., Hargrave & Van

De Ven, 2006; Pfeffer, 1992), career advancement (Buchanan & Badham, 1999; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005), and organizational change (e.g., Buchanan & Badham, 1999; 2008; Hargrave & Van De Ven, 2006; Lewis, 2002).

Certain influence tactics (e.g., exchange, ingratiation, coalitions, and upward appeal) may be particularly useful in generating and maintaining good customer relationships, as well as promoting growth and change in an organization. To cast aspersions on these behaviors is simply not accurate, or at least is without empirical support. Lumping them in with behaviors performed for selfish reasons and resulting in negative outcomes for others lacks the specificity that rigorous scientific inquiry demands. Hochwarter et al. (2010) proclaimed that politics go beyond being simply neutral, and instead are critical components of organizational functioning when viewed in light of these findings.

Outcomes as differentiators. This discussion begs the question; what are positive organizational politics and how are they different from negative politics? This is an especially complicated question as there has been little research on positive politics and especially positive and negative politics simultaneously (Fedor et al., 2008). One criterion advocated is the outcomes that result from the behavior, more specifically, who benefits from it (Kumar & Ghadially, 1989). In the means vs. ends framework, this would be an ends-focused perspective. Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller (2006) argued that political behavior is positive when it furthers the organization's goals, increases member collaboration and trust, and is aligned with the organization's ethics. Fedor et al. (2008) highlighted the importance of outcomes in the classification of political behavior, proposing that the beneficiary of the behavior is critical because positive and negative

political behaviors can be similar. Fedor et al.'s work is especially important as they

demonstrated that participants could not only distinguish between positive and negative

politics, but that they were perceived to the same degree. Additionally, they found

evidence that there are separate dimensions of political behavior; the two-factor model fit

the data better, and positive politics predicted significantly beyond negatively politics in

employee reactions.

Perceived intentions as differentiators. In addition to means and ends, the

motivations behind political behavior are salient to its identification. It is natural for

employees to evaluate the reasons and motivations behind the feedback and reactions

they receive from others. This process must occur for the employee to formulate a

reaction (Fedor, Buckley, & Eder, 1990). According to Davis and Gardner (2004),

determination of positive or negative politics relies on attributions about actors' motives.

For this reason, another way proposed to delineate positive and negative politics is

through the motivations of those involved (Fedor & Maslyn, 2002; Fedor et al., 2008).

This is very much in line with Ferris et al.'s, (2000) definition of perceptions of politics,

which specifically refers to attribution of behavior to self-serving intent. This definition is

clearly oriented to the negative side, but is still important as it focuses on the perceptual

process of the perceiver and how it attributes motivation to the political actor. Evidence

exists to support this view. For instance, Drory and Vigoda-Gadot (2010) examined

human resource management and noted that when political actors have organization-

focused motives the outcomes will be positive, whereas self-serving motives lead to

negative outcomes for human resource management efforts. This focus can be applied

more broadly to the political climate of the organization (Landells & Albrecht, 2013) using the same rationale.

Using a Kantian deontology, Gotsis and Kortezi (2010) proposed that it is conformance with rules and norms that defines moral behavior, and not the outcomes of the behavior. Therefore, when we evaluate other's behavior, we use the other's motivations and intentions to determine if they have violated social rules and norms, rather than evaluations of outcomes. The importance of the actor's motivation to politics is empirically supported in relation to several constructs including organizational learning (Coopey & Burgoyne, 2000), change (Diefenbach, 2007), cynicism (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, Zhou, & Gilmore, 1996), and group mobilization (Grossmann, 2006).

Fedor et al. (2008) suggest that the attributions perceivers make about political behavior trump objective behavior in defining its positive or negative nature, and they found that positive and negative reactions to politics are logical and in the expected direction (i.e., positive politics related to positive reactions and negative politics related to negative reactions). Thus, how individuals interpret the motivation behind behavior may provide a critical view into organizational politics. For instance, Drory and Vigoda-Gadot (2010) proclaimed that the self-serving or organization-serving motivations of those involved shape the success or failure of human resource management efforts. Landells and Albrecht (2013) argued that the key delineating factor between functional or dysfunctional nature political climate is the self- or organization-serving motivations of those involved. Further, Davis and Gardner (2004) showed the importance of perceived motives of the actor in the development of cynical perceptions and Christiansen,

Villanova, and Mikaulay (1997) found that compatibility between the individual and their political environment linked to better outcomes.

Thus, the motivations the individual infers from the political behavior she witnesses, may affect her politics perceptions and ultimately her own behavior. Therefore, it is critical to understand political behavior, politics perceptions, and how they relate. Once the individual constructs are established, the perceptual processes behind them will be addressed.

Political Behavior

The terms "politics" and "political" are bandied around frequently, and so a clear definition of what is meant by the term "political behavior" is in order. A comprehensive definition of political behavior was offered by Valle and Perrewé (2000): "Individual political behavior is defined as the exercise of tactical influence by individuals which is strategically goal directed, rational, conscious and intended to promote self-interest, either at the expense of or in support of others' interests" (p. 361). This definition is particularly useful as it allows for both selfish and altruistic motives, and does not negatively skew interpretations of behavior. As with organizational politics, influence is a prominent component of this and many other definitions of political behaviors (Drory & Romm; 1990); therefore, political behaviors are often described using influence taxonomies.

While there is general acceptance of influence tactics as political behavior, a common understanding of what those behaviors are has not been established (Valle & Perrewé, 2000). However, the taxonomy by Kipnis et al. (1980) is very frequently referred to and has received support (e.g., Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Schriesheim & Hinkin,

1990). Kipnis et al.'s set of studies first identified 14 categories of influence tactics and then used factor analysis to remove redundancy resulting in eight tactics: assertiveness, sanctions, ingratiation, rationality, exchange, blocking, upward appeal, and coalitions. They concluded that people are routinely trying to influence their environments. Frequently, influence had been studied as a top-down phenomenon, but Kipnis et al., (1980) found that managers are subject to upward influence from their employees, as well. Managers based their choice of tactics on their goal outcome and the power of the person being influenced, indicating that different tactics are used for upward and downward influence attempts. For instance, when influencing subordinates, assertiveness accounted for the most variance. When influencing a higher-status individual rationality was the most common.

Another taxonomy useful in examining political behavior is that of Tedeschi and Melburg (1984). Their 2x2 taxonomy for classifying political behavior concentrates on self-presentational behavior, specifically impression management. Behavior can be classified as assertive vs. defensive as well as tactical vs. strategic. The assertive/defensive dimension considers whether the behavior is due to selfish goals or contextual demands. The tactical/strategic dimension looks at the temporal aspect of the behavior. Is it engaged in for short-term impression management or for long-term gains? In this scheme, political behavior can be used to further one's interests or because it is necessary to manage in one's environment, and it can be for long- or short-term benefit. Example behaviors in this taxonomy are justifications and excuses (tactical-defensive), forms of ingratiation (tactical-assertive), attractiveness and esteem (assertive-strategic), and hypochondriasis and learned helplessness (defensive-strategic).

Ashforth and Lee (1990) provide another useful conceptualization of influence behaviors. They felt there had been an overemphasis on the proactive side of self-interest, and thus focused on the reactive and defensive aspects. Reactive defensive behaviors are thought to provide defense against unwelcome changes to the status quo, thereby avoiding objectionable threats or demands. The authors note specifically that these are a subset of political behaviors and are a consequence of antecedents such as ambiguity, overload, formalization, self-efficacy, self-monitoring and emotional exhaustion. In this framework, reactive behaviors avoid action (e.g., over-conforming, depersonalizing), blame (e.g., playing safe, scapegoating), and change (resistance).

In addition to classifying influence tactics into taxonomies, research has examined the use and social acceptability of political behaviors. In his survey of managers' experiences and perceptions of politics, Buchanan (2008) evaluated the frequency that 18 political behaviors were used. Generally, respondents viewed political behavior as a common occurrence that had the potential to advance organizational functioning. The five behaviors rated as most frequently used were: building networks, using key players to support initiatives, befriending power brokers, bending the rules, and self-promotion. Conversely, three behaviors were rated as used relatively rarely: using misinformation to confuse others, spreading false rumors to undermine others, and keeping "dirt files" to blackmail others. Contemplating the list of common and rare tactics, Buchanan points out that some tactics, such as those using manipulation and impression management, may be perceived as less harmful and more socially acceptable than those involving dishonesty and coercion.

The research by Zanzi and O'Neill (2001) examined the social desirability of political tactics classified as sanctioned or unsanctioned. It supports the notion that political tactics can be either sanctioned or unsanctioned, implying that not all political behaviors are necessarily negative. As noted previously, they also found that there was incongruence between the social desirability ratings of some tactics and their frequency of use. They asserted that a sanctioned tactic is not just non-negative and accepted by the organization's members; it actually serves the ends of the organization.

Despite efforts to qualify influence tactics as political (or not), the definition of political behavior and identification of political tactics is often as much of a challenge as defining organizational politics. The political nature of a particular behavior is "inherently contestable" (Provis, 2006). Common organizational occurrences like raises and promotions can have a variety of motives behind them, and can be perceived in a variety of ways running the gamut "from cynicism at one end through realism to naïveté at the other" (Provis, 2006, p. 101). The dissection of such an act is naturally going to be influenced by perceptions of actor intentions, goals of the perceiver, and opinions on all sides about what is political. The very discussion of the political nature of a behavior may in itself be fraught with politics.

The majority of research has focused on influence tactics used for upward influence, but this may not be a complete view of political behavior at work (Ferris et al., 2002). Ferris et al. (2002) identified several reasons for this position. First, research tells us that the reasons for using influence tactics are varied and may or may not have anything to do with politics (Kipnis et al., 1980; Rao, Schmidt & Murray, 1995; Thacker & Wayne, 1995). Additionally, while upward influence tactics may be political in some

instances, they comprise only one type of political behavior used in organizations, and therefore may not be a representative of organizational politics as a whole. In actuality, it appears that impression management (frequently used for upward influence) comprises a minority of political behaviors (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Further, as upward influence only represents one type of influence, it also represents only one direction of influence. A focus on bottom-up influence disregards influence exerted laterally or from the top down (Yukl, Guinan & Sottolano, 1995; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). In addition to the direction, the beneficiary of political influence tactics can vary to include the actor, the subordinate, the organization, or all three (Provis, 2006). Lastly, upward influence attempts such as rationality, ingratiation, and coalition building are often seen as harmless. Clearly, this does not match the common perception of politics as being a negative force with little regard for others or the organization, and it does not account for research that shows that politics can have negative manifestations (Hall et al., 2004). In sum, we have a body of research that illuminates only a small section of political behavior in organizations and does not adequately match the dark image politics definitions typically present. Combined with the measurement concerns, one is left with concerns about what exactly we have been measuring and how broadly any conclusions based on politics research can be generalized.

Politics Perceptions

While political behavior, and especially influence tactics, have been one way to examine organizational politics, another way has been the subjective experiences that individuals have in response to organizational politics. Ferris, Harrell-Cook, and Dulebohn (2000) noted that perceptions of organizational politics "involves an

individual's attribution to behaviors of self-serving intent, and is defined as an

individual's subjective evaluation about the extent to which the work environment is

characterized by co-workers and supervisors who demonstrate such self-serving

behavior" (p. 90). There are three important implications of this definition. First, politics

perceptions include the attribution of intent (e.g., motivation) about of others' behavior.

Second, other's political behaviors are seen as self-serving. Finally, perceptions involve

individuals' subjective feelings regarding political behavior in the work environment.

One important consideration is the level of analysis on which individuals base

their perceptions of organizational politics (e.g., one individual might be influenced by

the political climate in their workgroup while another might consider the entire

organization). In a sense, this is another subjective piece of how politics perceptions are

formed. Similarly, some research has suggested that one's place in the organizational

hierarchy may affect politics perceptions; those higher up tended to report greater politics

perceptions (Gandz & Murray, 1980; Madison et al., 1980). Further, politics from

different foci affect one's overall perceptions of politics differently. Fedor et al. (2008)

found that politics perceptions at the individual and group levels dominate perceptions

over those at the organization level, with the individual level being the strongest.

The study of politics perceptions has long been dominated by the philosophy that

subjective perceptions were more important than objective organizational politics (e.g.,

Ferris, Russ et al., 1989; Lewin, 1936; Porter, 1976). This perspective says that it is the

individual's *perceptions* of political influence on organizational activities and decision-

making processes that drive their cognitions and response choices, regardless of if their

perception corresponds with what actually happened (Lewin, 1936; Porter, 1976). Thus,

the argument goes, it is more illustrative to study individuals' *perceptions* of politics than the *actual existence* of political behavior. In other words, as individuals experience their organizational environment, they form their own interpretations and subjective views of the politics they see, regardless of whether this is reflective of objective reality (e.g., Ferris, Russ et al., 1989), and they respond according to those perceptions.

Gandz and Murray (1980) went so far as to state that organizational politics was most appropriately conceived of as a mental state, and that perceptions are affected by a number of variables. Essentially, we cannot view the human mind as a camera making exact mental representations of social experiences. Social perception, including politics perception, "is a constructive process that incorporates perceptual filtering, selection, and interpretational errors" (Heider, 1958, p. 1762). It is unlikely that perceptions always match the political behavior around them; hence this social process is a critical part of politics perceptions and outcomes. Porter et al. (1981) echoed this idea that social learning processes help to construct politics perceptions. Thus, it is through observation, judgments of motivations, and attributions about the situation and the disposition of actors that we ultimately come to our perception of the politics around us.

The actor and the perceiver may be unlikely to agree on the causes of political behavior (if they even agree the behavior is political). In judging other's behavior, people tend to make perceptual errors which result in self-serving judgments. These errors include a tendency to attribute one's own behavior to dispositional factors but others' political behavior to situational factors, even if the behavior is identical (Porter et al., 1981), and to see our own behavior in terms of competence and less about ethics (Wojciszke, 2005). Thus, it is clear that politics perceptions should have a relationship

with witnessed political behavior, but not an exact correspondence (Fedor et al., 1998; Hill et al., 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to delve deeper into the perceptual process behind politics perceptions (Hochwarter et al., 2010).

It is clear, however, that despite the importance of politics perceptions, it is not the only determinant of organizational politics or the political experience. Vigoda (2000) is careful to point out that while politics perception is important, it "does not fully describe other political rituals inside and outside organizations (e.g., influence tactics between internal and external stakeholders)" (p. 205). Further, Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, and Toth (1997) found that organizational politics cannot be fully understood without both perceptions of politics and political behavior. Fedor and Maslyn (2002) aptly stated it when they called for research to disentangle the two constructs and clarify how they relate. Discussion of organizational politics cannot be divorced from a discussion of political behavior, perceptions of politics, and relationship between the two. The behaviors the individual perceives from others and subsequently chooses to perform themselves is as critical to a full understanding organizational politics as the individual's subjective perceptions.

In essence, organizational politics do not exist solely in the perceptual worlds of employees, and it is necessary for research to consider how different types of organizational politics work in concert with perceptions to result in behavioral intentions. This is essentially the lifecycle of organizational politics. We witness an event, we perceive it as political and make attributions about the motivations of those involved, and we then decide how to react. These reactions constitute the input for others' perceptions, and the cycle continues. For this reason, the proposed research will examine not only

politics perceptions and political behavior, but explicitly the political behavior of others, the individual's perceptions of it, and their subsequent political behavioral intentions.

Models of Politics Perceptions

The first comprehensive model of antecedents and outcomes of politics perceptions was published by Ferris, Russ et al. (1989). This multilevel model identified assorted organizational influences (e.g., centralization, formalization), job/work influences (e.g., autonomy, feedback), and personal influences (e.g., age, Machiavellianism) as direct antecedents of politics perceptions, and outcomes like job satisfaction, job involvement, and withdrawal. Perceived control and understanding functioned as moderators to outcomes. Research commenced on various parts of the model but it should be noted that a single test of all parts of the original model was never conducted (Ferris et al., 2002). A revised model was informed by testing of the original model (Ferris et al., 2002) in which several variables were added and others dropped, most notably the removal of job involvement as an outcome and age and sex as personal influences. Since the publication of the revised model, there have been several efforts to test and refine portions of it, but full-fledged tests of the entire model have been not been made.

Antecedents

While there has not been comprehensive testing of the full models, there has been substantial testing of portions of the models and of other suspected variables. This research has highlighted several consistently supported antecedents. Centralized organizations have power and decision-making consolidated, usually at the top of the hierarchy. Substantial testing of centralization has given strong support to it as an

antecedent of politics perceptions (e.g., Fedor et al., 1998; Ferris, Frink, Galang et al., 1996; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Valle & Perrewé, 2000). Formalization refers to how well codified and structured the organization's rules and procedures are. Results for formalization have been mixed, but more have found support (e.g., Fedor et al., 1998; Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk et al., 1996; Parker et al., 1995) than have not (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Valle & Perrewé, 2000). Beyond these organizational attributes, support has been found for opportunity for development (Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Parker et al., 1995) and opportunity for promotion (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris, Frink, Galang et al., 1996; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Valle & Perrewé, 2000) as antecedents.

At the individual level, there has been support for socialization and tenure as antecedents with greater time in the organization relating to greater perceptions of politics (Fedor et al., 1998; Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996; Vigoda, 2002). Similarly, Machiavellianism has also been shown to positively relate to perceptions of politics (Valle & Perrewé, 2000). The results for gender and hierarchical level have been equivocal, hence their removal from the revised model (Ferris et al., 2002).

Interactions with coworkers (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Parker et al., 1995) and interactions with supervisor (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Valle & Perrewé, 2000) have been clearly supported as antecedents. These results support the notion that direct social relationships, and not simply organizational structures, contribute to politics perceptions. It is challenging to assess individual political behaviors, and far more difficult to use experimental designs that call for the manipulation of individual relationships with coworkers and supervisors. However, it is clear that the interactions the individual has with others result in perceptions, and it is

logical and obvious that these perceptions will elicit some sort of reaction. It is also important to note that interactions with others may or may not involve politics or political behavior. In fact, they are likely to include many other behaviors that are patently not political. With the exception of Hill et al. (2016), research has not been conducted in which the political nature of the stimulus has been experimentally manipulated, thus it is difficult to draw causal inferences based on much of the existing published research.

Study 1: Positive and Negative Politics Perceptions Via Motives and Attributions

While the antecedents and outcomes of politics perceptions have been studied and modeled, examination of the relationships positive- and negative-politics have with politics perceptions has not been conducted. The differences in the perceptual processes behind politics perceptions are important to advance of our understanding of politics in general. Study 1 applied MIM (Reeder, 2009; Reeder, Kumar, Hesson-McInnis, & Trafimow, 2002; Reeder & Trafimow, 2005; Reeder, Vonk, Ronk, Ham, & Lawrence, 2004) to explain how positive and negative politics lead to different attributions of political actors and therefore perceptions of politics, and accounted for the influence of the perceiver's attribution style (see Figure 1).

Politics Perceptions and Political Behavior

Most research has been conducted either on politics perceptions or political behavior, but not both simultaneously (Valle & Perrewé, 2000). In fact, Harrell-Cook et al. (1999) stated that the complexity of the relationship between the two has been virtually ignored. However, in spite of their conceptual distinctiveness, the two streams of research have been put under the organizational politics wing (Ferris et al., 2000). Politics perceptions have generally been conceived as the individual's perception of how others

use influence to manipulate the social sphere, while political behavior has focused on the individual's use of behaviors to influence and manipulate others. The two areas have proceeded separately, yet in parallel, under the assumption that they were related. As aptly stated by Ferris et al. (2002), "Despite the fact that it is plausible that the level of politics would predict participation in the influence process, the preponderance of research in each of these areas has failed to consider the potential of perceptions and behaviors to affect work outcomes simultaneously" (p. 228).

This is not to say that there has been a total absence of research incorporating both perceptions and behavior. For instance, in their longitudinal study of actual political behavior (behavior engaged in by oneself) as an antecedent of perceptions, Vigoda and Cohen (2002) found a positive relationship between behavior and perceptions. This relationship was, however, moderated by the level of met expectations. Harrell-Cook et al. (1999) investigated the moderating effects of ingratiating and self-promotion behaviors on the relationship between politics perceptions and outcomes of intention to turnover, general job satisfaction, and satisfaction with supervisor. Ingratiating behaviors were conceptualized along Tedeschi and Melburg's (1984) typology as less proactive and more reactive, while self-promotion behaviors were more proactive and less reactive. The researchers viewed political behavior as a coping mechanism or means of exerting control in a political environment. Self-promotion was supported; the use of self-promotion behaviors resulted in fewer negative outcomes while not using them resulted in more negative outcomes. Ingratiation was also a significant moderator, but the effect was the opposite of what was expected. The researchers surmised that using self-

promotion gave a greater sense of control over tangible rewards like promotions, but ingratiation may fail to give that sense of control.

Valle and Perrewé (2000) looked at the moderating effects of reactive and proactive actual political behaviors. They tested whether reactive political behavior resulted in more negative outcomes due to politics perceptions and if proactive behaviors resulted in less negative outcomes. In their research, reactive behaviors were operationalized as defensive tactics against perceived threats while proactive behaviors were tactics used to take advantage of perceived opportunities. Results suggested that reactive behavior had significant moderating effects leading to greater dissatisfaction, but proactive behavior was not a significant moderator, contrary to the findings of Harrell-Cook et al. (1999). The authors suggested that the effects of proactive behaviors as control mechanisms may actually occur after the onset of antecedents, but before perception formation, implying that the proactive behavior one chooses could alter the perceptions one has.

Cheng (1983) used an experimental design to examine if political context has an impact on individual political behavior. In his study, he asked if individuals would choose more rational political behavior (i.e., sanctioned, benefitting the organization) when they were in a rational political environment, and conversely if they would choose more non-rational behavior (non-sanctioned and not in pursuit of organizational goals) if in a non-rational environment. With the exception of upward appeal and exchange, the individual's intention to use non-rational tactics was significantly matched with perceptions of non-rational politics. Further, perceptions of a rational context were associated with intention to use rational influence. While only partially supported,

Cheng's work provided clear support for the idea that perceptions are associated with the perceiver's behavior.

The research by Hill et al. (2016) took a different perspective on political behavior, using an experimental design to manipulate the political behavior of *others* to determine its relationship with politics perceptions. The question asked was, do individuals actually perceive others' political behavior as political? The predictive relationship between others' political behavior and the individual's politics perceptions was supported, and this is important as it provides evidence of a causal relationship between the political behavior one witnesses and the politics one perceives, which had not been experimentally tested before. It is worth noting, however, that this moderately strong relationship ($\gamma = .62$, $p < .001$) does not indicate that political behavior was the only predictor of perceptions. Other unmeasured variables clearly account for portions of the variance seen in politics perceptions.

The research reviewed in this section has promoted the notion that behavior is related to perceptions, but has primarily relied actual political behavior and upward influence and impression management tactics. As discussed previously, this may not be a thorough representation of political behaviors (Ferris et al., 2002). In fact, these behaviors appear to be rather innocuous in nature, and comprise merely a subset of political behaviors. Others have acknowledged the wide variety in political behaviors (Kacmar & Baron, 1999) including potentially damaging methods like sabotage (Hochwarter, Witt, & Kacmar, 2000). Different influence tactics can have different relationships with politics perceptions and outcomes, and the tactic chosen and outcomes achieved depend on the context and individual.

Ferris et al. (2002) acknowledged this and called for research to extend beyond upward influence tactics in elucidating the construct. Specifically, they emphasized the need to disentangle the reasons behind political behavior, a phenomenon still largely unexplained. As they note, the .36 correlation between politics perceptions and political behavior (self-promotion) found by Ferris et al. (2000) indicates a strikingly large amount of variance unaccounted for in political behaviors. Of equal importance is the consideration of objective politics (the actual behaviors demonstrated) vs. subjective perceptions of those behaviors. While Hill et al. (2016) established a relationship between them, they also noted that the objective level of politics is a meaningful source of information in addition to politics perceptions.

Unfortunately, an understanding of what exactly makes up politics perceptions is lacking, and the perceptions of politics literature does not directly address this issue. General statements about increased perceptions are made, but greater detail is not offered. Additionally, the primary scale used to measure politics, the POPS, is no clearer on this than it is on the positive or negative nature of politics. Most items focus on (or imply a focus on) instrumentality of politics (e.g., "People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down"), but there are more policy focused items as well (e.g., "When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant"). As the perceiver witnesses a political behavior, infers motivation, and makes an attribution of the actor, in many cases they simultaneously witness the results of the behavior; did the behavior result in the actor's desired outcome or not? This is a very basic aspect of perception of the behaviors of others, and thus, instrumentality is an important aspect of perception for this research to consider.

The stability dimension of attributions would imply that perception would be associated with the likelihood that the behavior will happen in the future (Floyd, 2014). If one attributes high stability to political behavior, then it is perceived as having greater likelihood of recurring in the future. The most logical conclusion is that perceptions will include both judgments of instrumentality and of future likelihood. Thus, hypotheses including politics perceptions were made with this duality in mind.

Based on the explanations in this section, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1: Political Behavior will be related to Politics Perceptions, such that Organization-Serving Political Behavior will be positively related to Positive Politics Perceptions and Self-Serving Political Behavior will be positively related to Negative Politics Perceptions.

Inferred Motives, Attributions, and Perceptions: Multiple Inference Model

Heider (1958) said that when interpreting behavior, perceivers are most interested in understanding dispositions, going so far as to say that they were the primary goal of behavior interpretation. Reeder (2009) maintains that this may be a limited perspective, as it does not include intentions or motives. Motives are evolutionarily important as they allow us to explain and predict behavior, which make them a primary component of social interaction (Reeder & Trafimow, 2005). MIM outlines a process to explain perception of others' behavior in which we first assess intentionality, then infer motivations, and finally make trait attributions, allowing inferences of motives and traits to be integrated in a meaningful way (Reeder, 2009; Reeder et al., 2002; Reeder & Trafimow, 2005; Reeder et al., 2004). In this way, perceptions are not based on motives

or individual attributes, but rather, on both (Reeder & Trafimow, 2005). Reeder et al. (2004) cites Malle, Knobe, O'Laughlin, Pearce, and Nelson (2000) and Read and Miller (1993) saying that according to MIM, "inferences about motive are the glue that holds the impression together, allowing for a coherent impression of intentional behavior" (p. 541).

MIM accounts for both situational and individual characteristics in social perception (Reeder, 2009), such that situational factors are integrated with and clarify motivations (Reeder et al., 2002). This is more in line with the perceptual process people actually use; situational and dispositional causes of behavior are not seen as mutually exclusive (Uleman, Saribay, & Gonzales, 2008). When asked, people reported considering both and the interaction between the two when evaluating behavior. When the behavior is considered unintentional, situational constraints may modify or even discount inferred motivations (Reeder, 2009). For instance, if a person drops a priceless vase their motives may be discounted if it happened during an earthquake; the action was due to a cause outside of their control so they are not given a trait attribution of "clumsy." The situation becomes the primary explanatory source of behavior, and thus the meaning of it. When behavior is viewed as intentional, the mental state of the actor becomes more important (Giles & Gasiorek, 2013) and the inferred motive becomes the main explanatory source. For instance, if the person was very angry and in an argument with the owner of the vase, the breaking of the vase is far more likely to be seen as intentional, out of anger, and due to the motivation to mistreat the other person. Another way to view this is that intentional behaviors are explained in terms of motives while unintentional behaviors are explained in terms of causes (Malle, 1999). Hence, we reconcile the influences of motives and situations by considering situational constraints and the

intentionality of the behavior, and modify or discount the influence of motivations accordingly.

It is important to note that political behavior is recognized to be, at base, intentional, as described in the foregoing sections. Thus, while the discussion of intentionality vs. unintentionality in the use of motives to form attributions is relevant as an explanation of MIM, the proposed research will focus strictly on the model once a behavior is recognized as intentional.

MIM says that when we perceive intentional behavior, we make rapid inferences about the other's motivations, and these inferred motives form the groundwork for attributions of focal traits (e.g., Reeder, 2009; Reeder & Trafimow, 2005). Motives are the mental states we have while pursuing behavioral actions (Heider, 1958; Malle, 2008). We use motives to understand and give meaning to others' behavior and everyday events, and we may or may not view them as causal (Reeder & Trafimow, 2005). Based on the expectation that intentional behavior is rational and goal-directed, perceivers use evidence about the situation and the individual to infer a motive for behavior (Reeder, 2009). This may include psychological projections from the perceiver onto the actor (Ames, 2004; Epley, Morewedge, & Keysar, 2004; Goldman, 2001; Nickerson, 1999), and it may be spontaneous or based in a sequence (Fiedler & Schenck, 2001; Hassin, Aarts, & Ferguson, 2005; Reeder et al., 2004; Vonk, 1998). The process can also be affected by the perceiver's attribution style, their assumptions, and stereotypes they hold (Reeder, 2009).

Motives are quite distinct from traits, which refer to more stable patterns of behavior. An important distinction between motives and traits is that motives are much

harder to observe. While traits can be abstract, they still tend to be easier to observe than motives. It may be easy enough to state that someone is selfish (trait attribute), but it is far more difficult to identify the motivation behind the selfish behavior from the outside. This means that traits are more likely to be agreed upon (Albright, Kenny, & Malloy, 1988), while motives may be largely a matter of opinion (Reeder, 2009). A historic example of this is the outlaw Jesse James (Reeder et al., 2002). Jesse James was a thief in the Old West after the Civil War who was portrayed as an outlaw, a criminal, and a murderer. However, many felt that he was actually working to defend the Southern Confederacy, and that those he stole from were, in fact, rich northerners. For those who supported him, his motives were perceived as benefitting the Confederacy; he was viewed as a hero (Settle, 1966) and not a criminal. Thus, his behavior was interpreted very differently depending on the motivation inferred, underscoring how important motivational inferences are in how we evaluate actors and their behavior.

Based on this empirical support for the notion that perceivers assign inferred motivations to actors, the following was hypothesized, bearing in mind that political behavior is, by its very nature, volitional and therefore intentional:

Hypothesis 2: Political behavior will relate to inferred motive such that organization-serving political behavior will be related to more altruistic inferred motives and self-serving political behavior will be related to more self-serving inferred motives.

Perceivers endeavor to establish evaluative consistency between the motivations they infer and the dispositions they make, which means that attributed traits may change depending on the motives inferred (Reeder, 2009; Reeder et al., 2004). For instance,

Reeder et al. (2004) found that an inferred obedience motive predicted more helpful trait attributions, while a selfish ulterior motive predicted fewer helpful trait attributions. Additionally, they found that inferred motives were better predictors of trait attributions of helpfulness than abstract causal inferences (i.e., personal or situational attributes). This exemplifies a new view of causal attributions in which the need to explain others' behavior is more important to perceivers than the evaluation of individual vs. situational factors.

On top of this, there are indications that some motives result in greater adjustment of the trait attribution, especially self-serving motives (Reeder, 2009). In examinations of dispositional inferences of morality, Reeder et al. (2002) found that participants evaluated inferred motives positively or negatively (justified or unjustified in the context of the study), and that the trait morality of the actor was perceived in a similar way. If a participant inferred a positive motive, then they also had a positive view of the actor's morality trait.

Hypothesis 3: Inferred Motive will be related to Attribution such that a more Altruistic Inferred Motive will be related to a more Helpful Team Player Attribution and a more Self-Serving Inferred motive will be related to a Selfish Go-Getter Attribution.

As outlined by MIM, the relationship between observing political behavior and trait attributions made may be indirectly transmitted through inferred motivations.

Hypothesis 4: There will be an indirect relationship between Political Behavior and Attributions via Inferred Motive such that the impact of Organization-Serving Political Behavior on a more Helpful Team Player Attribution will be significantly

explained by an Altruistic Inferred Motive and the impact of Self-Serving

Political Behavior on Selfish Go Getter Attribution will be significantly explained

by a Self-Serving Inferred Motive.

Therefore, the perceiver infers motives to the actor, and then makes value

judgments about those motivations and the actor (Schneider, Hastorf, & Ellsworth, 1979),

which are likely to affect the perceiver's behavior toward the actor (Fiske & Taylor,

2013). Additionally, these judgments may serve as indicators of how the actor is likely to

behave in the future (Floyd, 2014) thereby affecting politics perceptions and expectations

of future political behavior. According to Davis and Gardner (2004), behaviors that result

in internal attributions are viewed as self-serving and the result of selfish ulterior motives.

Actors are judged more negatively and are expected to behave selfishly in the future. As

the expectancy of future political behavior increases, so does the perceiver's politics

perception (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). When external attributions of behavior are made, they

result in less political perceptions. In sum, encountering political behavior may trigger

motive inferences and trait attributions which indicate politics are more likely in the

future, reinforcing the perception of politics. This description clearly relies on the

negative understanding of politics, but it is reasonable to expect that behavior that is

intentional and with an organization-serving motive may also result in expectations of

similarly motivated future behavior. Thus, positive political behavior may result in

positive attributions, expectations of more positive political behavior, and therefore

increased positive political perceptions.

Hypothesis 5: Attribution will be related to perceptions of politics, such that a

more Helpful Team Player attribution will be related to increased Positive Politics

Perceptions and a more Selfish Go Getter attribution will be related to increased

Negative Politics Perceptions.

MIM has two fundamental components. The first is the adjustment of motives based on situational constraints, thereby integrating the intentionality of behavior, and the second is that motives that we infer will predict and, in some way, match the dispositional attributions that we make. Therefore, the inferred motives regarding intentional political behavior should have minimal discounting by situational constraints, and should have an indirect effect on perceptions transmitted through the dispositional attributions made.

Hypothesis 6: There will be an indirect relationship between Inferred Motive and Politics Perception via Attribution such that the impact of a more Altruistic Inferred Motive on Positive Politics perceptions will be significantly explained by a more Helpful Team Player Attribution, and the impact of a more Self-Serving Inferred Motive on Negative Politics Perception will be significantly explained by a more Selfish Go-Getter Attribution.

Hypothesis 7: There will be an indirect relationship between Political Behavior and Politics Perceptions via Inferred Motive and Attributions such that the impact of Organization-Serving Political Behavior on Positive Politics Perceptions will be significantly explained by a more Altruistic Inferred Motive and more Helpful Team Player Attribution, and the impact of Self-Serving Political Behavior on Negative Politics Perceptions will be significantly explained by a more Self-Serving Motive and more Selfish Go Getter Attribution.

The Self in Attributions: Hostile Attribution Style

Mischel (1973) outlined the importance of looking beyond situational factors in understanding human behavior. This work and subsequent efforts by Mischel and Shoda (1995) emphasized the importance of the person, the situation, and the interaction between the two in understanding why individuals behave as they do. This is important to the study of attributions of political behavior. Critical to this is the influence of the perceiver on their own perceptions.

The work of Martinko, Gundlach, and Douglas (2002) and Martinko, Harvey, and Douglas (2007) asserted that the behavior of the actor is not the sole driver of causal attributions, and that perceivers have distinct tendencies, or attribution styles, in how they make attributions. The perceiver's attribution style is a trait-like, individual difference evidenced by consistent patterns of causal attribution across situations (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Kent & Martinko, 1995; Martinko et al., 2002). These individual predispositions are a factor in the way attributions are made resulting in impacts on emotions and behavior (Anderson, Jennings, & Arnold, 1988; Martinko et al., 2002; Martinko et al., 2007), and do not constitute objective assessments of reality (Dobbins & Russell, 1986; Jones & Nisbett, 1971). Attributional styles have been found to affect motivation, performance, and affective reactions to life events (Anderson et al., 1988).

Attribution research has been comprised of two primary areas (Thomson & Martinko, 2004). The first focused on intrapersonal processes of achievement attribution (e.g., Weiner, 1985), while the second focused on social attributions made by observers based on Kelly's (1973) cube. These research streams have spanned constructs like

performance appraisal (e.g., Ashkanasy, 1995; Fedor & Rowland, 1989; Ferris, Yates, Gilmore, & Rowland, 1985) and leader effectiveness perceptions (e.g., Cronshaw & Lord, 1987). According to Thomson and Martinko (2004), integration of these research streams reveals that social- and self-attributions derive from the same general causal reasoning process. Thus, the attribution style one has in observing personally experienced outcomes proceeds through the same process as those associated with observing other's outcomes. Thus, research into self-attributional style can inform that of social attributional style.

Attribution styles are researched as combinations of dimensions of attributions. Heider (1958) identified attributions as having three dimensions, including locus (e.g. internal or external), stability, and controllability. In other words, perceivers examine outcomes and make determinations about how much the outcome was due to an internal quality, how likely it is to happen in the future, and the degree of volitional control the individual had. It is the tendency to make attributions in certain ways across these dimensions that constitute a particular attribution style. The proposed study will focus on the hostile attribution style.

Hostile attributional style was first defined by Martinko and Zellars (1998) and describes a tendency to make external and stable attributions across situations (see also Dodge & Coie, 1987; Harvey, Harris, & Martinko, 2008; Martinko, Douglas, & Harvey, 2006). Individuals with a hostile attributional style perceive negative events as intentional and with minimal situational influence. The stability aspect is important as it is thought to affect expectancies. If the cause is seen as stable then it is perceived to be more likely to happen in the future, increasing the likelihood of emotional and behavioral responses.

Applied to the political arena, a hostile attribution style is likely to result in the perception that political behavior will continue to happen, thereby increasing perceptions of politics (Thomson & Martinko, 2004), which is in line with the interpretations from MIM.

According to Harvey et al. (2008), hostile attributional style is mainly seen in reaction to negative events, and the effects are more cross-situationally consistent than other attributional biases. Additionally, individuals with hostile attributional style are more inclined to blame factors outside of themselves (e.g., other employees, supervisors, and organizational policies; Douglas & Martinko, 2001). It has been linked to several negative types of perceptions including perceptions of hostility (Douglas & Martinko, 2001), victimization (Aquino et al., 2004), and abusive supervision (Brees, 2012). In ambiguous situations, those with a hostile attribution style are especially likely to perceive hostile intentions (Baker, 2005). This is important as Ferris, Frink, Galang et al. (1996) asserted ambiguity as a possible negative antecedent of politics perceptions.

The Social Attribution Style Questionnaire (SASQ; Thomson & Martinko, 2004) was written to assess attribution style in response to observing *other's* behavior in the workplace. It was developed from the Organizational Attribution Style Questionnaire (Kent & Martinko, 1995) which focuses on the person's observations of their *own* behavior in the workplace. The SASQ includes stability and intentionality dimensions, making it ideal for examining hostile attribution styles associated with social attributions.

Hypothesis 8: Hostile Attribution Style will moderate the strength of the relationship between Attribution and Politics Perceptions (Hypothesis 5), such that the relationship will be weaker under low Hostile Attribution Style and stronger under high Hostile Attribution Style.

If the relationship between attribution and politics perceptions is moderated by attribution style, it is logical to expect the mediation of inferred motive to politics perceptions by attribution to vary with attribution style. As outlined above, hostile attributional style is most relevant to negative perceptions of negative motivations; therefore, its effects are likely confined to the relationship between a self-serving motive and negative politics perceptions.

Hypothesis 9: Hostile Attribution Style will moderate the strength of the indirect relationship between Inferred Motive and Politics Perceptions via Attribution (Hypothesis 6) such that the mediated relationship will be weaker under low Hostile Attribution Style and stronger under high Hostile Attribution Style.

Hypothesis 10: Hostile Attribution Style will moderate the strength of the indirect relationship between Political Behavior and Politics Perceptions via Inferred Motive and Attribution (Hypothesis 7) such that the mediated relationship will be weaker under low Hostile Attribution Style and stronger under a high Hostile Attribution Style.

Study 1: Method

Participants

An initial sample of 516 participants was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk and all participants were required to be 18 years or older. A number of data checks resulted in the reduction from this initial size. First, though employment was not a requirement for participation, only those with recent job experience (employed within the last two years) were included in data analysis resulting in the removal of 12 participants. Additionally, a time check, six attention check items, and a manipulation check item were

used to check for sufficient attention and effort. Participants had to spend at least 18

minutes (60% of the expected average time for participants to take the study) and pass

five of the six attention check items. Six participants were eliminated for insufficient time

spent and eight did not pass the attention check requirement. The manipulation check

asked participants to indicate why the target person behaved as they did, information

given in the situation video. There were 98 who failed this check, likely indicating a lack

of focus on the situation video, as the behavior video was the same for both conditions.

Finally, there were nine participants who were removed for failing both attention and

manipulation checks. After these removals, there were 383 participants in the sample

which exceeded the estimated 300 needed to achieve sufficient power.

Univariate and multivariate outliers were investigated. Three multivariate outliers

were found, but investigation of these cases found no clear grounds for removal.

Analyses were conducted with and without these three outliers and no substantive

differences were found (model fit, path coefficients, correlations), so the results reported

below include all participants.

The average age of the participants was 36.16 years (range = 18 - 70, SD =

11.25), and women made up 46.2% of the sample. White participants represented the

largest racial demographic (73.9%) followed by Asian (10.7%), African American

(7.6%), Hispanic/Latin-American (6.8%), and other (1.0%). Most participants were

employed (95.3%), had been with their employer an average of 5.8 years (range = 0 - 44,

SD = 5.90), and worked an average of 39.7 hours per week (range = 3 - 80, SD = 9.06).

Only 2.1% had a language other than English as their first language. Participants most

commonly worked in retail (15.4%), education (9.9%), technology-related professions

(9%), and healthcare (8.6%), but there was a wide representation across industry types.

Procedure

      Pilot testing. Pilot testing was conducted online using Qualtrics to refine the

scales created for the research and to collect critical incidents of influence behavior

attributed to self- or organization-serving motives for use in the development of stimulus

videos. Please see Appendix A for information about the pilot test.

      Main study. Study 1 and Study 2 data collection occurred at the same time using

a single survey administration. The survey was administered online using Qualtrics. The

procedures described here, therefore, apply to both studies. Participants completed an

initial set of measures, watched a pair of stimulus videos, and then completed a final set

of measures. The first set of measures included demographics questions, attribution style,

and political skill. The final set included inferred motive, attribution, politics perceptions,

acceptance of political behavior, emotion, and political behavior intentions.

      Following the methodology outlined by Reeder et al. (2004), all participants

watched two videos after the initial survey: a situation video and a behavior video. All

participants first viewed a situation video which explained the situational conditions

surrounding the actions of the target actor in the behavior video. This video implied, but

did not overtly state, the actor's motivations. The subsequent behavior video used paid

actors to depict political behavior in an organizational situation. While the behavior video

involved political behaviors, the actors did not voice their motivations. Participants were

randomly assigned to either an organization-serving or a self-serving condition for the

situation video. Thus, all participants watched the same behavior video but different

situation videos, allowing for the manipulation of actor motivation. Participants were

informed which actor they should focus their attention on prior to watching the

behavioral video, and were advised that they would later be asked to report their

impressions of that person. Please see Appendix B for situation and behavior video

scripts.

Materials

     Videos. The behavioral video was created using scenarios taken from critical

incident reports collected in pilot testing, and informed by research on influence tactics

and antecedents of politics perceptions. As described above, the behavioral video was

standard across conditions. In the accompanying situation video, a neutral speaker (i.e.,

not featured in the behavior video nor a member of that organization) explained the

situational forces behind the behavior of the target actor based on information culled from

the pilot study critical incidents question. There were two versions of the situation video;

a positive and a negative condition. The situations were described in a manner implying

the motivation consistent with the condition, but did not expressly state the actor's

motives. In the positive condition, political behavior was due to an organization-serving,

or more altruistic motive illustrated by the situation (helping the work team win an

award). In the negative condition the situation illustrated a situation in which the behavior

had self-serving motivations (getting a promotion). The video pairs were evaluated by

subject matter experts to ensure manipulation effectiveness, and manipulation checks

were used during data collection. The scripts for the situation and behavior videos are in

Appendix B.

Inferred motivation. A custom scale was created and refined via pilot testing for this construct. Some items were adapted from MIM-related research (e.g., Reeder et al., 2002; Reeder et al., 2004; Reeder, Pryor, Wohl, & Griswell, 2005) and others were composed independently. The final scale had 13 items corresponding to two sub factors (altruistic and selfish). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*) regarding the selfish or altruistic motives of the target. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .93 and composite reliability was .94. An example item is, "Carl [the target person] was mostly concerned about getting ahead." Self-serving motive items were reverse coded such that a higher score on this scale corresponded with a more altruistic inferred motive and lower scores mean a more self-serving motive. See Appendix C for the inferred motivation instrument.

Attribution. The scale developed for this study was composed of items adapted from the Self-Report Altruism Scale (Rushton, 1981) and items used in MIM research (e.g., Reeder et al., 2002; Reeder et al., 2004; Reeder et al., 2005). Pilot testing identified 15 items for final use, with two sub factors (altruistic and selfish). It had an alpha of .94 and composite reliability of .95. A sample is, "Carl would delay an elevator and hold the door open for a coworker." Items regarding a selfish attribution were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated a more helpful team player attribution and lower scores indicated a more selfish go getter attribution. See Appendix C for the full set of items.

Politics perceptions. Positive and negative politics perceptions were assessed using a composite measure comprised of items from Fedor et al.'s (2008) politics perceptions scale, Kacmar and Carlson's POPS (1997) scale, and items created for this study. After removal of one negative politics perceptions item for low loading, the final

scale consisted of nine items with four being related to positive politics perceptions and

five related to negative politics perceptions. Participants rated their agreement using a

five-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*). All items asked

participants about their perceptions of the organization shown in the behavioral video.

Example items are "I have seen necessary changes happen because of the use of politics"

and "To do well in this organization, who you know matters more than how good a job

you do." Negative items in this scale were reverse coded such that higher scores on this

scale indicate more positive perceptions and lower scores indicate more negative

perceptions. The Cronbach's alpha was .80 and composite reliability was .87. See

Appendix C for the politics perceptions scale items.

      Hostile attribution style. Hostile attribution style was measured using the

intentionality and stability dimensions of the SASQ (Thomson & Martinko, 2004). This

scale is set in the organizational context and asks participants about their perceptions of

the outcomes experienced by others. Each dimension has 16 items. The intentionality

dimension had a Cronbach's alpha of .87 and the stability dimension had an alpha of .82.

Composite reliability for the hostile attribution style scale was .93. Participants read a set

of 16 statements of workplace situations and then rated the intentionality and stability of

each using seven-point Likert scales (scale anchors varied by item; see Appendix C). An

example item is "You recently discovered that a coworker of yours is being paid

considerably less than another employee holding a similar position" (p. 196). A hostile

attribution style score was determined by first computing average scores on each

dimension, and then using the mean of those values to create the composite score. High

hostile attribution scores were those composite scores one standard deviation or more

above the mean. Similarly, low hostile attribution scores were those falling one standard

deviation or more below the mean. Of the 380 participants, 52 had high hostile attribution

style scores and 59 had low attribution style scores. See Appendix C for the full set of

items.

Data Analytic Procedure

Data were analyzed using SPSS (IBM, 2015) and the statistical software package

R (R Core Team, 2013). The selfish or negative items in inferred motive, attribution, and

politics perceptions were reverse coded so that a high score on the overall scale would

correspond with the more positive or altruistic attribute and a lower score would

correspond with the more negative or self-serving attribute.

Three balanced parcels consisting of approximately equal numbers of items were

created for use as measured variables in the models following the procedure outlined in

Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman, (2002). According to Little et al., (2002),

having three indicators has been shown to produce a just-identified (i.e., not under-

identified or over-identified) latent variable. Parcels values were the means of their items,

and were checked for cross-loading onto other latent factors. Further, the parceled data

was checked for multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distances using χ^2 cutoffs at the

$p < .001$ level. Before elimination, outliers were reviewed to ensure the appropriateness of

removal.

Both confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM)

were used. For both, fit was evaluated using χ^2 statistic, the root mean square error of

approximation (RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI;

Bentler, 1990), and the Nonnormed Fit Index (NNFI; Bentler, 1980). RMSEA signifies

model fit relative to degrees of freedom with values less than .08 interpreted as

acceptable fit and less than .05 as very good fit. CFI and NNFI utilize comparative

models in which model fit is compared to that of the null model. For each index, .90

indicates acceptable fit and .95 very good fit. While there are some generally accepted

practices, there are no universally recognized values for fit, thus these cutoffs were used

as guidelines for fit decisions (Schumacher & Lomax, 2010).

Prior to hypothesis testing, CFAs were conducted on the scales to evaluate their

structural validity. Hypothesis, moderation, and mediation model testing were conducted

using the lavaan package in R (Rosseel, 2012) and Maximum Likelihood Estimation.

Following the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) for SEM, a two-step

analysis was used. First, CFA was used to test an initial measurement model in which

measured variables related to their corresponding latent variables, but the latent variables

were free to vary. After ensuring acceptable fit of this model, a structural model

specifying the hypothesized relationships between latent variables was examined using

SEM. Direct path hypothesis testing used the standardized regression weights produced

by the final structural model (hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5).

In order to test mediation (hypotheses 4, 6, and 7), a more detailed approach than

SEM was used (Brown, 1997). While an overall understanding of the fit of a mediated

model is valuable, it is important to decompose the indirect effects on outcome variables

which are not separated in an SEM analysis. To accomplish this, bootstrapping in R was

conducted (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 2006; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007).

Bootstrapping is the creation of a larger sampling distribution by resampling from the

data with replacement a set number of times (1000 in this study). It is advantageous as it

does not assume that the sampling distribution of the indirect effect is normal. It has been

shown to improve power and Type I error rates compared to other methods of mediation

analysis (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). It should be noted, however, that

the utility of bootstrapping is limited if the sample distribution does not resemble the

population distribution (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). R allows for the specification of all

indirect paths in the bootstrapping process, and thus allowed for the decomposition of the

indirect effects on latent outcomes. Over the 1000 resamples, a distribution of values for

each indirect path was created constituting a nonparametric estimate of the indirect path's

sampling distribution. When zero was absent from the 95% confidence interval the

indirect path was deemed significant. For hypothesis 7, the same bootstrapping procedure

was used, but the indirect effect included three paths rather than just one. The use of this

bootstrapping technique with serial mediation was appropriate per Taylor, MacKinnon,

and Tein (2007).

Testing of the moderation hypothesis (8) followed the procedure described by

Kenny and Judd (1984; Cortina, Chen, & Dunlap, 2001). Latent cross-product terms were

formed via multiplying the mean-centered composites together (one for each

hypothesized moderation). Reliabilities for the latent cross products were calculated

using Bornstedt and Marwell's (1978) formula. The paths from the composite indicators

and the latent variables were fixed to the square root of the reliability of the scale, and

their error variances were set to the product of one minus the reliability multiplied by the

composite's variance. When the resulting model, called the additive model, showed

significantly better fit than the model without the interaction term, moderation was

concluded (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992).

Study 1: Results

All measures demonstrated good fit upon CFA examination. One item was removed from the politics perceptions scale for low loading, but all other scale items loaded appropriately. See Table 3 for goodness of fit statistics for the measures and Appendix C for scale items.

Hypothesized model. The measurement model achieved excellent fit ($\chi^2[24] =$ 47.51, $p < .01$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .99; NNFI = .99). Latent variable relationships were specified in the structural model, and it also had good fit ($\chi^2[40] = 77.70$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .99; NNFI = .98). See Figure 2 for this model. This and all subsequent model fit statistics are shown in Table 4. There were no additional paths that were theoretically logical, nor any suggested by modification indices; however, the nonsignificant relationship between hostile attribution style and politics perceptions ($\lambda =$ .06, $p = .15$) suggested that it might be removed from the model. Testing of this trimmed model (see Figure 3), found that the removal of this path did not significantly alter model fit ($\Delta\chi^2[8] = 6.77$, $p = .56$), but proved a more parsimonious model ($\chi^2[32] = 70.93$, $p <$ .001; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .99; NNFI = .98). In light of these findings, this was deemed the final model and all subsequent hypothesis testing was based on the trimmed model.

Direct relationships. Hypotheses concerning the relationships between constructs were tested using the standardized path coefficients from R for the final model. Hypothesis 1 stated that political behavior and politics perceptions would be related such that positive political behavior would relate to positive perceptions and negative political behavior would relate to negative politics perceptions. Based solely on the path coefficient in the model, this was not supported ($\lambda = .00$, $p = .94$). Despite this, the

variables were correlated with each other ($r = .21, p < .001$); thus, it is important to consider the broader model context. There were two indirect paths hypothesized from political behavior to politics perceptions, and each was significant, as explained in the next section. This means that the relationship between political behavior and politics perceptions exists, but occurs entirely through indirect means in this model. Indeed, a test of the direct path with the indirect paths constrained to zero shows a significant positive relationship (PE $\beta = .26, p < .001$). Given that this direct path was significant when the indirect effect was not modeled, this provides support for hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 stated that the organization-serving or selfish nature of the political behavior would correspond with an altruistic or self-serving inferred motivation, respectively, and this was supported ($\lambda = .58, p < .001$). Similarly, the altruistic or self-serving inferred motivation corresponded with the helpful team player or selfish go getter attribution, respectively, in hypothesis 3 ($\lambda = .87, p < .001$). Hypothesis 5 was supported ($\lambda = .61, p < .001$) finding that the attribution made (team player vs. selfish go getter) was related to positive or negative politics perceptions, respectively.

Indirect relationships. There were three hypothesized indirect relationships, and all were supported. The indirect paths of hypothesis 4 relating political behavior to attribution through inferred motive was significant (PE $\gamma = .79, p < .001$; 95% CI [.66, .93]), as was hypothesis 6, the indirect relationship from inferred motive on politics perceptions via attribution (PE $\beta = .25\ p < .001$; 95% CI [.18, .33]). Hypothesis 7 stated that the relationship between political behavior and politics perceptions would be indirectly transmitted through inferred motive and attribution, and this was also supported (PE $\beta = .24, p < .001$; 95% CI [.16, .33]).

Moderation and moderated mediation. Hypothesis 8 was that hostile attribution style would moderate the path from attribution to politics perceptions. This hypothesis was not supported as a significant interaction between hostile attribution style and attribution on politics perception was not found. The additive model was not a significantly better fitting model ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .26$, $p = .61$). Considering that the direct path and the interaction involving hostile attribution style on politics perceptions were not significant, the further testing of moderated mediation in hypothesis 10 was not warranted.

Post hoc analysis. In the previous discussion regarding the stability component of hostile attribution style, it was asserted that part of perceptions is how likely the behavior is expected to occur in the future. In order to test this specific expectation as a contributor, a scale was created, refined in pilot testing, and used to gauge the degree participants thought the target actor would behave as they did in the video in the future. The perceived likelihood of future political behavior (PLFPB) scale had five items and a Cronbach's alpha of .81. No a priori hypotheses were developed around this variable, but delving into its effects is beneficial. To that end, I consulted the correlations and found likelihood of future political behavior had significantly correlated with all other study variables except hostile attribution style (see Table 2). Its strongest relationship was with inferred motive so I chose to test a model based on the Final Model with the addition of likelihood of future political behavior as antecedent to inferred motive (see Figure 4). Both the measurement model ($\chi^2[48] = 156.97$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .97; NNFI = .96) and structural model ($\chi^2[61] = 219.58$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .96; NNFI =

.95) achieved good fit. The path from PLFPB was significant ($\lambda = -.50, p < .001$)

indicating that the greater the PLFPB, the more selfish the inferred motive.

Clearly, the expectation for future behavior will, to some degree, stem from

witnessing that behavior, so it was logical that political behavior contributed to the

PLFPB. A nested model was tested with the addition of this direct path. This model had

good fit ($\chi^2[60] = 188.15, p < .001$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .97; NNFI = .96), and the added

path was significant ($\lambda = -.31, p < .001$). This model fit the data significantly better than

the previous ($\Delta\chi^2 [1] = 31.44, p < .001$). This means that the negative political behavior

was associated with an increased perception that the behavior would occur in the future,

and positive political behavior was associated with a lower expectation of future political

behavior. Please see Model 4 for the final Study 1 Post Hoc Model A.

The fact that PLFPB was associated with the antecedent political behavior and

with inferred motive, it was logical to test for mediation. Further, as inferred motive was

previously hypothesized as part of three other indirect path hypotheses (hypotheses 4, 6,

and 7), I decided to test the following series of indirect paths using bootstrapping in

SEM:

1. Political behavior on inferred motive via PLFPB: Supported (PE $\gamma = .15, p <$

   .001; 95% CI [.15, .36]). The negative signs on the two paths can be

   interpreted to mean that negative political behavior was associated with a

   greater perception that the behavior will occur in the future, and that the

   greater this perception is, the more self-serving the motive that will be

   inferred. Conversely, positive political behavior is perceived as less like to

   recur and results in a more altruistic inferred motive. This is consistent with

the positive coefficient on the direct path which can be interpreted as the more

negative the political behavior, the more self-serving the inferred motive.

Notably, the direct relationship between political behavior and inferred motive

($\gamma = .43$, $p = .001$) remained significant in the presence of the indirect path.

2. PLFPB on attribution via inferred motive: Supported (PE $\gamma = -42$, $p < .001$;

   95% CI [-.70, -.43]). This path shows that as a negative PLFPB is associated

   with a more self-serving inferred motive, the resulting attribution is consistent

   with that inferred motive (selfish vs. altruistic).

3. Political behavior on attribution via PLFPB and inferred motive (three paths):

   Supported (PE $\gamma = .13$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [.12, .30]). This indirect path is a

   combination of the previous two.

4. Political behavior on politics perceptions via PLFPB, inferred motive, and

   attribution (four paths): Supported (PE $\beta = .08$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [.03, .10]).

   This indirect path shows how the perception of politics results from the chain

   that begins with political behavior and moves through PLFPB and MIM.

The direct path between political behavior and politics perceptions remained

nonsignificant ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .91$) when the indirect effect was modeled suggesting

complete mediation. PLFPB proved to be a beneficial addition to the model and an

explanatory variable for the relationship between political behavior and inferred motive.

In consideration of the similarity between PLFPB and the stability aspect of

hostile attribution style, I assessed a model in which PLFPB is tested in place of hostile

attribution style in the hypothesized model. This model achieved borderline fit ($\chi^2[61] =$

314.03, $p < .001$; RMSEA $= .10$; CFI $= .93$; NNFI $= .91$), and comparison to a nested

model with the path removed found no significant difference in fit ($\Delta\chi^2$ [1] = 2.65, p = .10). In light of this, the more parsimonious model without the path was retained. Additionally, the path between PLFPB and politics perceptions approached, but did not reach, the level of significance (γ = -.10, p = .06).

Though it was clear that high and low hostile attribution style were not associated with variables in the model, I decided to test a model in which hostile attribution style was a continuous variable using parcels composed of items from the stability and intentionality dimensions. The measurement model fit well (χ^2[48]=88.71, p < .001; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .99; NNFI = .98) as did the structural model (χ^2[61] = 127.49, p < .001; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .98; NNFI = .98). However, the relationship between hostile attribution style and politics perceptions remained non-significant (γ = .04, p = .39). It is clear that these data do not support the idea that hostile attribution style is related to politics perceptions.

Study 1: Discussion

The results of Study 1 indicate that positive political behavior and negative political behavior are indeed perceived differently, and that these perceptions are strongly tied to the motivation inferred by the perceiver. In many ways, previous examinations have treated the individual as a black box into which political stimuli went and somehow combined with internal forces to create politics perceptions. This study introduces some light into that process. It shows that political behavior resulting in different motivational inferences show distinct patterns of attributions and perceptions.

Gunn and Chen (2006) proposed a means and ends framework for examining organizational politics definitions. The results from this study suggest that motivations

may be another important attribute. At least in regards to how they are perceived, the outcomes and methods of political behavior are not the only important pieces of information that perceivers rely on. Clearly, when the motivations differ, the same political behavior is viewed differently. Therefore, it is not simply a matter of *what* or *how* someone behaves that determines whether it is political; the *why* is also critical.

In this study, participants were privy to the how (behavior video) and the why (situational video). By holding the actual behavior constant across conditions, and varying only the motivations of the actor to be self-serving or organization-serving, it was demonstrated that the same political behavior can be perceived very differently. The difference in motivation alone was powerful enough to alter the perceptual pathway resulting in different perceptions of the same behavior. The what, or the actual outcomes of the behaviors, was never witnessed by the participants, so the outcomes could not impact perceptions. It is possible that the effect of political behavior on politics perceptions would have been stronger if the outcomes were also seen.

These results add to the evidence that solely negative conceptualizations and definitions of organizational politics and political behavior are not accurate. The individual's experience in the organization has more nuance than these definitions capture. Study 1 showed that the types of inferred motives, attributes, and perceptions were predicted by the motive of the actor. The overall perceptual process was the same, but the quality of each piece was very different. The dual nature of politics was even supported by the refinement process to create the scale for politics perceptions. It showed that positive and negative politics perceptions were distinct, and yet best modeled as sub-factors of overarching politics perceptions. This is encouraging because it supports the

notion that politics perceptions can be both positive and negative, and therefore the definition of politics should allow for both.

Hill et al. (2016) experimentally demonstrated that political behavior results in politics perceptions, and at first glance, these results may appear to contradict that. As found in the final model, the direct path from political behavior to politics perceptions was not significant when direct and indirect effects were modeled together. However, when the indirect path was constrained to zero, the direct effect was indeed significant. This provides evidence for complete mediation given that the indirect effect was significant and the direct effect became non-significant. In this model, the relationship is explained by the chain of perceptions outlined in the MIM model, and this study actually provides additional experimental support that politics perceptions result from political behavior.

These results underscore the importance of perception in the sense that the perceptual pathways are rife with the opportunity for subjectivity. The perceiver's misunderstanding of motive or inaccurate attribution will affect how they perceive political behavior. While hostile attribution style was not supported in this study, it is likely that other individual differences play a role. One could also see how the perceivers' prior experience with an actor might color how they infer motive and make attributions. The models tested in this study tell an important story about a general perceptual process, but there is much more to be explained in this process.

The post hoc examination of PLFPB indicates that expectations of repeated political behavior do indeed contribute to politics perceptions. Further, it helps explain the motives that are inferred, thereby contributing to the MIM process of perception. It

also shows that the route from political behavior to politics perceptions goes through several perceptual paths; though the resulting perception may appear instantaneous, the path is actually somewhat winding and with many stops along the way.

It is important to note that the notion to test the PLFPB came about in relation to politics perceptions' relationship with the expectation that the behavior would recur. Hostile attribution style, and specifically the stability dimension of attribution, also taps this, but hostile attribution style, did not show relationships with other variables. The PLFPB also includes stability of behavior, but it may be that it's politics-specific nature made it distinct. The comparison of the two may or may not be appropriate. Either way, the results of the post hoc investigation show that it may be most accurate to consider PLFPB more related to inferred motive than actual attribution or politics perception.

Study 1 gives more insight into the conceptualizations of politics perceptions, advances the understanding of positive and negative politics in general, and teases apart the perceptual processes relating political behavior to perception.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

One of the primary strengths of Study 1 is the relatively new research design used to manipulate political behavior. This design introduces new avenues for the exploration of organizational politics, particularly positive and negative politics, because motives are manipulated while behavior is held constant. The experimental nature allows one to draw conclusions about the causal relationship between political behavior and politics perceptions that is often not possible in politics research. Politics perceptions research could extend its reach by using this design to include the manipulation of outcomes and other contextual variables.

The content of the study offers another set of strengths. First, the use of critical incidents reported from pilot study participants is another strength of this study. Collecting critical incidents of both positive and negative political behavior at work offered the most valid collection of possible video scenarios. In conjunction with theory, these critical incidents were essential to the creation and refinement of a final set of video stimuli that effectively manipulated political motive. The process of creating these videos relied heavily on subject matter experts, as well, to ensure the most potent manipulation. Further, study 1 did not rely on the POP scale, with its known negative skew. By developing a new scale with positive and negative dimensions, the results are more comprehensive and offer far greater insight into politics perceptions.

Beyond methodology, these results indicate that the general outline of perception offered by MIM applies to political behavior and politics perceptions. By employing MIM, Study 1 provides another way to look at politics perceptions, examining more than solely perception but also illuminating the perceptual process. The self-seeking nature of politics had been written about many times through the years, but this study shows that politics perceptions can come from altruistic motives, and that the issue of motive may be as critical as that of outcomes and tactics. This not only extends our literature, but offers a new schema for understanding politics perceptions and for studying them.

This study's research design also answers calls to investigate politics perceptions and political behavior simultaneously (Fedor & Maslyn, 2002), so as to better integrate the two in our literature. The lack of consensus regarding definitions of organizational politics has made their study and effects unclear. Incorporating both political behavior and politics perceptions in an experimental design adds evidence that may help clarify

organizational politics as a whole. Rather than assuming a relationship between political behavior and politics perceptions, as has been done historically, this extends the work of Hill et al. (2016), empirically showing that the two are causally related, and outlining the perceptual process that links them.

Study 1 is not without limitations, however. While the video stimuli were effective, it is important to note that they only showed a single situation. The scenario showed the target actor using a variety of influence tactics, but it was still not an exhaustive representation of political behaviors. This study is limited in its ability to indicate any differences in how we perceive political behavior across genders or races, as the target actor was male and all three actors were white. Only one gender difference was found in the final model variables. In the self-serving condition, men rated the inferred motive slightly more positively ($M = 2.19$) than women ($M = 2.01$; $t = .24$, $p = .04$). It may be that because the target actor was male, male participants related to him more than female participants did, and therefore inferred a slightly less selfish motive. In both conditions, however, there was no significant difference in attributions or politics perceptions. It is conceivable that participants may react differently to people representing different demographics and types of political behavior. Study 1 cannot give any insight into this.

Though they followed a rigorous protocol for development and proved to be effective, the videos themselves were limited in some ways. As noted previously, the scenarios were limited to a single situation and a single political actor (though there were two other characters who did not behave politically). However, the individual at work is likely to witness, experience, and enact a much wider range of behaviors and situations

than could be shown in a video. Being *in* the situation may illicit different reactions and perceptions for the individual. While the ability to manipulate motive is a definite strength, there are tradeoffs in terms of how well they represent organizational reality. The videos were effective at eliciting politics perceptions, but the nature of an experiment is that it is without the complications and realities of actual experience. Related to this, it is possible that hostile attribution style would be related to perceptions if participants were actively involved in the situation. Perhaps, simply viewing a video is too passive to make hostile attribution style relevant to perception.

One of the strengths of this study is that it offers new insights and avenues to research politics perceptions. Future research should utilize this research design with a variety of political behaviors and situations. Additionally, it should investigate if the gender or race of the political actor is a factor in the perceivers' reactions and ultimate perceptions. Different motives may also be a fruitful avenue for investigation, but also looking at how mixed motives operate. A common question is if there is such a thing as complete altruism; does a person ever do something altruistic without any kind of positive result for themselves? Future research should see how perceptions form when the actor is behaving politically to simultaneously help themselves and their organization. Perhaps true political skill is the ability to camouflage selfish motivations *and* benefits when engaging in altruistic political acts.

It is also important for future research to look at the perceptions of the political actors. Do they perceive themselves differently than others, and does the perceptual process they go through match the MIM design? To what degree do we see positive and negative politics in our own behavior? Investigation of these questions would

complement this research and meaningfully add to our understanding of organizational politics as a whole.

While hostile attribution style was not a significant actor in this model, it is logical that other attribution errors and styles have an effect on politics perceptions. Future research should investigate what these other variables are that shape politics perceptions. For instance, prior experience or knowledge of the actor may affect the MIM path. If an individual knows the political actor, perhaps they make greater allowances for the actor's motives or adjusts their attributions to be in line with their knowledge of the actor. Individual differences may also affect inferred motives and attributions. As an example, those high in openness to experience may infer motives differently than those higher in neuroticism. A related question is where these as-yet-unidentified variables operate in the model? For instance, the post hoc examination showed that the effect of political behavior on inferred motive is partially transmitted through PLFPB. It is possible that PLFPB would be different for everyone, so future research should attempt to add clarity to how it affects inferred motive and what increases or decreases this perception. Additionally, how does this work at the group level, when there may be a perception that someone will behave politically, but not necessarily the person you're interacting with at that moment? Does the group level affect the inferred motivation? This would be very valuable research to have.

Though the results of the post hoc testing are exciting and provide avenues for interesting future research, it is difficult to make any firm conclusions based on PLFPB because this scale was developed largely from a neutral-to-negative politics viewpoint as an adjunct. As such, two of the five items are negative-politics related and the remaining

three are neutral. There are no definitively positive politics-related items. The fact that

this variable is significantly related to the model is important, but without a more

balanced scale and reexamination, the most that can be said is that the indication is that

PLFPB is relevant to inferred motivation and MIM, and therefore warrants greater

attention in future research.

Research should also expand beyond video stimuli, and attempt to bring

participants into the situation in a more salient way. If the situation resonates more deeply

or personally with the participant, it will add much needed depth to our understanding of

their perceptions. It may also be that being an actual participant in a political situation,

rather than just a witness, has a different effect. Simply watching an interaction, even if it

is face-to-face, is a different experience from being a participant in the interaction.

Finally, longitudinal study would be very helpful to tease out how daily exposure to

political behaviors from the same people affect perceptions.

Study 2: Behavioral Intentions from Perceptions

Thus far, this research has focused on the issues surrounding positive and negative

politics and the perceptual process that occurs after witnessing political behavior. There is

an additional process that occurs after perception that may give insight into the behaviors

individuals choose in response to politics, specifically what triggers political behavior.

The idea that positive and negative politics may have different effects has not been

explored previously. As Fedor et al. (2008) put it:

The relatively positive side of perceived politics on individual reactions has not

been well studied, much less integrated with perceptions of negative politics. As a

result, researchers in this area have not captured the extent to which positive

political behavior can affect important, organizationally related responses. (Fedor
et al., 2008, p. 80)

Thus, this research examines positive and negative politics concurrently with the
expectation that they have differing behavioral intention outcomes. More specifically, it
builds upon Study 1 by examining how positive and negative politics relate to emotional
reactions, and the behavioral intentions that develop as a result. It further investigates the
role that individual differences have in political behavioral intention formation. In a
sense, this study asks if politics perceptions beget political behavior intentions, and
applies attribution theory to explain the process.

Behavior Intentions

A general understanding of the formation and composition of behavioral intentions
is a necessary start to the explanation of Study 2, before taking a more detailed look at
political behavior intentions.

Beyond questions of how valued the outcomes are from actual political behavior,
there are still clear differences in the behavioral intentions individuals form in reaction to
the same political environment. Similar to the exit-voice framework (Hirschman, 1970),
individuals may respond to a highly political environment quite differently. One person
may choose to withdraw from the political game, while another may happily engage in it.
While the prediction of behavior has long been a goal of research, theories have gone
beyond simple prediction, also attempting to explain what leads to behavioral intentions
and ultimately performance of the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985) posits that
behavioral intentions are a result of three components: the individual's attitude toward the

behavior, subjective norms, and their perceived control. The attitude toward the behavior is the individual's feelings and beliefs about the behavior and its positive and negative consequences (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; 2005); in essence, this is the sum of the individual's salient beliefs about outcomes and their evaluation of those outcomes. One may think of this as the determination of the desirability (Chang, 1998), or valence, of those outcomes. Subjective norms are formed by the individual's understanding of important others' (friends, family, coworkers) approval or disapproval of the behavior. Subjective norms add an external, social evaluation to the internal evaluation provided by attitudes. The final component is the perceived control one has about the situation. The attitude and subjective norms will be tempered by the belief the individual has in their ability to successfully complete the behavior and achieve the desired outcomes. The aggregation of these components leads to formation of behavioral intentions, and ultimately, behavior itself (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, 2005).

While the three components are conceptually distinct, they do covary, and there is substantial evidence that they are effective in predicting intentions and behavior. In a meta-analysis conducted by Armitage and Conner (2001), the TPB explained 39% of variance in intentions and 27% in behavior. Van Breukelen, Van der Vlist, and Steensma (2004) compared the three components of the TPB to well-known "external predictors" of turnover intentions and voluntary turnover such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and tenure. The external predictors did not explain additional variance beyond the three components of the TPB in actual turnover behavior. While job satisfaction and tenure did add to the prediction of turnover intentions, as a possible

explanation the authors proposed that attitude toward the behavior may include organizational commitment.

In a study of unethical behavior, Chang (1998) found that subjective norms were important in the development of attitudes towards behavior; people cared about what others thought of them and what they did. Chang pointed out that coworkers' beliefs about unethical behavior, which clearly political behavior is viewed as, can have serious impact on attitudes and social pressures, and therefore on intentions and behavior. Additionally, background factors (e.g., personality, mood) affect all three components, thereby indirectly affecting intentions and behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The three components do not always have the same or equal weight on intentions or behavior, however. Some behaviors are more influenced by attitudes, while others by subjective norms or concerns about control.

The TPB provides a useful framework for understanding the composition and formation of behavioral intentions. From this vantage point, it is appropriate to examine political behavior and political behavior intentions.

Behavioral Responses to Politics Perceptions

First, it is critical to underscore that these are political behaviors that the perceiver intends to enact in response to their perceptions. Much of the politics literature does not distinguish between political behavior observed and political behavior enacted. In fact, in most cases, it is assumed to be political behavior enacted while behavior observed in others is not addressed at all. As this research uses both types of behavior, I want to be clear that Study 2 refers to the political behavior intentions of the *self* in *response* to other's political behavior.

There are several theories behind behavioral responses of observers to witnessing politics (Ferris, Russ et al., 1989). The first uses Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice framework. If feasible, the employee may choose to withdraw, or exit, the situation. Typically thought of as turnover or turnover intentions, withdrawal can also include absenteeism. Miller et al. (2008) noted that correlations between perceptions and turnover intentions have been reported as high as .60, but that the directionality has not universally been positive, implying the need for more research into this relationship. When the individual cannot leave the organization, they may find refuge and distraction in their work. This more psychological withdrawal is essentially immersion or enhanced involvement in the job, and may provide another reaction to politics perceptions (Huang, Chuang, & Lin, 2003). Whether exit or withdrawal, the employee chooses to remove themselves from the situation they perceive as political.

As an alternative to exit, individuals may react to politics perceptions with their own political behavior (Ferris, Russ et al., 1989). In this case, the perceiver may genuinely like politics or see utility in it. Mintzberg (1983) defined voice as efforts to change the situation, rather than escape from it, thus one can view political behavior as a form of voice in Hirschman's model (1970; Ferris et al., 2002). When the individual is faced with a situation they wish to see changed, the use of influence tactics to effect change can be viewed as a form of voice, as opposed to the psychological or physical withdrawal of exit. Another perspective is that political behavior is a coping response to uncertainty and ambiguity. In this case, when employees are left with unclear understandings of how their performance relates to rewards, political behavior is thought to provide more clarity (Ferris et al., 2002; Harrell-Cook, Ferris, & Dulebohn, 1999).

Uncertainty and ambiguity (in the form of formalization and centralization) have been empirically supported as antecedents of politics perceptions (e.g., Fedor et al., 1998; Ferris, Frink, Galang et al., 1996) so the extension to political behavior is based on the presumed relationship between politics perceptions and general behavior. Fedor et al. (1998) surmise that lack of involvement in decision making leads individuals to assume higher levels of organizational politics. Also, centralization means lack of power in lower hierarchical levels, so informal mechanisms (e.g., politics) become a more pronounced means of influence. While this is logical, and some correlational research exists to support it (e.g., Harrell-Cook et al., 1999; Valle & Perrewé, 2000), the research is far from comprehensive, and lacks tests of direct relationships between these antecedents and political behavior.

Another perspective says that political behavior may be a response to stress. Politics' relationship with negative stress is well established (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Vigoda, 2000). Further, evidence from Ferris, Frink, Galang et al. (1996) asserts that "politics and stress share considerable domain space." (p. 224). However, the direction of this relationship is inconclusive. If uncertainty is a precursor to stress (Jex & Beehr, 1991), then perhaps political behavior used to cope with uncertainty is in fact a moderator of that stress (Ferris et al., 2002). It is conceivable that the types of political behavior (i.e., that performed by oneself vs. others) may make a difference, as well. Witnessing the political behavior of others may serve to increase stress, whereas political behavior undertaken by the perceiver may be a means of coping. Thus, the literature suggests that politics and stress may pose threats to the employee, but they also present opportunities for change (Ferris et al., 2002).

Thus, under uncertainty and ambiguity endemic to highly political environments, individuals may use political behavior in the form of influence, to achieve desired outcomes, possibly in an effort to establish some control over their environment. When the relationship between job performance and reward is unclear, it is possible that work efforts that benefit the organization may be construed as less valuable to the individual. In less political environments, the relationship between effort and reward is clearer and more direct; therefore, expending effort is a less risky proposition (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

In reality, we have little empirical evidence to predict how people will react to politics. While we may assume that one person is more likely to react politically to their politics perceptions, there is little research to support that this is what happens, and certainly none that is experimental. Further, it is highly likely that this relationship, if it does exist, is moderated by a number of situational and individual differences. As an important step in the literature, this research examines the political behavioral intentions people develop in reaction to their perceptions, and considers two important moderators: the person's attitude toward political behavior and their political skill.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory describes the process by which individuals explain the causes of theirs and others' behavior (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967; Weiner, 1986), and it is more accurate to say that the term refers to a group of attribution theories rather than a single theory (Kelley & Michela, 1980). The causal inferences individuals make have subsequent effects on their interpersonal interactions. Effects can be seen on interactions with supervisors and on personal decisions they make (e.g., Struthers, Weiner, & Allred,

1998). While attribution theory has been studied since the mid part of the 20th century, it was not until the 1990s that it became a regular part of organizational psychology (Martinko, Zmud, & Henry, 1996; Struthers et al., 1998; Weiner, 1995). Typically, Heider (1958) is credited with the origin of attribution theory. He viewed people as "naïve psychologists" trying to understand the causes of positive and negative outcomes around them. In contrast to Weiner's focus on outcomes, Kelley's (1971, 1973) attribution theory focused on how people use information to make attributions, specifically looking at the consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness of the information. This research focuses on the work of Weiner as it provides a framework for contemplating how people move from attributions to behavior, which is most relevant to Study 2.

The inferences and attributions we make are an important part of understanding the social world. As described by Heider (1958), attributions help us to understand our environment and determine the best responses to it. Weiner (1996) outlined four theoretical results from the social judgments (attributional inferences) made of others' behavior: (1) reformation: the actor learns from their transgression and is less likely to repeat the behavior; (2) general deterrence: others are deterred from engaging in the behavior after becoming aware of the judgments/inferences; (3) moral education: others learn about acceptable social behavior on a societal level; and/or (4) retributive justice: a "moral balance" is achieved by having punished the transgressor. It is through these processes that we protect and maintain ourselves and our social groups (Hull, 1943), thus the process of making inferences and attributions becomes functional and adaptive in the social world in which we live.

Social Conduct Theory: Linking Attributions to Behavior Through Emotion

According to Weiner (1985), the most basic causal dimension of attributions was defined by Heider (1958) when he declared a distinction between causal factors inside the person and those in the environment. Subsequent research has focused in on this locus dimension of causality (e.g., Collins, Martin, Ashmore, & Ross, 1974; Rotter, 1966). From the perspective of MIM, this could be viewed as intentionality. The second dimension, stability, was proposed by Weiner and Schneider (1971) and it accounted for the fluctuations in internal causation over time. For instance, mood could be a causal factor for a behavior, but it may not be as stable over time as cognitive ability. A third dimension, controllability, was described by Weiner et al. (1979) and refers to the autonomous control an individual may have over a cause, as opposed to causal factors that are unstable for reasons outside of the individual's control. For instance, a person experiencing withdrawal from drug addiction may be seen as having more volitional control over their affliction than one who has Parkinson's disease. Weiner (1996) draws a distinction between controllability and intention, saying that intentions refer to motives or goals while controllability has to do with some aspect of the cause. He notes that because they both share the aspect of responsibility, distinguishing them may be difficult and may require different attributional analysis.

While initially focusing on causal attributions of achievement success and failure, Weiner (1995, 1996, 2000) went on to develop his ideas of attribution into a social conduct theory connecting judgments of motivation and ability to emotions and, ultimately, actions. His theory posits that we assess others' behavior and act on our judgments and emotions, thereby holding them accountable for their actions (Struthers et

al., 1998). Specifically, Weiner (1996) describes a process in which the individual experiences a social event and classifies its basic properties, including aspects of intentionality, controllability, stability, and other relevant (potentially mitigating) circumstances. This results in inferences and cognitive appraisals. The perceiver experiences emotions, such as anger or sympathy, in response to these judgments that then motivate a response. Further, social conduct theory posits that emotion operates as a mediating mechanism between the attribution and behavioral reactions. For instance, a poor grade on an exam may be due to a lack of ability in that subject or a lack of studying. The student who has shown effort but little ability, will likely elicit sympathy. In contrast, the student who exerts no effort to study is more likely trigger anger in observers.

The behavioral reactions will differ depending on the emotions experienced. According to Weiner (1996, 2000), behavioral reactions elicited by anger are less prosocial (e.g., reprimand, condemnation, retaliation), while those triggered by sympathy are more prosocial (e.g., no reprimand, no retaliation, provision of help). Weiner relies on the metaphor of the perceiver as judge, determining the guilt or innocence of those around them and assigning punishment based on the emotions they experience.

There has been research supporting the direct relationship between attributions and behavioral responses (Struthers et al., 1998; Struthers et al., 2001; Weiner & Kukla, 1970) extending as far back as Piliavin, Rodin, and Piliavin (1969) who found that offers of assistance to a fallen train passenger were related to attributions of the cause of the fall. When the target had a cane, thereby implying an unintentional, stable, and uncontrollable condition, witnesses offered assistance 95% of the time. When the target

appeared drunk the cause was viewed as intentional, stable, and controllable, and assistance was offered only 50% of the time. This is not to imply that attributions and emotions are the only predictors of behavior, but rather that they are related and relevant to behavioral responses. As noted by Weiner (1995), complex behaviors clearly have any number of antecedents, and there has been debate in the literature regarding the ability of attribution theories to capture the process (Martinko et al., 2007).

To this point, I have discussed attributions as a primary antecedent in the process of behavior formation. This study relies on theory discussed in Study 1 and its subsequent research to support the notion that attributions will lead to perceptions of politics, making perceptions an appropriate antecedent to behavioral intentions. While empirical research does not exist to support the linkage between attributions and politics perceptions, theoretical work by Davis and Gardner (2004) makes just such an assertion. Their theoretical paper explores the importance of LMX on attributions made, and subsequent linkages to politics perceptions and organizational cynicism. As employees try to understand decisions and requests from their leaders, they make inferences, attributions, and judgments about the causes of these decisions and requests. As found by Martinko and Gardner (1987), certain attributions of leader behavior are more likely to result in empirically supported antecedents of politics perceptions (e.g., conflict, ambiguity, and injustice).

Study 1 examined the relationship between observing political behavior and resulting perceptions of politics. Study 2 picks up from this point and looks to understand how perceptions relate to what the perceiver intends to do. Both Gotsis and Kortezi (2010) and Ferris et al. (2000) affirmed that actual political behavior and perceptions of

other's political behavior are perceived differently, thus it is appropriate to investigate the two types of behavior separately.

Investigations into the association between perceptions of politics and self-political behavior are scant, and typically focused on negative views of politics and political behavior. Frequently, variables proposed as contributing to the use of political behavior (e.g., self-monitoring, Machiavellianism) are also thought to be related to politics perceptions (Valle & Perrewé, 2000). It is not clear, however, if these antecedents work directly on the perceivers' behavior, or through politics perceptions. Ferris, Russ et al. (1989) proposed that certain behaviors are likely to result from politics perceptions, but their analysis was focused most on negative behaviors such as withdrawal and opportunistic behaviors. While no empirical support exists for this assertion, it does provide an explanation; understanding and influencing organizational politics can ameliorate its negative effects. Thus, political behaviors are seen as a buffer or coping mechanism. Further, it has been found that people largely choose political behaviors that match their political context (e.g., rational behaviors in a rational context and several non-rational behaviors in a non-rational context; Cheng, 1983).

Commonly, actual political behavior is modeled as a moderator of perceptions of politics on a variety of outcomes. For instance, Valle and Perrewé's (2000) comparison of reactive and proactive behaviors (enacted by the perceiver) found that reactive behaviors successfully moderated the effects of politics perceptions on outcomes such as satisfaction, stress, and turnover intentions, but proactive behaviors did not. While reactive behaviors correlated moderately with politics perceptions ($r = -.29$, $p < .001$), the correlation with proactive behaviors was not significant ($r = .07$, $p > .05$). Similarly,

Harrell-Cook et al. (1999) found that ingratiating political behavior was correlated with politics perceptions (*r* = -.28, *p* < .01) and moderated its effects on satisfaction with supervisor and intent to leave, but self-promotion did not (*r* = .18, *p* > .05). It should be noted, however, that these results are both sparse in number, and limited in scope. While they support the notion that behavioral reactions are related to politics perceptions, they rely on upward influence and impression management tactics. This provides merely an indication that such a relationship exists, but does not flesh out such a relationship. Additionally, their negative focus is not especially illuminating in the pursuit of an understanding of the more neutral or positive conception of politics shown to exist. This research undertook to expand our understanding of the relationship between perceptions and behavioral intentions using a more inclusive and balanced view of politics.

One of the hallmarks of definitions of political behavior is that it is voluntary and purposeful (Valle & Perrewé, 2000). This automatically places it in the realm of the controllable and intentional alluded to in attribution theory. Weiner et al. (2000) explored this phenomenon in classroom, burglary, and murder scenarios, and in each case the controllable conditions were more associated with retributive goals in participants. Hence, it may be that political behavior perceived as negative will be seen as within the actor's control, elicit an affective response of anger, and result in more retributive behavioral intentions. Political behavior that is perceived as supporting the organization will, however, be viewed as prosocial and controlled by the actor. This will trigger a sympathetic affective response and more prosocial behavior intentions and fewer self-serving behavior intentions in response. The essence of Wiener's theory is the marrying

of cognitive reasoning with motivational and behavioral processes (De Faria & Yoder, 1997).

Affective reactions most commonly studied as part of Weiner's (1995) model are anger and sympathy. In this research, anger is defined as "a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism" ("Anger", 2015) and sympathy is "agreement with, or support of, a group, idea, plan, etc." as in to be sympathetic to another's point of view ("Sympathy", 2016). This relationship has been supported in past research. In examining supervisor and coworker punishment responses to poor performance, Struthers et al. (1998) and Struthers et al. (2001) found that attributions of low or high ability resulted in different behavioral responses in supervisors, (e.g., an attribution for poor performance was associated with low ability but a high effort attribution was more likely to result in forgiveness). They also found that low performance due to perceived low ability but high effort had a greater relationship with sympathy, whereas those perceived as high ability but low effort had a greater relationship with anger (Struthers et al., 1998; Struthers et al., 2001).

Hypothesis 11: Politics Perceptions will be related to Emotion, such that (a) Positive Politics Perceptions will be positively related to Sympathy, and (b) Negative Politics Perceptions will be positively related to Anger.

Struthers et al. (2001) tested Weiner's social conduct theory in an investigation of causal attributions of coworker interactions. Over four studies they found support for the model, and specifically that individuals consider both ability and effort (controllability and intentionality). Further, they found that these attributions were related to judgments of responsibility which led to anger or sympathy. Affective reactions were then associated

with behavior such that anger significantly related to antisocial interactions ($r = .43$) and sympathy to prosocial interactions ($r = .45$). Struthers et al. (1998) also tested the model in the realm of personnel decisions. By controlling the ability and effort dimensions of performance scenarios, they determined that attributions of control and locus related to decisions about responsibility and to subsequent emotional reactions of anger or sympathy. The behavioral possibilities were to reprimand or console. Sympathy was related to both, but anger was not, which the authors note may have been an inadequacy of the manipulation or social desirability. Based on the forgoing sections,

Hypothesis 12: Emotion will be related to Political Behavior Intentions, such that (a) Sympathy will be positively related to more Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intentions and (b) Anger will be positively related to more Self-Serving Political Behavior Intentions.

The social conduct model further states that emotion functions as a mediator, transmitting the effects of attributions onto behavior. This effect was borne out by both studies by Struthers and colleagues for sympathy (Struthers et al., 1998; Struthers et al., 2001) and anger (Struthers et al., 2001). Both were significant mediators of the relationship between attributions and punishment responses. Based on the previously explained relationship between attribution and politics perceptions:

Hypothesis 13: There will be an indirect relationship between Politics Perceptions and Political Behavior Intentions via Emotion such that (a) the impact of Positive Politics Perceptions on more Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intentions will be significantly explained by Sympathy and (b) the impact of Negative

Politics Perceptions on more Negative Self-Serving Political Behavior Intentions

will be significantly explained by Anger.

It is important, to remember, however, that there are many other factors relevant

to the behavioral intentions that individuals form. Just as perceptions are subject to

individual interpretations, people who have the same perceptions will not always behave

the same way. Therefore, two individual difference variables are included in this research.

Political skill is a common social effectiveness construct in politics research, while

acceptance of political behavior is a relatively new variable.

Acceptance of Political Behavior

As described previously, one component of the TPB model of behavior intentions

is the individual's attitude toward the behavior. An attitude is the individual's evaluation

of an attitude object, including their beliefs and feelings. This definition should also

include their acceptance of the attitude object. In this study, the acceptance of

organizational politics is therefore intricately connected to the attitude which contributes

to behavioral intentions. Thus, the proposed study will examine the conditional effect that

one's acceptance of political behavior may have on behavioral intentions. There is

support for the idea that attitudes toward behavior are related to behavioral intentions,

with meta-analyses showing correlations from .45-.60 (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

The importance of individual differences in attitudes and acceptance of political

behavior was borne out in the context of person-climate fit research. Christiansen et al.

(1997) investigated how job satisfaction and intention to turnover could be affected by

the match between an individual's preferences for political influence and their

workplace's political climate. By examining the congruence between the individual's

preference and the level of political processes in the organization, they supported the notion that differences in individual preference and their resulting incongruence with climate related to both attitude and behavioral intention. Further supporting the idea that the level of politics in the organization is not the whole story.

Therefore, acceptance of political behavior is conceived of as the individual's judgments of the viability and morality or integrity involved in the use of political behavior (by others or oneself). Acceptance is the step beyond perception in which the individual decides if the behavior is in concert with or contrary to their expectations of acceptable behavior. This study surmises that it will influence affective and behavioral responses. It is anticipated that one's degree of acceptance of political behavior will have a conditional effect on the relationship between the individual's perception and their affective reaction. This supposition goes beyond the TPB; it is based in the notion that the individual's attitude about their own behavior will be reflected in their acceptance of the same behavior in others. Therefore, when faced with other's political behavior they will have affective reactions in line with their attitude. Those who accept organizational politics as a viable and acceptable means of conducting oneself may experience more sympathy for the actor, while those who find it unacceptable may have more anger.

Research Question: Does Acceptance of Political Behavior moderate the strength of the relationship between Politics Perceptions and Emotions such that the relationship will be stronger with higher Acceptance of Political Behavior and weaker under lower Acceptance of Political Behavior?

Based on TPB evidence regarding attitudes, it is expected that acceptance of political behavior will have a moderating effect on the relationship between the individual's affective reaction and their resulting behavioral intention.

Hypothesis 14: Acceptance of Political Behavior will moderate the strength of the relationship between Emotion and Political Behavior Intention such that (a) the relationship between Sympathy and Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intention will be stronger under higher Acceptance of Political Behavior and weaker under lower Acceptance of Political Behavior, and (b) the relationship between Anger and Self-Serving Political Behavior Intention will be stronger under higher Acceptance of Political Behavior and weaker under lower Acceptance of Political Behavior.

Hypothesis 15: Acceptance of Political Behavior will moderate the strength of the indirect relationship between Politics Perceptions and Political Behavior Intentions via emotion such that (a) the mediated relationship between Positive Politics Perceptions and Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intentions via Sympathy (Hypothesis 13a) will be stronger under higher Acceptance of Political Behavior and weaker under lower Acceptance of Political Behavior, and (b) the mediated relationship between Negative Politics Perceptions and Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intentions via Anger (Hypothesis 13b) will be stronger under higher Acceptance of Political Behavior and weaker under lower Acceptance of Political Behavior.

Political Skill

Political skill is a social effectiveness construct defined as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives." (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004, p. 311). This is a particularly useful definition for the proposed research as it is inclusive of both positive and negative political motivations. Politically skilled individuals display a range of skills that allow them to inspire trust, appear sincere, and successfully influence those around them (Ferris et al., 2005), and they are flexible and able to adapt the use of their skills as demanded by the situation. There are four dimensions to the political skill construct: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity.

The primary instrument to measure political skill is the political skill inventory (PSI; Ferris et al., 2005). It has good psychometric properties and there is no redundancy between political skill and influence tactics was found during scale validation, which is important for this study. This scale does not display the same negative orientation seen in the POPS. Questions such as "I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others" or "I pay close attention to people's facial expressions" are emblematic of its more neutral assessment, which is particularly beneficial with a politics-related construct. Use of both the PSI and the negatively skewed POPS in studies is common, thus the relationship between one's view of their own political skill and their view of the politics around them may not have been adequately captured.

There are a number of ways to conceptualize the role of political skill in positive and negative politics. Common to most of them is the idea that the politically skilled

actor is better able to conceal her or his motivations. Ferris et al. (2000) pointed out that all influence typologies include the notion that actors actively work to reduce resistance to their influence by hiding their self-serving motivations (e.g., Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, & Judge, 1995; Ferris et al., 2000; Pfeffer, 1981; Tedeschi & Melburg 1984). A behavior designed to influence or manipulate for self-serving gains is far less likely to be perceived as political if it is presented in a manner that disguises its ulterior motives. If the actor is not successful at this, the resulting behavior will likely be interpreted as political (Ferris et al., 2002).

Political skill has been shown to effectively moderate the effects of politics perceptions on a variety of constructs, such as anxiety, physiological strain (e.g., Perrewé et al., 2004; Perrewé et al., 2005), job stress, affective commitment (Jam, Khan, & Zaidi, 2011), and depressive symptoms (Brouer, Ferris, Hochwarter, Laird, & Gilmore, 2006). Additionally, Ferris et al. (2002) proposed that political skill can alter politics perceptions by concealing ulterior motives, thereby moderating politics perceptions' effects on political behavior. Another view suggested by Witt, Kacmar, Carlson, and Zivnuska (2002) was that individuals lacking in political skill are less able to accurately perceive their environment and appropriately adapt their behavior, thus they are not "skilled self-managers" and do not know how best to behave in political situations. As a result, they perceive higher levels of politics and are less able to effectively use political behavior to benefit themselves or their organization.

Politically skilled individuals may also be more inclined to use political behavior to begin with. According to Bing, Davison, Minor, Novicevic, and Frink (2011), they are more likely to create and take advantage of opportunities due to their skill with

networking and leveraging social capital. Politically skilled individuals display greater ease and aptitude with influence, making them more apt to recognize opportunities in situations missed by those low in political skill. Further, these highly skilled political actors are not viewed as manipulative because they inspire higher trust and perceptions of integrity in others (Blass & Ferris, 2007).

While research conducted explicitly on the moderating effects of political skill within an attribution theory framework could not be found, it has been shown that individuals experience different internal consequences of political behavior depending on their level of political skill. For instance, Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, and Ferris (2005) found that political behavior resulted in higher emotional labor for those with low political skill, whereas it was essentially neutralized for those with high political skill. It is anticipated that these internal consequences will affect the attitude and perceived control components of behavioral intentions.

Past research on political skill and political behavior intentions was similarly elusive, but there is evidence that political skill is related to other types of behavior, such as task performance (e.g., Bing et al., 2011; Jawahar, Meurs, Ferris, & Hochwarter, 2008; Liu et al., 2007) and contextual performance (Bing et al., 2011). According to Jawahar et al. (2008), political skill is essentially an interpersonal, self-regulation construct, thus politically skilled individuals are better able to listen and adapt their performance as needed, resulting in better task performance. However, their skills may also enable them to use influence and impression management to influence raters (e.g., Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991) thereby exploiting raters' biases and systematic errors

(e.g., Viswesvaran, Schmidt, & Ones, 2005). Thus, political skill may be a more direct predictor of task performance *ratings* than actual task *performance* (Jawahar et al., 2008).

It is conceivable that political skill could have a similar effect on other work-relevant behavior, such as political behavior. This parallel is especially likely when one considers the ease with which politically skilled individuals maintain trust while concealing motives. Further, it is likely that the more negative internal experience felt by those with low political skill is aversive, resulting in less inclination to engage in those behaviors. Political skill then interacts with emotions to have a conditional effect on political behavior intentions, and another conditional effect on the indirect relationship from politics perceptions to political behavior intentions via emotion. Those who experience anger may use their political skill to attain resources and security in a more hostile environment. Additionally, their heightened skill at concealing their motives may make them more likely to engage in political behavior. For those experiencing sympathy, they may be similarly predisposed to using political behavior, but in a more positive situation their political skill may mean they recognize the benefits associated with organization-serving political behavior.

> *Hypothesis 16:* Political Skill will moderate the strength of the relationship
> between Emotion and Political Behavior Intention such that (a) the relationship
> between Sympathy and Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intention will be
> stronger under strong Political Skill and weaker under weak Political Skill, and
> (b) the relationship between Anger and Self-Serving Political Behavior Intention
> will be stronger under strong Political Skill and weaker under weak Political Skill.

Hypothesis 17: Political Skill will moderate the strength of the indirect

relationship between Politics Perceptions and Political Behavior Intentions such

that (a) the mediated relationship from Positive Politics Perceptions to

Organization-Serving Political Behavior Intention via Sympathy (Hypothesis 13a)

will be stronger under high Political Skill and weaker under a weak Political Skill,

and (b) the mediated relationship from Negative Politics Perceptions to Self-

Serving Political Behavior Intention via Anger (Hypothesis 13b) will be stronger

under high Political Skill and weaker under a weak Political Skill.

Figure 5 shows the hypothesized relationship for paths related to Study 2.

Study 2: Method

Participants

Data collection for Study 2 was done as part of the same data collection effort as

Study 1 using a survey administered online through Qualtrics. As described in Study 1,

516 participants of 18 years or older were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk.

Through checks for recent employment, time expended on the survey, attention checks,

and a manipulation check, 133 were removed resulting in a final sample size of 383. This

met the estimated minimum sample size of 360 needed to achieve sufficient power

(Schumacher & Lomax, 2010).

Univariate and multivariate outliers were investigated. There were 13 multivariate

outliers identified, but investigation of these cases found no clear grounds for removal.

Analyses were conducted with and without them and no substantive differences were

found (model fit, path coefficients, correlations). The results reported here include all 383

participants.

As reported previously, this sample's average age was 36.16 years (range = 18 -

70, *SD* = 11.25), and 46.2% were female. The largest racial demographic was white

(73.9%) and most participants were currently employed (95.3%). The average

employment with their current employer was 5.8 years (range = 0 - 44, *SD* = 5.90), and

they worked an average of 39.7 hours per week (range = 3 - 80, *SD* = 9.06). The most

common industries were retail (15.4%), education (9.9%), technology-related professions

(9%), and healthcare (8.6%).

Procedure

Data Collection. Participants completed a survey online using Qualtrics. The

survey consisted of an initial set of measures (demographics questions, attribution style,

and political skill), the stimulus videos, and then a final set of measures (inferred motive,

attribution, politics perceptions, acceptance of political behavior, emotion, and political

behavior intentions).

Materials

Videos. Study 2 used the same videos as Study 1. The videos were created based

on critical incidents collected during the pilot study. Please see the explanation given in

Study 1 for details of video development.

Politics perceptions. The same scale used to measure politics perceptions in

Study 1 was used in Study 2. As described in Study 1, this measure had four positive

politics perceptions items and five negative politics perceptions items. After removal of

one negative politics item for low loading, the scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .80 and

composite reliability of .87. Due to reverse coding of negative items, higher scores on

this scale indicate more positive perceptions and lower scores indicate more negative

perceptions. See Appendix C for the politics perceptions scale items. It should be noted

that politics perceptions was the only variable with reverse coding in this model.

Emotion. Anger and sympathy were assessed using scales created for each

emotion (see Appendix C). The scales were generally based on Reisenzein (1986), but the

item statements were slightly modified and additional statements added. Anger had five

items and sympathy had six items. Participants were asked to rate the level of anger or

sympathy they felt toward the target in the video. Sample items are "How much

sympathy would you feel for the target?" and "How angry would you feel at the target?"

Responses were made using a five-point Likert scale (*1 = None* to *5 = A Lot*). The anger

scale had a reliability of .96 and sympathy of .93. Both scales can be found in Appendix

C.

Political behavior intentions. The items for this scale were collected and adapted

from several different scales measuring general influence tactics (Schriescheim &

Hinkin, 1990), subordinate influence tactics (Wayne & Ferris, 1990), political behavior

(Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, & Ferris, 2005), and use of political tactics (Schoel,

1995). After pilot testing, there were 10 items for political behavior intentions to benefit

personal objectives and 10 for political behavior intentions to benefit work objectives. In

the survey, intentions based on work objectives were assessed separately from those

based on personal objectives, following the general framework used by Schoel (1995).

Participants were given descriptions of work- and personal-benefit objectives and asked

to consider the likelihood of performing the item behaviors to achieve benefits similar to

the examples using a 5-point Likert scale (*1 = Very Unlikely* to *5 = Very Likely*).

Therefore, the item "I would use my connections at work to achieve my objectives" was

presented for both types of political behavior. Both scales had ten items and showed good reliability; political behavior intentions personal (PBIP) had a Cronbach's alpha of .88 and political behavior intentions work (PBIW) had an alpha of .83.

It should be noted that simultaneous analysis of both intention type scales was expected to produce a factor associated with each intention type (work or personal benefit). However, using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and CFA, it became clear that these items did not fall into sub-factors corresponding to personal and work objectives. When constrained to two factors, the items in each were a mix of personal and work objectives. The CFA revealed that each was best modeled as having two dimensions that could be interpreted as a support dimension (behavior oriented specifically to gaining the support of others) and a more general influence dimension. Based on these results, I decided to model the two types of behavioral intentions separately but allowed them to covary. Neither scale had any reverse coding, so higher scores mean greater behavior intentions on each scale. Please see Table 3 for the CFA model fit results for these two scales. Both scales are provided in Appendix C.

Acceptance of political behavior. Participants' acceptance of political behavior was assessed with a set of items primarily composed of the Schoel's (1995) attitudes toward politics scale, with supplementation by modified items from Zahra's (1989) attitudes regarding organizational politics scale. Following the procedure described in Schoel (1995), a general definition of organizational politics was provided to participants in addition to a list of objectives (work-related or personal benefit-related). Participants were asked to rate their agreement with a set of statements relating to organizational politics in the context of work-related or personal benefit-related objectives using a five-

point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*). The scale had 18 items;

nine for work-related objectives and nine for personal benefit-related objectives. An

example item is "It is wrong for employees to use political tactics to accomplish their

work-related objectives" and the scale showed a Cronbach's alpha of .94 and a composite

reliability of .96. Negatively worded items were reverse coded so higher scores on this

scale indicate greater acceptance of political behavior. This scale is provided in Appendix

C.

Political Skill. Ferris et al.'s (2005) Political Skill Inventory was used to measure

participant political skill. The scale consists of 18 items such as "I am good at using my

connections and networks to make things happen at work" (p. 150). Participants were

asked to indicate how much they agreed with the statements using a 7-point Likert scale

(*1 = Strongly Disagree* to *7 = Strongly Agree*). The scale had good reliability with an

alpha of .93. Because it has four dimensions, composite reliability was also computed and

found to be .95. This scale is provided in Appendix C.

Data Analytic Procedure

The types of analysis for Study 2 mirror that used in Study 1. As such, the

following explanation will be brief and targeted to the hypotheses in Study 2.

Data were analyzed using SPSS (IBM, 2015) and the statistical software package

R (R Core Team, 2013). Parceling was used and followed the procedure outlined in Little

et al. (2002). Both CFA and SEM were used and evaluated using χ^2 statistic, the RMSEA

(Steiger & Lind, 1990), the CFI (Bentler, 1990), and the NNFI (Bentler, 1980). RMSEA

signifies model fit relative to degrees of freedom with values less than .08 interpreted as

acceptable fit and less than .05 as very good fit. CFI and NNFI are comparative indices,

and for each .90 indicates acceptable fit and .95 very good fit. As there are no universally

recognized values for fit, these cutoffs will be used as guidelines (Schumacher & Lomax,

2010).

Structural validity of the scales was determined using CFA and hypothesis,

moderation, and mediation model testing were conducted using the lavaan package in R

(Rosseel, 2012) and Maximum Likelihood Estimation. A two-step analysis for SEM was

used (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) consisting of an initial measurement model tested with

CFA and then a structural model tested with SEM. Direct path hypothesis testing used the

standardized regression weights produced by the final structural model (Hypotheses 11

and 12).

Testing of moderation hypotheses (Hypotheses 14, 16, and the research question)

followed the procedure described by Kenny and Judd (1984; Cortina, Chen, & Dunlap,

2001). After creating the latent cross-product terms and constraining composite indicators

and their error variances according to their procedure, the fit of the additive model was

compared to the model without the interaction term. Moderation was concluded when the

additive model showed significantly better fit (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992).

Mediation (Hypotheses 13) was tested with bootstrapping in R (James et al.,

2006; Preacher et al., 2007). Bootstrapping allowed for the decomposition of indirect

effects on the latent outcomes of political behavior intentions via emotion. Ninety-five

percent confidence intervals that do not include zero indicated significance.

Study 2: Results

All measures demonstrated good fit upon CFA examination. One item was

removed from the politics perceptions scale based on low factor loading, but all other

scale items loaded appropriately. See Table 3 for goodness of fit statistics for the
measures and Appendix C for scale items.

Hypothesized model. The measurement model achieved good fit (χ^2[168]
=409.17, p < .001; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .97; NNFI = .96) as did the structural model
(χ^2[175]=466.18, p < .001; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95). Table 6 shows these
and all subsequent model fit statistics. The hypothesized model did not include direct
paths from politics perceptions to political behavior intentions, so two models which
added these paths were tested. The first model included a direct path to personal benefit
political behavior intentions. It achieved good fit (χ^2[174] = 464.96, p < .001; RMSEA =
.07; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95), but was not a significantly better fitting model than the
hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2$[1] = 1.22, p = .27). The added path was not significant (β =
.08, p = .28). The next model included a path from politics perceptions to work benefits
political behavior intentions. As in the previous model, it had acceptable fit (χ^2[174]
=462.97, p < .001; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95), but it also was not
significantly better fitting than the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2$[1] = 3.21, p < .07). The
added path approached, but did not reach significance (β = .13, p = .09). There were no
other path additions that were logical, and so the hypothesized model was retained for
subsequent hypothesis testing. See Figure 6 for this model.

Direct relationships. Hypothesis 11 asserted a relationship between politics
perceptions and emotion, and it was supported. Positive politics perceptions were
significantly related to sympathy (γ = .69, p < .001) and negative politics perceptions
were related to anger (γ = .66, p < .001). Hypothesis 12a proposed that sympathy would
be related to work benefit political behavior intentions, but this relationship only

approached significance ($\gamma = .07$, $p = .06$). The relationship between anger and personal

benefit political behavior intentions, hypothesis 12b, was not supported ($\gamma = .00$, $p =$

1.00). Thus, hypothesis 12 was not supported.

  Indirect relationships. There were two indirect paths hypothesized as part of

hypothesis 13. Hypothesis 13a asserted that the effect of positive politics perceptions on

work benefit political behavior intentions would be indirectly transmitted through

sympathy, and hypothesis 13b proposed the relationship between negative politics

perceptions and personal benefit political behavior intentions would operate through

anger. Hypothesis 13a was supported (PE $\beta = .07$, $p = .05$; 95% CI [.01, .24]), but 13b

(PE $\beta = .01$, $p = .75$; 95% CI [-.10, .13]) was not. Therefore, hypothesis 13 was partially

supported in that there was a significant indirect relationship via sympathy between

positive politics perceptions and behavior intentions to benefit work.

  Moderation and moderated mediation. There were six hypothesized

moderations, but none of the additive models for these moderations proved to be

significantly better fitting. Hypothesis 14 proposed moderation by acceptance of political

behavior on the paths from the emotions to political behavior intentions. Neither the path

from sympathy ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .26$, $p = .61$) nor the path from anger ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .01$, $p = .91$)

were significantly moderated by acceptance of political behavior. Political skill did not

have a conditional effect on the paths from sympathy ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .67$, $p = .41$) or anger

($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .15$, $p = .70$) to behavioral intentions, thus hypothesis 16 was not supported. A

research question was posed as to the conditional effects of acceptance of political

behavior on the relationship between positive politics perceptions and sympathy and

negative politics perceptions and anger. Neither interaction significantly related to

sympathy ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .91$, $p = .34$) nor anger ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .88$, $p = .77$). Due to the lack of support for the moderation hypotheses, the further testing of moderated mediation in Hypotheses 15 and 17 was not warranted.

Post Hoc Analyses. I was interested in how the phenomena in Study 1 and Study 2 could work together, so I designed two post hoc models to illuminate how attribution of political behavior related to emotions and political behavior intentions independently.

In the first model, Post Hoc Model B, I considered possible indirect effects through politics perceptions, and I modeled acceptance of political behavior as a potential moderator on the attribution to politics perceptions relationship. See Figure 7 for Post Hoc Model B. The measurement model ($\chi^2[48] = 122.34$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97) and structural models both had good fit ($\chi^2[82] = 186.16$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .98; NNFI = .98) indicating that this system of relationships is a good fit to the data. The standardized coefficients demonstrated several significant paths. As in Study 1, attribution was positively related to politics perceptions ($\gamma = .58$, $p < .001$), thus more attributions of selfishness corresponded with more negative politics perceptions. Politics perceptions were inversely related to anger ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$); the more negative the perceptions, the more anger was experienced. However, the path to sympathy was not supported and did not approach significance as it did in the a priori Study 2 model ($\beta = .05$, $p = .47$). These results indicate that the positive or negative quality of the attribution is reflected in the perceptions of politics, that the type of perceptions affected anger but was unrelated to sympathy.

Indirect and conditional effects on sympathy and anger via politics perceptions were also tested. The indirect path to sympathy was not supported (PE $\beta = .03$, $p = .51$;

95% CI [-.06, .12]), but the path to anger was (PE β = -.18, p < .001; 95% CI [-.58, -.11]).

Thus, the indirect path is also indicative of negative perceptions association with

increased anger. It should be noted, however, that the direct path is also significant (β

= -.45, p < .001), thus the path through politics perceptions represents only part of the

effect on anger. The direct path from attribution to sympathy was also significant (β =

.64, p < .001). Positive, helpful team player attributions were associated with sympathetic

emotional reactions. Thus, in this study, attribution was related to emotion; however, its

effects on sympathy were direct while those on anger were partially indirect. Acceptance

of political behavior demonstrated a significant relationship with politics perceptions (γ =

.37, p < .001) such that the greater the acceptance of political behavior, the more positive

the politics perceptions. However, an interaction effect between it and attribution on

politics perceptions was not found ($\Delta\chi^2[1]$ = .65, p = .42).

Post Hoc Model C also incorporated the path from attribution to politics

perception with moderation by acceptance of political behavior. The endogenous

variables, however, were work- and personal-benefit political behavior intentions. The

model also included moderation of the paths from politics perceptions to these intentions

by political skill. See Figure 8 for Post Hoc Model C. Both the measurement model

($\chi^2[120]$ = 306.05, p < .001; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .97; NNFI = .96) and the structural

model ($\chi^2[123]$ = 328.86, p < .001; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95) demonstrated

good fit. As found in the previous post hoc test, attribution was positively related to

politics perceptions (γ = .59, p < .001), and acceptance of political behavior was

significantly related to politics perceptions (γ = .40, p < .001). Greater acceptance of

positive political behavior was associated with positive politics perceptions. The

interaction of acceptance of political behavior and attribution on politics perceptions was not supported ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .41$, $p = .52$). Interestingly, this model found a positive relationship with both types of political behavior intentions: political behavior intentions for work benefit ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$) and personal benefit ($\beta = .50$, $p < .001$). Politics perceptions was reverse coded such that higher scores indicated positive perceptions and lower scores mean more negative perceptions, but the behavior intention scales had no reverse coding and simply indicate magnitude of behavior intention. More positive politics perceptions resulted in more political behavior intentions of both types, and more negative politics perceptions result in less political behavior intentions of both types. Though political skill did contribute to political behavior intentions for work benefit ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$), it did not have an interaction with politics perceptions ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 1.25$, $p = .26$). Similarly, it related to intentions for personal benefit ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$), but did not moderate politics perceptions' effects ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = .24$, $p = .62$).

The indirect paths analysis for Post Hoc Model C revealed more about the relationship between political behavior and the formation of political behavior intentions. The direct path from attribution to political behavior intentions for work benefit approached significance ($\beta = -.14$, $p = .07$), and the path to personal benefit intentions was significant ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .01$). While not fully supported for work-benefit behavior intentions, the direct path results indicate that the more negative the attribution, the higher the intentions to engage in either type of political behavior. However, the positive signs of the indirect effects imply a different and positive relationship: work benefit (PE $\beta = .29$, $p < .01$; 95% CI [.08, .40]) and personal benefit (PE $\beta = .29$, $p < .01$; 95% CI [.11, .60]). I also examined the total effects on each outcome and found total effects on

personal benefit behavior intentions (PE β = .15, p < .05; 95% CI [.04, .20]) were

significant, but were not on work benefit intentions (PE β = .09, p < .13; 95% CI [-.40,

.22]).

In the case of behavior intentions to benefit the self, the significant indirect and

direct paths had opposite signs. Situations like this are called inconsistent mediation and

may be associated with suppression effects in which the inclusion of the mediator results

in an increase in the strength of the direct path (MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000).

Focusing on political behavior intentions we see that the signs are opposite, but the direct

path is not larger than the total effect when the indirect path is present. As the total effects

on personal benefit behavior intentions were smaller than the direct effect, this is not

interpreted as suppression according to MacKinnon et al. (2000). Though the two paths

are not consistent in their signs, it cannot be concluded that politics perceptions

accentuates the relationship between attribution and political behavior intentions.

MacKinnon et al. (2000) noted this type of inconsistent mediation is possible by chance,

thus these results should be taken with caution. As a final check on these indirect

relationships, I examined the direct effects when the indirect paths were constrained.

When the indirect paths are constrained to zero, the direct relationships between

attribution and both behavioral intention outcomes are significant and positive: work

benefit (β = .17, p < .01) and personal benefit (β = .12, p < .05).

The results from Post Hoc Model C can be interpreted to mean that more positive

attributions and politics perceptions are associated with increased political behavior

intentions of both types. Increased acceptance of political behavior corresponded with

increased positive politics perceptions, and the higher one's political skill, the greater the

political behavior intentions of both types. Attribution is indirectly related to both behavioral intention outcomes, and directly to personal-benefit behavior intentions.

Study 2: Discussion

The goal of Study 2 was to understand how politics perceptions affected the political behavior intentions of those who witness political behavior, and how that may be different for positive and negative politics perceptions. The results were mixed. As hypothesized, sympathy and anger showed significant relationships with politics perceptions. Participants' emotional reactions to their politics perceptions were as expected, but the subsequent paths to behavior intentions were not supported. Past research with social conduct theory found that emotions were linked to behavioral reactions (e.g., Weiner, 1996, 2000), and these findings are in contradiction with that. A possible explanation is that though the experience of watching a video may have allowed participants to have emotional reactions, these emotional reactions were simply not strong enough to trigger substantial behavioral intentions. In fact, the mean scores for sympathy ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.05$) and anger ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.26$) were moderate in strength, thus the emotions were not intensely felt. This level of emotional reaction may simply not have been enough to allow for the projected behavioral intentions that the survey asked for. Alternatively, the viewing experience may not have effectively demonstrated how political behavior would be useful in the organizations depicted. The distance from an actual situation or a lack of clarity about how using political behavior would play out could diminish the likelihood of participants reporting intentions to behavior politically.

It may also be that in this more sterile experimental setting behavioral intentions simply would not develop. When in an organization, individuals are surrounded by political behavior, organizational climate and culture regarding politics, and have history with other potential political actors. All of this may make emotional responses more intense or more focused resulting in stronger intentions to react politically. Perhaps if the participants were actively engaged in a political situation, physically present to the behavior they witnessed, or somehow invested in the outcomes of the situation, rather than merely observing actors on a screen, a more powerful effect would have been seen. It may also be that without the imminent need for a behavioral reaction, intentions were too amorphous for participants to adequately gauge in their responses. Remembering that the study asked participants to picture themselves in a fictitious situation and then to project how they would react. This may be too great a leap for most people.

When Post Hoc Model C was tested absent the emotions variables, the relationships between perceptions and behavior intentions were significant. This is in contrast with what was found in the a priori model tested in Study 2. Additionally, the significant correlations between politics perceptions and personal-benefit political behavior intentions ($r = .30, p < .001$) and work benefit political behavior intentions ($r = .32, p < .001$) imply that the relationships exist, but that emotions took up much of the variance in the Study 2 model. See Table 5 for correlations for this study and Table 7 for correlations between Study 1 and Study 2 variable. Though Hypotheses 12a and 12b could not be supported by the testing of the Study 2 model, there are other indications that these relationships may exist with a different model. Perhaps emotion would have emerged as a mediator with a stronger manipulation, but that is not certain.

A further complication may be that there are very likely unmeasured variables helping to explain the relationship between politics perceptions and political behavior intentions. As evidenced by the impact of political skill, there are other antecedents beyond emotion, and possibly other intermediate variables that the effects of politics perceptions operate through. Another possibility is that there are moderators or mediators on the path from emotions to intention. In line with the TPB (Ajzen, 1985), the attitude toward the behavior is just one part of behavioral intentions. The subjective norms and perceived control are also contributors, but they are not measured in this study. It is possible that one, both, or an interaction between them attenuated the effects on behavioral intentions.

Though the moderation hypotheses were not supported, the direct relationships are valuable to consider. Political skill was related to both types of political behavior intentions indicating that people higher in political skill were more likely to intend to engage in political behavior. It may be that those who have high levels of political skill are simply more likely to use behaviors that suit their skill. As a person contemplates engaging in political behavior, they may first evaluate their ability to be successful with it. If they believe they are capable, they may be more inclined to perform the behavior; in essence, the perceived control component of the TBP. The strength of the paths from political skill are not especially strong; thus, it is possible that other parts of the TBP are relevant. For instance, the organizational climate and norms around political behavior would be consistent with the social norms portion of the TPB. Whether viewed through a TBP lens or not, it is entirely reasonable to expect that other variables not included in this research are important to behavior intention formation.

The post hoc testing adds dimension to the findings of Study 2. In Post Hoc

Model B, when emotions were the outcomes, positive attributions resulted in positive

politics perceptions, but the path to sympathy was not supported and the indirect

relationship between attribution and sympathy was not supported. There was a direct

relationship with sympathy, however. The negative path to anger was different. There was

a significant relationship between politics perceptions and anger, and the indirect

relationship from attribution was also significant, though it explained only a portion of

the effects on anger. This set of relationships supports the notion that as people make

more negative attributions, they experience more anger, and that some of those effects

occur through the increase in negative politics perceptions.

The lack of consistency between the positive and negative paths is interesting, and

there are several possible explanations. First, it is possible that the negative condition was

more effective at generating negative politics perceptions than the positive condition

generated positive politics perceptions. The mean perceptions of the negative items ($M =$

3.22, $SD = .84$) was higher than the positive items ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .83$). A comparison of

each test condition's score on positive and negative politics adds some clarity. Those in

the negative conditions perceived significantly higher levels of negative politics ($M =$

3.51, $SD = .70$) than the positive condition ($M = 2.93$, $SD = .88$; $t = -7.16$, $p < .001$), but

they also perceived significantly more positive politics ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .77$) than the

positive condition ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .87$; $t = 3.01$, $p < .001$). The stimulus videos

manipulated the motive behind the political actor's behavior and every participant passed

the manipulation check, meaning that they all correctly identified the general motivation.

This implies that positive politics, as delineated by an altruistic motive, are perceived as

political, however, political behavior with a self-serving motive is perceived as political

even more. Additionally, it means that participants can perceive positive politics even in

selfish political behavior. I would propose that part of the reason for this is that people

may identify with using political behavior to benefit oneself when other, officially

sanctioned options are not feasible or successful. Using a personal connection to get

business accomplished so one gets a promotion still benefits the organization, therefore it

is understandable that there would be mixed perceptions. The same may be true for

positive politics, but the effects are not as strong, likely because behavior which is

altruistic may simply be less likely to be seen as political.

Whether positive or negative, politics perceptions were related to acceptance of

political behavior. The path coefficient was positive ($\gamma = .37$, $p < .001$) which is

interpreted as increased acceptance being associated with increased positive perceptions

and decreased negative perceptions. This is consistent with the correlations between

acceptance of political behavior and positive ($r = .30$, $p = < .001$) and negative politics

perceptions ($r = -.19$, $p < .001$). A closer examination of the scales helps to explain these

relationships. The acceptance of political behavior scale is a mixture of items regarding

behavior to benefit the organization or oneself. The negative items were reverse coded so

that a high score means greater acceptance of all political behaviors in the measure.

Therefore, as acceptance increases, positive political perceptions increase, while negative

politics perception decrease. It is logical to assume that greater acceptance would be

positively related to the usefulness of politics at work, which is what the positive politics

perceptive items measure. The negative politics perceptions items largely touch on the

destructive nature of politics; thus, the negative relationship is consistent with the

approval of political behavior represented in the acceptance of political behavior scale.

Post Hoc Model C presents a number of interesting findings, especially when

considered in conjunction with the Study 2 results. This model linked attribution with

behavior intention, and supported indirect and direct effects on behavioral intentions.

Interestingly, these mediations appear to be inconsistent mediations without suppression

effects. The direct effects are negative; positive attributions decrease political behavior

intentions, but the indirect effects are positive. Were this a suppression effect, we would

see direct paths larger than the total effects. This is not the case, thus according to

MacKinnon et al. (2000) we can conclude the effect is possible by chance.

To help tease out this situation, I consulted the correlations and found that

perceptions of politics positively correlated with both types of behavioral intention.

However, when looking at correlations with positive and negative politics perceptions

independently, personal-benefit behavioral intentions related to positive politics

perceptions ($r = .39$, $p < .001$) and work-benefit behavioral intentions ($r = .41$, $p < .001$),

but negative perceptions were not related to either. When combined into a single scale

(with negative items reverse coded), perceptions positively related to both outcomes.

Using the scale items to help interpret, this means that as people find political behavior

more useful and less destructive, they have greater intention to use it, whether it be for

personal or work benefit. The negative attribution to intention paths may be indicating

something different. As people make a self-serving attribution of others, they are less

inclined to engage in the behavior themselves. In each case, the logic is sound, and the

combination helps to explain why the direct path would be negative and the indirect positive.

The lack of moderation across all models is surprising. Possibly, the effect of the manipulation was not powerful enough or there were not enough participants for any of the tests to be significant. Another possible consideration is multicollinearity among the predictors. However, testing did not find any tolerances between any of the moderation predictors below .60. Power may also have been an issue. O'Boyle, Banks, Walter, Carter, and Weisenberger (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of 15 years of publications using continuous moderators. They found that the effect sizes for moderations are quite small, therefore many tests of moderation are underpowered. Ironically, they found an inverse relationship between sample size and effect size. The authors maintained this as evidence of a bias for small sample sizes. It may be that the interaction effects I was testing were very small and the sample size (whether too small or too large) did not allow for enough power to find the effects. Certainly, another possible explanation is that there simply are no conditional effects to be found.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

As highlighted for Study 1, one of the strengths of this research is the design. The use of critical incidents and manipulation of political motivation in the videos in an experimental design is innovative and adds to the design alternatives for studying organizational politics. Though Study 2 did not include political behavior as a variable, politics perceptions resulted from the video stimuli and the political behavior intentions were directed toward how participants would intend to behave were they in the

organization in the video. Therefore, the video design and creation are critical to the results in Study 2.

Another important contribution of Study 2 is that it examined politics perceptions and political behavior intentions simultaneously. This combination of perceptions and intended actual political behavior is unusual and fills a gap in our understanding. Perceptions have implications beyond simply being reactions to organizational politics. It is important to understand what people *do* as a result of their perceptions. Though the hypothesized model did not support the paths from emotion to political behavior intentions, the post hoc testing did support the relationship between positive politics perceptions and political behavior intentions, and indirectly from attribution through positive politics perceptions. Therefore, overall, this study supports the relationship between politics perceptions and behavior intentions.

While positive politics perceptions were related to political behavior intentions, correlations showed no relationship between negative politics perceptions and political behavior intentions. A possible explanation for this is that watching someone use political tactics to benefit themselves may have deterred the participants from any political behavior. Participants may have associated the objective behavior shown in the behavior video with the self-serving motive, and were then disinclined to endorse similar behavior. Additionally, it is possible that the act of projecting what one would do in a fictitious situation may not have been powerful enough for political behavior intentions from negative politics perceptions to form. Watching someone do something to help others may trigger similar behavior in others, but watching someone do something to help only themselves may not be sufficient for the perceiver to intend similar behavior. It is also

possible that there was an issue of impression management; participants did not want to endorse behavior conducted for selfish purposes as it might portray them negatively.

Another strength of this study is that it includes individual difference variables in the study of perception and behavior intention formation, and specifically the new construct, acceptance of political behavior. As measured, this construct assesses the degree to which the individual accepts political behavior. When studied with emotions, its relationship with sympathy was supported. The more participants accepted political behavior, the more sympathy they had with the political actor. It was also significantly related to both types of political behavior intentions. This is very logical; as people are more accepting of political behavior, the more likely they are to engage in it themselves. As this is a new construct, a great deal more research is needed to fully understand its role in organizational politics perceptions and behaviors, but this is an exciting first step.

There are several limitations associated with this study that should be recognized. First, this was cross sectional research. While the experimental design contributes to conclusions of cause, the results only refer to a single moment in time. Changes in politics perceptions and behavioral intentions over time remain unknown. Further, several of the measures asked participants to answer in a prospective manner. This relies on their ability to accurately project themselves into a fictitious situation, however realistic, and to report their responses. Past research using this design (Hill et al., 2016) has proven its utility, but this remains a limitation.

It is possible that there are variables missing from the model that account for the influence of emotion on behavior intentions. I think it is likely that emotion may be a precursor to behavior intentions, but there are several other variables, such as political

skill, that either accentuate or diminish that relationship. It is likely that there are several cognitive steps that occur after emotion, as reflected by political skill. Organizational climate and possible negative consequences likely weigh heavily on the decision to enact behavior. Future research should examine how internal and external processes affect the development of political behavior intentions. One may feel very angry about the politics in their environment, but feel too constrained by their ability or the organizational climate to even consider reacting politically.

It is also possible that reactions to politics perceptions may not always be political behavior intentions. Withdrawal from the situation, the team, or the work may be other possible outcomes. The perceiver may choose to not interact with political actors, or they may choose to report the political behavior in an effort to stop it. It may also be that the intention to behave politically takes time to develop, and witnessing a single negative politics event is not enough to trigger it.

Future research should delve into what contributes to political behavior intentions, beyond strictly politics perceptions. It should ascertain how perceptions interact with other emotional, cognitive, and environmental variables, and specifically how positive and negative politics perceptions may operate differently. Understanding the circumstances that surround political behavior would help organizations understand what may be contributing to a political climate and take steps to mitigate negative results.

Study 2 examined perceptions and behavior intentions in conjunction with the individual differences of acceptance of political behavior and political skill. The results show that perception is not strictly what we observe and behavior intentions are not simply the result of perception. Future research should investigate other individual

difference attributes that could contribute to the processes of perception and behavior intention formation. For instance, past experience with political behavior may be an important antecedent of perceptions and intentions. Additionally, examining these attributes at the group- or team-level and how they relate to political behavior and perceptions would be invaluable to understanding the political dynamics within teams. It is likely that there are individual-level effects, team-level effects, and interactions between the two. Multilevel modeling would help illuminate these relationships.

General Discussion

This research set out to understand the perceptual mechanism behind positive and negative politics perceptions and then to identify how those perceptions affect political behavior intentions. It maintained that the paths for positive and negative political behavior and perceptions would be different; that witnessing the same behavior with different motives would have different effects. These relationships were largely supported. This is important because it shows that positive and negative politics exist together and can be studied together. It shows that the motives and attributions inferred by the perceiver are different for positive and negative political behavior, and that they result in different perceptions of the same political behavior.

These results support the notion that politics may be for personal gain or to benefit work objectives, and that they will be perceived as having different motives. It is important for organizations to recognize that efforts to control or reduce political behavior may have unintended consequences. If the focus is solely on behaviors used, then the benefits for the work team or organization could be lost. Without an understanding of the motivational component, employees may simply stop using social

influence to accomplish goals. Alternatively, employees may be forced to find different methods to work outside of formally sanctioned techniques, or they may leave the organization for a place with greater flexibility. This research shows that people differ in how much they accept political behavior and in how politically skilled they are, and these differences contribute to the differences we see in political behavior intentions. Those with the greatest skill may go somewhere that allows them to use that skill. Organizations may also benefit from understanding more about why their employees use political behavior or perceive politics. The excessive use of political behavior could indicate that the formal structure for achieving work and personal goals is too restrictive, uncertain, or ambiguous (e.g., Fedor et al., 1998; Ferris et al., 2002; Harrell-Cook, Ferris, & Dulebohn, 1999).

From a research perspective, much of politics research has focused on politics perceptions because it was thought to be the most relevant aspect of the individual's political experience. Perception is subjective and forms the basis for reactions. Additionally, the measurement of perception is somewhat simpler than the measurement of political behavior, especially in light of the lack of consistency regarding what organizational politics and political behavior are. This research impacts these conclusions in two primary ways. First, it shows that, while perceivers do have individual differences in how they perceive and accept politics, their perceptions are generally in line with the positive or negative nature of the behavior they observe. The input matters to perception, and objective behavior is still relevant and should be considered in examinations of politics perceptions. Additionally, how we view politics affects how we see political behavior. Political behavior benefitting oneself is seen more as political than behavior

benefitting the group. Those in the negative politics condition perceived more politics

than the positive condition, and not just overall politics; they also perceived more positive

politics than those in the positive condition. This finding is consistent with the idea that

the negative reputation of organizational politics affects perception; if it is positive it

simply cannot be political. Therefore, it is the behavior, individual perceptual tendencies

and errors, and general views on the nature of politics which all contribute to politics

perceptions and political behavior intentions.

Politics perceptions are not limited to *what* the person perceived happened; they

are also importantly related to *why* the perceiver thinks they happened. In these studies,

the actor's motivation was manipulated and subsequent perceptions were logically related

to them, and this explicit consideration of actor motivation is new in politics research.

The implication is that study of political behavior cannot be divorced from consideration

of actor motivation in combination with individual perceptual tendencies and general

acceptance of political behavior. People who witness behavior intended to benefit the

work group saw that behavior more positively. Additionally, those who were less

accepting of political behavior were more inclined to see that behavior negatively.

The political experience at work is more a system of motivation, behavior,

perception, and reciprocal inputs between individuals. To this point, to a degree, the

political behavior intentions we form mirror what we see others do. The impact of the

organization's culture and climate regarding politics and political behavior will impact

what we see, and likely the acceptance people have of politics. Use and perceptions of

political behavior in organizations where it is sanctioned (and possibly expected), will

differ from organizations in which it is not accepted. Adequate study and understanding

will only come when we fully grasp all parts of this system and how they function together.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

A strength of this research was that it ultimately combined both the perceptual aspect of political behavior, as well as the formation of behavioral intentions influenced by perceptions. Though the paths from emotion to behavioral intentions were not supported in the hypothesized model, subsequent testing involving attribution from the MIM model did establish a relationship with behavior intentions. The results imply that people do form intentions to behave politically in situations where they perceive others to behave politically. Additionally, there was no real difference in the formation of intention to benefit oneself or work, thus the quality of politics perceived does not, in this sample, seem to affect being more or less willing to act politically to benefit oneself or the work group. Further, the strength of the relationships with politics perceptions were moderately strong; participants saw the value in using political behavior and had a reasonable degree of willingness to consider using it.

The perceptual path outlined by MIM was different for positive and negative political behavior and resulted in different politics perception. In the hypothesized model for Study 2, the emotional responses to those perceptions were also different, but the formation of behavior intentions in response to those emotions was not supported. However, politics perceptions did relate to political behavior intentions when emotion was removed from the model, and in fact, politics perceptions mediated the relationship between attribution and behavior intentions. Thus, when portions of each study's models are tested together, an overall picture develops in which attributions result in perceptions

and ultimately political behavior intentions. Thus, the motivations behind the political

behavior we observe affect how we perceive political behavior, and are then related to

how we choose to react.

The effects of the individual difference variables were also interesting. Indeed, the

degree to which one accepts political behavior and views it as useful contributes to it

being perceived more positively, but surprisingly it related to decreased sympathy. It is

possible that the use of political behavior is still not entirely accepted by people, and

therefore they are less likely to identify and sympathize with those who use it. I may see

the utility of the behavior, but find it distasteful and believe that there would be other

ways to accomplish my goals were I in that situation. Across the Study 2 models, the

importance of political skill to political behavior intentions was consistent. Those with

higher political skill may be more inclined to use political behavior because of their

facility with it, or a more acute sense of when to use it.

The overall picture is one in which the behavior we see processed through our

perceptual filters creates politics perceptions influenced by our acceptance of political

behavior. Then our individual level of political skill and those perceptions contribute to

behavioral intentions. The paths taken by positive political behavior and negative

political behavior are distinct, but both contribute to political behavior intentions to

benefit the workplace and the individual. The implication is that *what* we see, *why* we

think it happened, and *how* we perceive it are all important to what we choose to do.

Positive and negative politics perceptions are not strictly about the behaviors

observed, but also the motivations behind them and individual differences about the

perceiver. Politics becomes a system of exchange between the actor and the perceiver,

and ultimately influences the perceiver becoming a political actor in the future. It is highly likely, then, that relationships are also critical to this equation. Previous experience with a political actor is likely to affect the inferred motives and attributions. A good relationship may correct the attributions we make of someone when they use political behavior to achieve a personal benefit.

It is important to note that the study models were informed by theory, but could not possibly account for all variables that employees encounter while at work. Therefore, these models are indicative of specific relationships, but not of the entire system surrounding politics in organizations. As such, future research should continue to examine other mediators and moderators of the relationships in this research. Future research should also consider what other constructs contribute to the formation of positive and negative politics perceptions. While this research focuses on perceived motivations, the outcomes derived by political behavior have also been suggested as factors. Ultimately, considering motivations and outcomes simultaneously would be ideal. A prominent unmeasured variable in these studies is how our social relationships alter perceptions and political behavior intentions. It is likely that influence behaviors used for politicking are different depending on the degree of social connection one has to others in the organization.

This research made an important first step to outline a process from political behavior to a political behavior intention response, but it also points the way to a new way of researching and viewing organizational politics. Using a set of videos to isolate one aspect of the political situation for manipulations offers a useful tool for experimentally considering political behavior and perceptions. Though the videos in this

research may not have been a powerful enough stimulus to elicit strong emotions, it they were effective in establishing the other relationships, pointing to their potential for future research efforts.

Future research should also begin to examine the dyadic nature of organizational politics. Consistent with Hill et al. (2016), the dyadic relationships that are affected by organizational politics are also likely contributors to it, being connected to the individual level as well as group and organizational climate and culture. Hierarchical examinations would be an important next step, as well as greater explication of the dyadic process. What one sees affects what one perceives and then what one does, which then affects what others see, perceive, and do. The perceptual process may be internal to the individual, but their possible reactions form the political inputs for others. Combined with the general climate and acceptance or encouragement of political behavior in the organization, there are any number of fascinating and exciting opportunities for research that could profoundly add to this area of study.

Conclusion

This research adds meaningfully to our understanding of organizational politics, how it manifests, and the perceptual processes that surround it. Positive and negative politics are areas in need of study, particularly concurrent study, and these studies add to our understanding of how they may be distinct in their formation and consequences. Additionally, this research further develops our knowledge of the relationship between perceptions and behavior, thereby addressing calls in past research to integrate constructs that have largely been assumed to relate.

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Table 1

Definitions of Organizational Politics

Who	Quoted Definition
Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick & Mayes (1979, p. 77)	"Intentional acts of influence to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups."
Bacharach & Lawler (1998, p. 69	"The efforts of individuals or groups in organizations to mobilize support for or opposition to organizational strategies, policies or practices in which they have a vested stake or interest."
Buchanan (2008, p 14)	"…the discursive processes through which behaviours come to be labelled as political, attributed with political intent, and socially constructed as political remain unexplored."
Buchanan & Badham (1999)	"The practical domain of power in action, worked out through the use of techniques of influence and other (more or less) extreme tactics."
Cropanzano, Kacmar & Bozeman (1995, p. 7)	"Social influence attempts directed at those who can provide rewards that will help promote or protect the self-interest of the actor."
Farrell & Peterson (1982, p. 405)	"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"

Who	Quoted Definition
Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, & Hochwarter (2002 p. 220)	"...politics as a process by which influence over others is accomplished through the manipulation of images, impressions, and the management and interpretation of the meaning of phenomena."
Ferris, Harrell-Cook & Dulebohn (2000, p. 90)	"Involves an individual's attribution to behaviors of self-serving intent, and is defined as an individual's subjective evaluation about the extent to which the work environment is characterized by co-workers and supervisors who demonstrate such self-serving behavior."
Ferris, Russ, & Fandt (1989, p. 145)	"A social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests."
Gotsis & Kortezi (2010, p. 498)	"…organizational politics embodies three constitutive elements: influencing behaviors through intentional acts, use of power tactics and strategies, and non-sanctioned, informal activities sometimes implying potential intra-organizational conflict. Accordingly, there are two distinct ways in viewing organizational politics: either, in the more general sense, as a manifestation of social influence processes entailing rather beneficial organizational effects, or in the narrower sense as self-serving and unsanctioned attempts, most frequently opposing to organizational goals."
Kacmar & Baron (1999, p. 4)	"Actions by individuals that are directed toward the goal of furthering their own self-interests without regard for the well-being of others within the organization."

Who	Quoted Definition
Kurchner-Hawkins & Miller (2006, p. 331)	"…an exercise of power and influence that primarily occurs outside of formal organizational processes and procedures. The behavior is based upon influence tactics designed to further self and/or org interests and is aimed at reconciling potential competing interests."
Mayes & Allen (1977, p. 675)	"Organizational politics is the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influence means."
Mintzberg (1983, p. 172)	"… individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate - sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (though it may exploit any one of these)."
Pettigrew (1973) as cited in Kurchner-Hawkins & Miller (2006, p. 330)	"…politics is about setting goals, and generating support for achieving them and managing the distributions of resources."
Pfeffer (1981, p. 7)	"…those activities taken within an organization to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes in a situation in which there is uncertainty or dissensus about choices."
Porter, Allen, & Angle (1981, p. 111)	"Social influence attempts that are discretionary (i.e., that are outside the behavioral zones prescribed or prohibited by the formal organization), that are intended (designed) to promote or protect the self-interests of individuals or groups (units), and that threaten the self-interests of others (individuals, units)."

Who	Quoted Definition
Schein (1977, p. 66)	"The intent of the [political actor] can be classified into two general categories: (a) to bring about personal goals congruent with organizational goals and (b) to bring about personal goals incongruent with organizational goals."
Tushman (1977, p. 207)	"The use of authority and power to effect definitions of goals, directions, and other major parameters of the organization."
Valle & Perrewé (2000, p. 351)	"...the exercise of tactical influence by individuals which is strategically goal directed, rational, conscious and intended to promote self-interest, either at the expense of or in support of others' interests."
Vrendenburgh & Maurer (1984, p. 50)	"Organizational politics (a) is undertaken by individuals or interest groups to influence directly or indirectly target individuals, roles, or groups toward the actor's personal goals, generally in opposition to others' goals, (b) consists of goals or means· either not positively sanctioned by an organization's formal design or positively sanctioned by unofficial norms, and (c) is objective and subjective in nature, involving real organizational events as well as perceptual attributions."

Table 2

Study 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Political Behavior Condition	NA	NA	*NA*					
2. Inferred Motive	2.60	.84	.57*	*.93*				
3. Attribution	2.82	.81	.43*	.83*	*.94*			
4. Hostile Attribution Style	1.98	.53	-.04	.00	-.05	*NA*		
5. Politics Perceptions	2.91	.49	.21*	.42*	.49*	.05	*.79*	
6. Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior	3.76	.77	-.28*	-.54*	-.46*	.01	-.24.	*.81*

Note. N = 383
* *p* < .01 level.

Table 3

Goodness of Fit Statistics for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Study 1 and Study 2 Scales

Scale	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFA	NNFI	Items Removed	Final Item Count
Study 1							
Inferred Motive	202.32**	62	.08	.96	.95	0	13
Attribution	292.15**	88	.08	.94	.93	0	15
Politics Perceptions	81.09**	24	.08	.95	.92	1	9
Hostile Attribution Style	498.80**	246	.05	.91	.90	0	32
Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior	15.83*	4	.09	.98	.95	0	5
Study 2							
Politics Perceptions	81.09**	24	.08	.95	.92	1	9
Anger	24.37**	6	.09	.99	.98	1	6
Sympathy	18.73*	7	.07	.99	.98	2	6
Political Behavior Intentions Personal	102.75**	34	.07	.96	.95	0	10
Political Behavior Intentions Work	98.11**	32	.07	.94	.92	3	10
Acceptance of Political Behavior	438.44**	128	.08	.94	.93	0	18
Political Skill	442.54**	127	.08	.93	.91	0	18

* $p < .01$ level. ** $p < .001$ level.

Table 4

Study 1 Goodness of Fit Statistics for Structural Equation Modeling

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	Compared to	$\Delta\chi^2$
Measurement	47.51*	24	.05	.99	.99		
Hypothesized	77.70**	40	.05	.99	.98		
Final (Trimmed)	70.93**	32	.06	.99	.98	Hypoth.	6.77
Post Hoc Model A							
Measurement	156.97**	48	.08	.97	.96		
1. Added PF → IM	219.58**	61	.08	.96	.95		
2. Added PB → PF	188.15**	60	.08	.97	.96	Model 1	31.44*

Note. N = 355. df = degrees freedom; RMSEA = root mean square of approximation; NNFI = nonnormed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; PF = Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior; IM = Inferred Motive; PB = Political Behavior.
* *p* < .01 level. ** *p* < .001 level.

Table 5

Study 2 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables.

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Politics Perceptions	2.91	.49	.79						
2.	Anger	2.75	1.26	-.46**	.96					
3.	Sympathy	2.15	1.05	.37**	-.51**	.93				
4.	PBI-Personal	3.41	.79	.30**	-.12*	.08	.88			
5.	PBI-Work	3.44	.65	.32**	-.14**	.14**	.78**	.83		
6.	Acceptance of Political Behavior	2.83	.82	.40**	-.32**	.08	.38**	.35**	.94	
7.	Political Skill	3.77	.66	.04	-.01	.08	.23**	.25**	.11*	.93

Note. *N* = 383. PBI = Political Behavior Intentions.
* *p* < .05 level. ** *p* < .01 level.

Table 6

Study 2 Goodness of Fit Statistics for Structural Equation Modeling

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI
Measurement	409.17*	168	.06	.97	.96
Hypothesized	466.18*	175	.07	.96	.95
Post Hoc Models					
Post Hoc B Measurement	122.34*	48	.06	.98	.97
Post Hoc B Structural	186.16*	82	.06	.98	.98
Post Hoc C Measurement	306.05*	120	.06	.97	.96
Post Hoc C Structural	328.86 *	123	.07	.96	.95

Note. N = 383. df = degrees freedom; RMSEA = root mean square of approximation;
NNFI = nonnormed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index.
* $p < .001$ level.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study 1 and Study 2 Variables.

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Political Behavior Condition	NA	NA	*NA*					
2.	Inferred Motive	2.60	.84	.57**	*.93*				
3.	Attribution	2.82	.81	.43**	.83**	*.94*			
4.	HAS	1.98	.53	-.00	.05	-.05	*NA*		
5.	Politics Perceptions	2.91	.49	.21**	.42**	.47**	.03	*.79*	
6.	PLFPB	3.76	.77	-.28**	-.54**	-.46**	-.01	-.24**	*.81*
7.	Anger	2.75	1.26	-.30**	-.57**	-.61**	.13*	-.46**	.39**
8.	Sympathy	2.15	1.05	.38**	.70**	.68**	.12*	.37**	-.42**
9.	PBI-Personal	3.41	.79	-.02	.05	.12*	.05	.30**	.16**
10.	PBI-Work	3.44	.65	-.04	.12*	.18**	.03	.32**	.18**
11.	Acceptance of Political Behavior	2.83	.82	-.04	.07	.12*	-.06	.40**	-.03
12.	Political Skill	3.77	.66	.10	.12*	.07	.06	.04	.02

Note. $N = 383$. HAS = Hostile Attribution Style. PLFPB = Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior. PBI = Political Behavior Intentions.

* $p < .05$ level. ** $p < .01$ level.

		7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Political Behavior Condition						
2.	Inferred Motive						
3.	Attribution						
4.	HAS						
5.	Politics Perceptions						
6.	PLFPB						
7.	Anger	.96					
8.	Sympathy	-.51**	.93				
9.	PBI-Personal	-.12*	.08	.88			
10.	PBI-Work	-.14**	.14**	.78**	.83		
11.	Acceptance of Political Behavior	-.32**	.08	.38**	.35**	.94	
12.	Political Skill	-.01	.08	.23**	.25**	.11*	.93

Note. N = 383. HAS = Hostile Attribution Style. PLFPB = Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior. PBI = Political Behavior Intentions.
* *p* < .05 level. ** *p* < .01 level.

Figure Caption Page

Figure 1. Study 1 Hypothesized Model.

Figure 2: Results from SEM modeling of Study 1 Hypothesized Model.

Figure 3. *Figure 3*. Results from SEM modeling of Study 1 Final (Trimmed) Model

reflecting the removal of Hostile Attribution Style.

Figure 4. Results from SEM modeling of Post Hoc Model A reflecting the addition of

Perceived of Likelihood of Future Political Behavior.

Figure 5. Study 2 Hypothesized Model.

Figure 6. Results from SEM modeling of Study 2 Hypothesized Model.

Figure 7. Results from SEM modeling of Post Hoc Model B.

Figure 8. Results from SEM modeling of Post Hoc Model C.

Figure 1. Study 1 Hypothesized Model.

Figure 2. Results from SEM modeling of Study 1 Hypothesized Model. Values represent standardized path coefficients. *p < .001.

Figure 3. Results from SEM modeling of Study 1 Final (Trimmed) Model reflecting the removal of Hostile Attribution Style. Values represent standardized path coefficients. *p* < .001
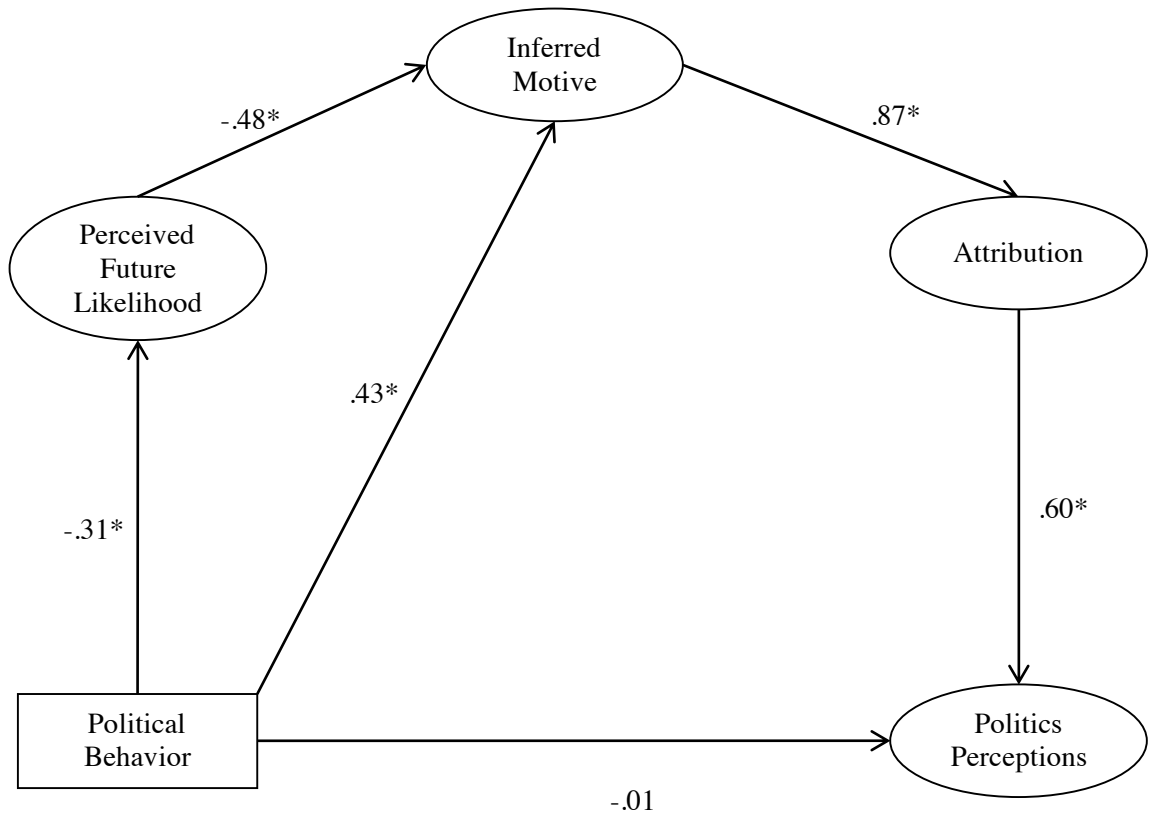
Figure 4. Results from SEM modeling of Post Hoc Model A reflecting the addition of Perceived of Likelihood of Future Political Behavior. Values represent standardized path coefficients. *p < .001
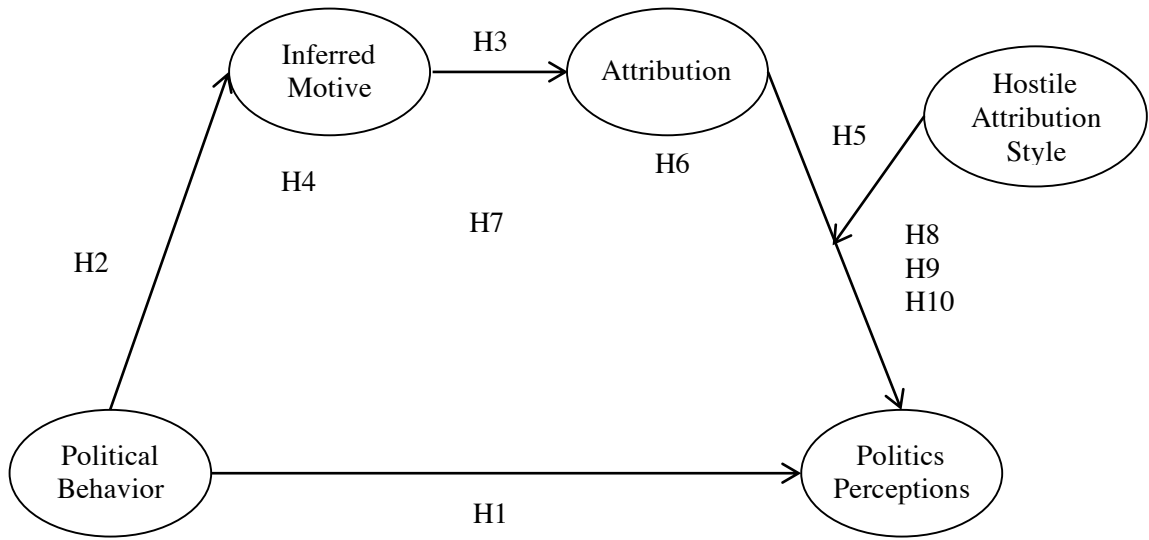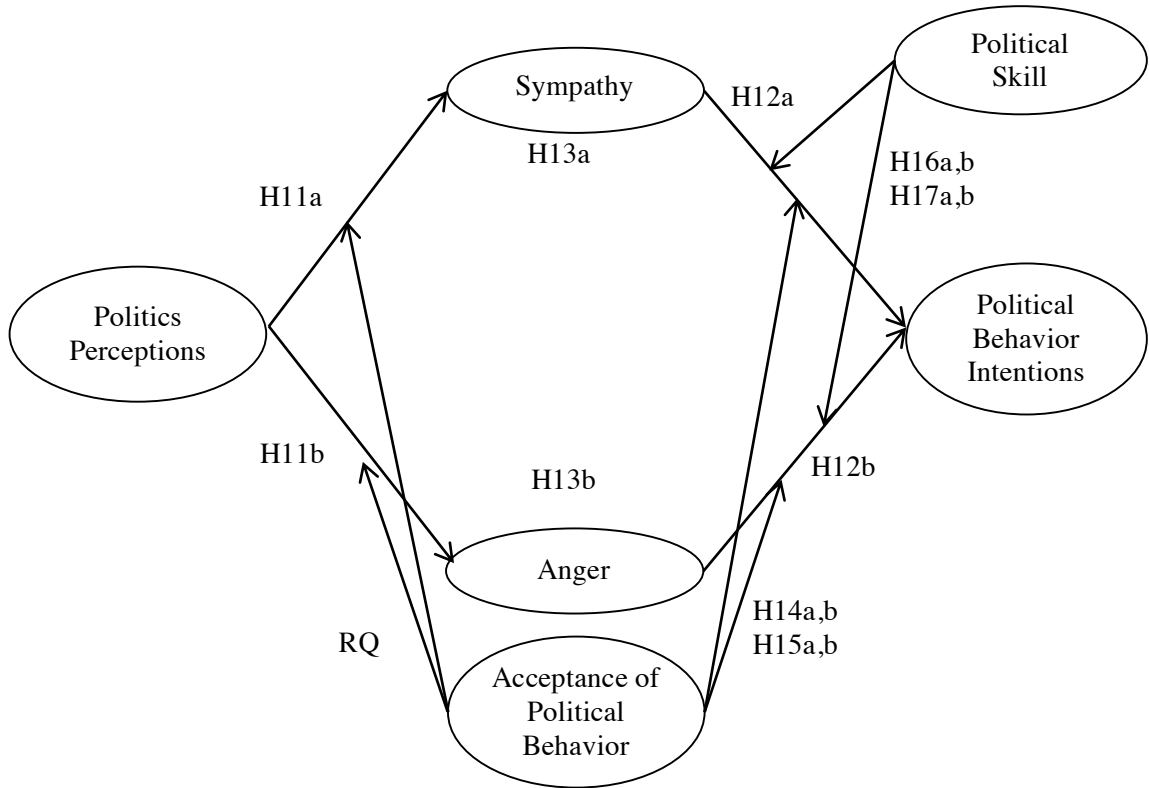
Figure 5. Study 2 Hypothesized Model.
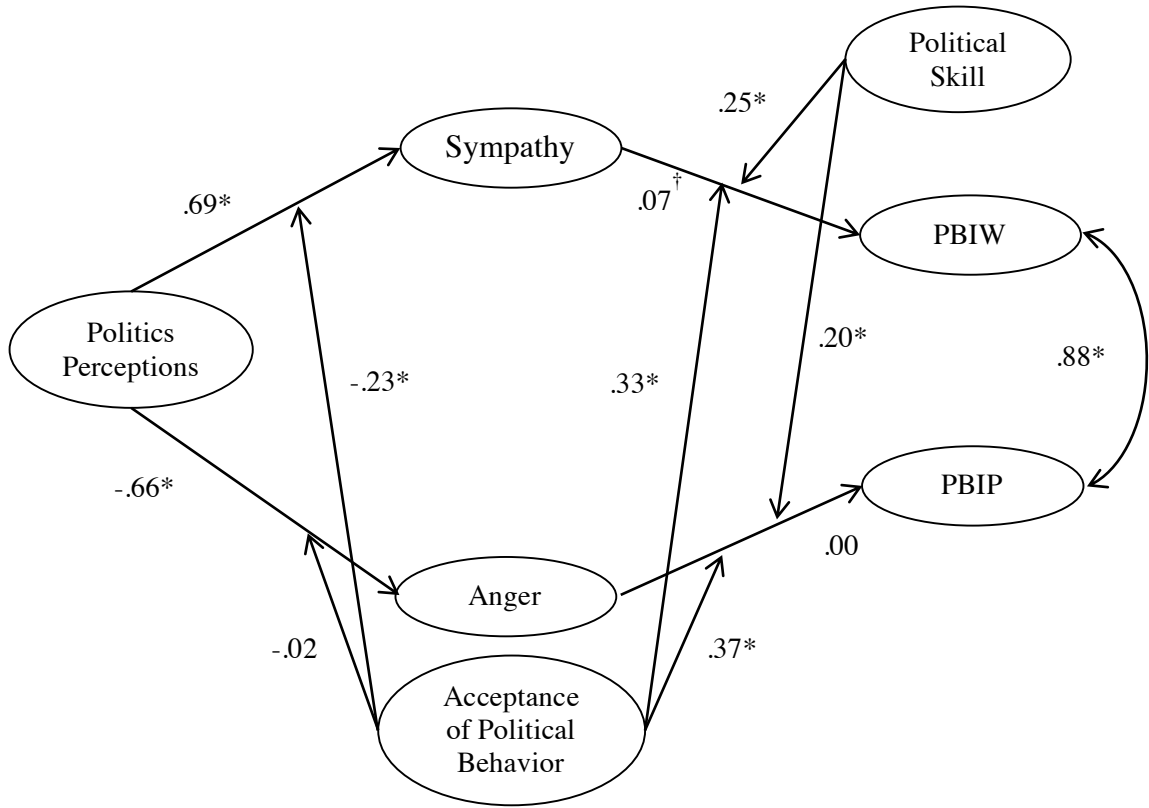
Figure 6. Results from SEM modeling of Study 2 Hypothesized Model. Values represent standardized path coefficients. Political Behavior Intentions-Work. PBIP = Political Behavior Intentions-Personal. *p < .001. † p < .10.
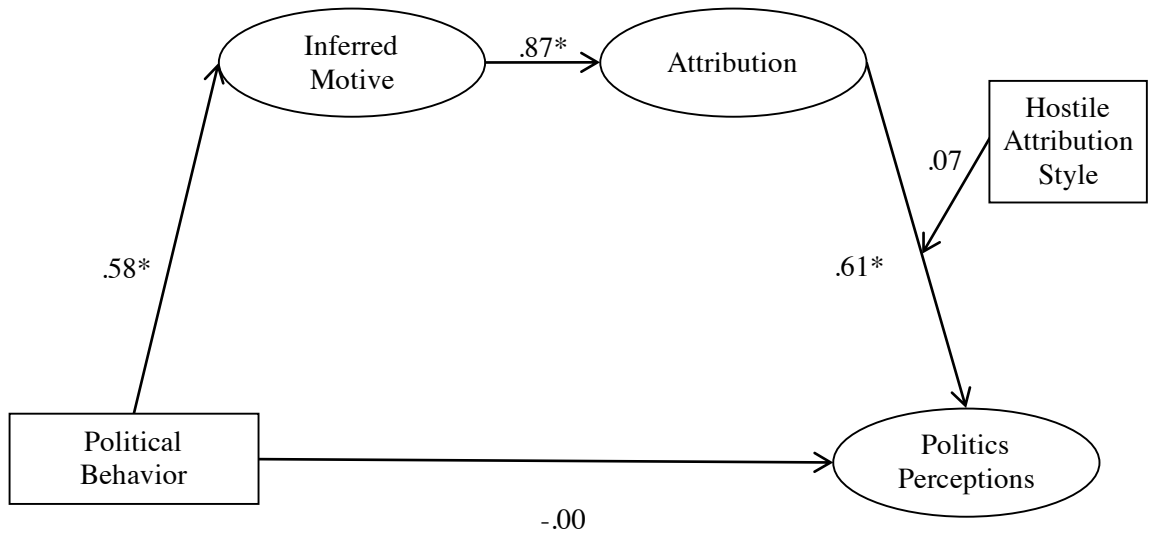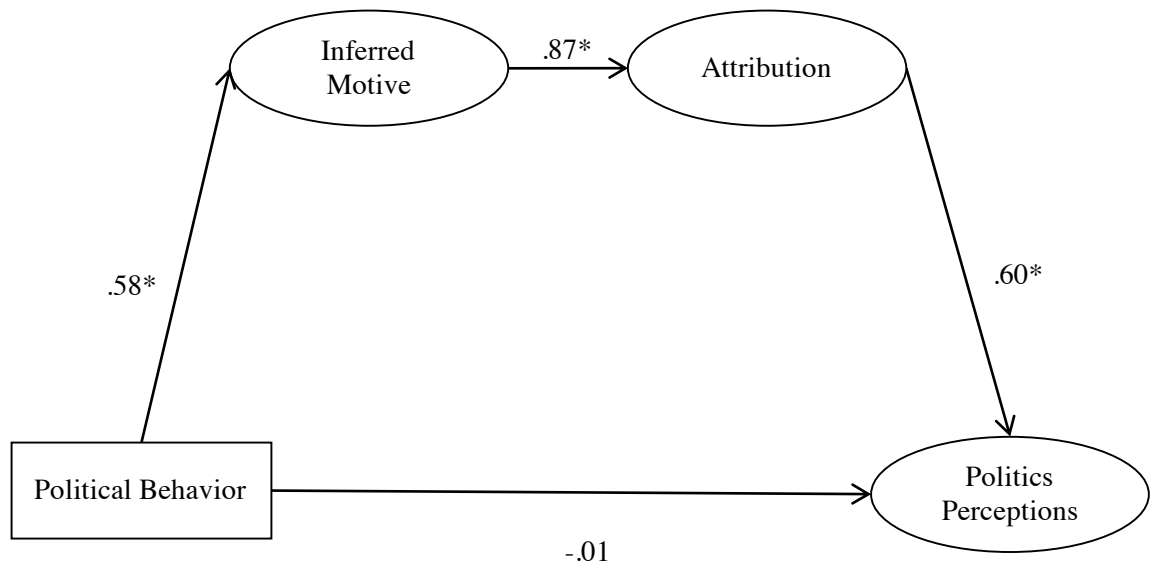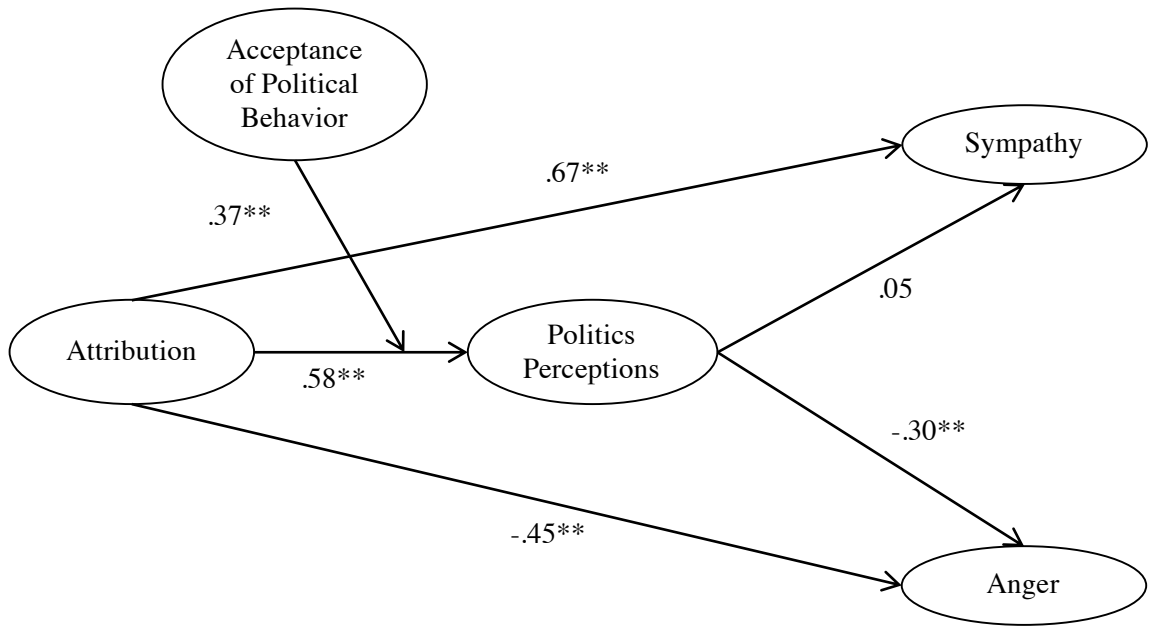
Figure 7. Results from SEM modeling of Post Hoc Model B. Values represent standardized path coefficients. **p* < .001.

Figure 8. Results from SEM modeling of Post Hoc Model C. Values represent standardized path coefficients. Political Behavior Intentions-Work. PBIP = Political Behavior Intentions-Personal. *p < .01. **p < .001. † *p* < .10.

Appendix A: Pilot Testing

A pilot study was conducted prior to the two main studies to collect critical incidents of positive and negative political behavior, and to determine the psychometric characteristics of the scales created for this research. Data was collected from participants in the Psychology Human Subjects Pool and busines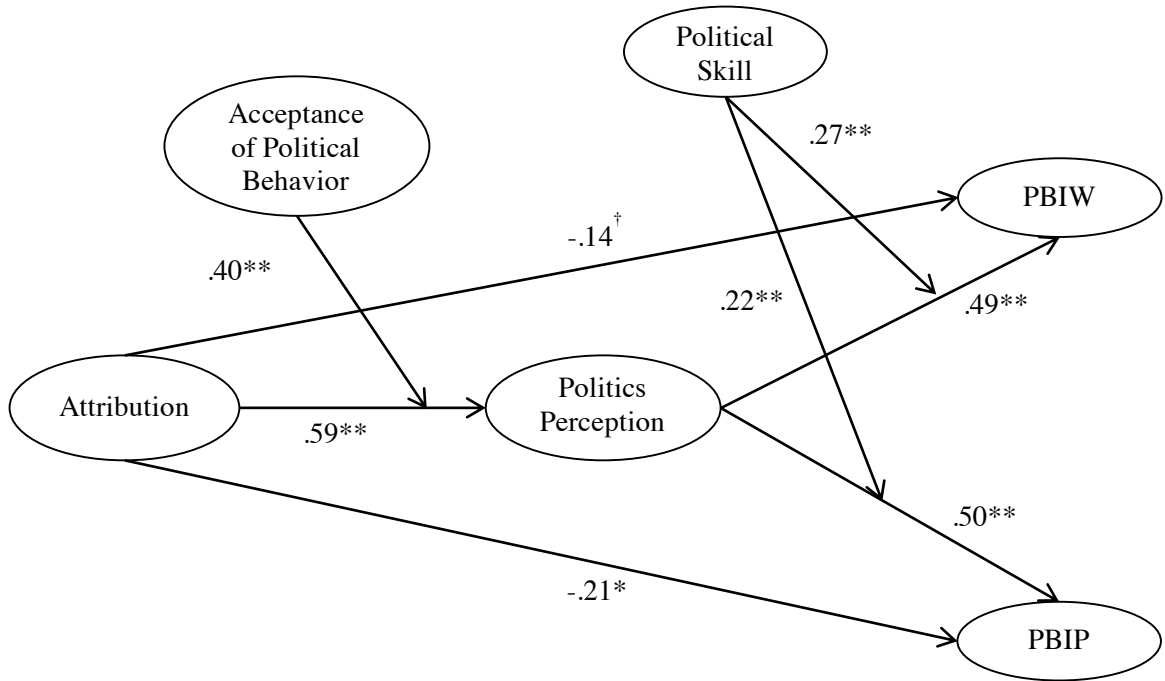s school classes of a Midwestern university, and Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants were mostly white (71.9%), followed by African American (10.5%), Asian (10.5%) Hispanic/Latin-American (4.4%) and other (2.6%). Female participants made up 62.3% of the sample. The participant average age was 31.34 years (range = 19 - 66, SD = 10.94).

The pilot study asked participants to write an incident in which they had witnessed someone use social influence behavior. There were two conditions. In the first, the behavior was for the benefit of the work group or team. In the second, the behavior was for personal benefit. After reporting their incident, participants completed the measures. With the exception of acceptance of political behavior, scale instructions directed participants to answer the items in relation to the incident they had described.

There were 155 people who completed the pilot study. To maintain data quality, several criteria were used to evaluate cases for retention or removal. Participants had to pass 80% of the attention checks items, and 20 participants failed this check. The time spent on the study was also used to evaluate sufficient effort, however a different time cutoff was used for UMSL and Mechanical Turk participants, as it was clear that Mechanical Turk workers were far faster and similar in their response times ($M = 16$, $SD = 8.80$) than UMSL students ($M = 27$, $SD = 24.96$), likely due to the practice they have completing surveys like this. Those that took less than half the mean time of their group

were removed. Nine UMSL participants and seven Mechanical Turk participants were

removed for insufficient time. Being employed within the last two years was also a

condition of retention, and five participants were removed for not being employed in that

timeframe. Excessive missing data was also grounds for removal of one participant. The

final sample was 113, of which 58 were Mechanical Turk workers and 55 were UMSL

students. The data collected in the pilot study was not used in the main study analyses.

Pilot Study Results

   Data Analytic Procedure. Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and

confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to ascertain the psychometric quality of

each scale. EFA was used to assess factor structure for scales without an a priori

understanding of factor structure, CFA was used to establish fit of the model, and

correlations were consulted to ensure that items were not so strongly related as to be

duplicative. For EFA, Principal Axis Factoring with a Direct Oblimin rotation was used

in SPSS (IBM, 2015). CFA fit was evaluated in R (R Core Team, 2013) with the lavaan

package (Rosseel, 2012) using χ^2 statistic, the root mean square error of approximation

(RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), and the

Nonnormed Fit Index (NNFI; Bentler, 1980). RMSEA with values less than .08 are

interpreted as acceptable fit and less than .05 as very good fit. For CFI and NNFI, .90

indicates acceptable fit and .95 very good fit. These cutoffs were used as general

guidelines for fit decisions, but there are no universally recognized values for fit

(Schumacher & Lomax, 2010).

   The items for each scale in the pilot study were intentionally more numerous than

desired for the final data collection, and participant fatigue was a concern. Trimming the

measures to the most effective items within each scale to have reliable, well-fitting measures was the goal. Decisions to remove items were based on several criteria. First, a minimum loading of .35 per Clark and Watson (1995). This was a minimum, however, and depending on the fit of the model and length of the survey, items with loadings less than .50 were removed in some instances. Other considerations for item removal were cross loading across factors, correlations with other items so as to be duplicative, and the overall fit and reliability of the scales.

Inferred Motive. There were 17 items for this scale. It was designed to be two factors corresponding to altruistic and self-serving motive. A CFA was conducted first which demonstrated achieved acceptable fit ($\chi^2[118] = 219.57$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .93; NNFI = .92), but one altruism item showed low loading and was removed. I decided to check the factor structure and cross loading using EFA. The resulting model had two factors accounting for 62% of the variance. Both factors had eigenvalues exceeding one and the scree plot supported the two-factor solution. Three items were found to cross load over the course of three EFAs and were removed:

Table A.1

Items Removed from the Inferred Motive Measure

Altruism
1. The target person was motivated to put their needs before the needs of their work group.

Self-Serving
1. The success of the work group was less important than the target person's success.
2. The target person was motivated by selfish interests.
3. The target person would take advantage of the mistakes of others if they benefitted him/her.

CFA of the two-factor model achieved good fit ($\chi^2[64] = 114.77$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .09; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95). To double-check that a two-factor model was indeed the best fit to the data, I compared it to a model in which all items loaded onto a single factor. The fit was significantly worse with the single-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 83.92$, p < .01), indicating that a two-factor model was best fitting. The final scale had 13 items: nine for altruism and four for self-serving inferred motive, and the two factors were negatively correlated ($r = -.77$, $p < .001$). See Table A.2 for final item factor loadings. Reliability for this measure was .69 and its composite reliability was .82.

Table A.2

Factor Loadings for Items Assessing Inferred Motive

Altruistic Inferred Motive	
Item	Loading
The target person was motivated to do what it takes to help his/her work group.	.94
The target person was motivated by a desire to see their work group do well.	.94
The target person wanted to see their work group succeed.	.92
The target person wanted to help others.	.91
The target person was motivated by concern for those they work with.	.85
The target person was motivated by ethical principles.	.83
The target person was a moral person.	.81
The target person was inspired to take one for the team.	.74
The target person would rather do things that help others than only benefit themselves.	.51

Self-Serving Inferred Motive	
Item	Loading
The target person had an ulterior motive.	.92
The target person just wanted to gain power.	.84
The target person believed it was important to first look out for number one.	.69
The target person was mostly concerned about getting ahead.	.65

Attribution. This measure had 24 items and was designed to have two factors corresponding with helpful team player and selfish go-getter attributions. The CFA to evaluate the expected structure of the scale was poorly fitting ($\chi^2[251] = 497.978$, $p <$ .001; RMSEA = .10; CFI = .89; NNFI = .80), though all items loaded significantly onto their respective factors above .55. An EFA was conducted to help reduce the size of the

measure and to improve its model fit. Five items were removed for cross loading over a

series of EFA tests. One item was removed because it correlated strongly ($r > .70$) with

eight other items with similar content. Items that were removed are shown in Table A.3.

Table A.3

Items Removed from the Attribution Measure

Helpful Team Player

1. The target person is a cooperative, team player. (removed for high correlations with other items)

Selfish Go-Getter

1. The target person would offer to help others only if it didn't cost him/her.

2. The target person would take advantage of the mistakes of others if they benefitted him/her.

3. The target person is a selfish person.

4. The target person would take the attitude that "good guys finish last."

5. The target person would always be first in line to get the best stuff.

The final EFA had two factors explaining 67% of the variance in the data. Both factors

had eigenvalues greater than 1 and scree plots indicated two factors. Subsequently, a CFA

of the two-factor model was conducted which achieved good fit ($\chi^2[89] = 137.41$, $p <$

.001; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .96; NNFI = .96). I compared this model to a single factor

model and found the fit significantly worse with the single-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 61.68$,

$p < .01$). The two factors were negatively correlated ($r = -.79$, $p < .001$). The final

measure had 15 items: 11 helpful team player factor items and four selfish go-getter items

(see Table A.4). Its reliability was .94 and composite reliability was .82.

Table A.4

Final Items for the Attribution Measure by Factor

Helpful Team Player	
Item	Loading
The target person is generous.	.92
The target person is helpful.	.90
The target person would help a coworker he/she did not know well with their work when he/she knew more about it.	.86
The target person would help carry a coworker's belongings (briefcase, parcels, etc.).	.84
The target person would donate to a charity.	.82
The target person would delay an elevator and hold the door open for a coworker.	.79
The target person would give money to a coworker who needed it (or asked for it).	.78
The target person would allow someone to go ahead of him/her in a lineup at the copy machine.	.75
The target person would give a coworker a lift in his/her car.	.75
The target person would help a coworker that he/she didn't know well to move households.	.74
The target person is altruistic.	.73

Self-Serving Inferred Motive	
Item	Loading
The target person is a selfish go-getter.	.91
The target person would only help a coworker if he/she believed the coworker could do something for him/her later on.	.83
The target person would take the attitude "you snooze, you lose."	.71
The target person would take the attitude that "good guys finish last."	.69

Politics Perceptions. This measure had 25 items and was designed to have two factors corresponding with negative (9 items) and positive (8 items) politics perceptions. An initial EFA found 6 factors exceeding Eigenvalues of 1 and accounting for 49% of the data variance. After iterative removal of 10 items for cross-loading or low loadings (< .50), EFA showed two factors accounting for 46% of the variance. To assess the fit of these two factors, CFA was conducted and resulted an additional item being removed for low loading. In total, 11 items were removed over the course of the EFA and CFA and they are shown in Table A.5. The final two-factor model (see Table A.6) had six negative items and four positive items, achieved acceptable fit ($\chi^2[34] = 60.77$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .09; CFI = .92; NNFI = .90), and had a Cronbach's alpha of .56. The composite reliability for this measure was .90.

Table A.5

Items Removed from the Politics Perceptions Measure

Positive Politics Perceptions

1. My job is easier because other people use influence tactics.

2. While others might judge what my manager/supervisor does as being political, his/her actions are for the benefit of my work group.

3. The better my manager is at being a politician, the better it is for my work group.

4. As long as we are performing well, it does not bother me if my work group is accused of being somewhat political.

5. I often need to influence others to get the best results I can achieve.

6. My job is easier because other people use politics.

7. I would not be as successful without the use of some political behavior on my part.

Negative Politics Perceptions

1. I have seen individuals use influence to make changes to policies which only benefit a few people.

2. Trading favors, paying compliments to others, and using good working relationships pays off in this organization.

3. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative to get along or get ahead in this organization.

4. Politics has, at times, made doing my own job more difficult.

5. Political behavior by others has a negative impact on my job situation in this organization.

6. We have not been as effective as we could have been because of people being political within our work group.

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

Table A.6

Final Items for the Politics Perception Measure by Factor

Negative Politics Perceptions	
Item	Loading
Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead in my work group.	.78
To do well in this organization, who you know matters more than how good a job you do.	.71
People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.	.69
Political behavior within my work group has wasted time and effort that could have been more productively channeled.	.67
People in this organization who use their power are the ones who get what they want.	.64
Political behaviors have more to do with raises and promotions than policies.	.62
Positive Politics Perceptions	
Item	Loading
I use political maneuvering to reap the most benefits from my contributions at work.	.90
Learning how to work the system has real benefits for me at work.	.72
Bending the rules aids me in doing a superior job.	.57
I have seen necessary changes happen because of the use of politics.	.50

Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior. This unidimensional

measure had eight items. CFA of all the items resulted in good fit, but two items had very

low loadings (< .15). Further investigation found that one item was strongly correlated

with another item ($r = .77$, p < .001) and was removed (see Table A.7). The final model

fit well ($\chi^2[5] = 5.59$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .03; CFI = 1.00; NNFI = .99) and the scale had

Cronbach's alpha of .77. The final items are shown in Table A.8.

Table A.7

Items Removed from the Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior Measure

Item
1. Rely on personal connections with influential people to primarily achieve their personal goals.
2. Rely on personal connections with influential people to primarily achieve their work team's goals.
3. Influence others to primarily get the best results they can for their work team.

Table A.8

Final Items for the Perceived Likelihood of Future Political Behavior Measure

Item	Loading
Use political behavior to get promotions rather than focus on good performance.	.73
Use political maneuvering to get the greatest benefits from my contributions at work.	.73
Influence others to primarily get the best results they can for themselves personally.	.68
Agree with major opinions outwardly, even when they disagreed inwardly.	.62
Offer an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you).	.45

Emotion. This measure was created to have two dimensions corresponding to

sympathy and anger. An EFA indicated a two-factor solution, and the factors fell along

sympathy and anger lines accounting for 72% of the variance. It was concerning that two

sympathy items (*How much sympathy did you feel for the person?* and *How much compassion did you feel for the person?*) correlated positively greater than .30 with all of the anger items. Normality checks had shown these items to not be skewed or kurtotic. The only outlier response was on the item not positively correlated with anger items (*How much pity did you feel for the person?*). CFA of the two factors produced a theta matrix that was not positive definite due to one item having negative estimated variance (*How much compassion did you feel for the person?*). It also indicated that the item that did not correlate with anger was very low-loading (-.15), though I interpret those results with caution. Removing that item resulted in nonconvergence of the model. Removing both the low-loading and Heywood case produced good fit ($\chi^2[2] = 3.42$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = 1.00 NNFI = .99) with loadings exceeding .90, but a limited assessment of sympathy. These results were unexpected and contrary to the expected relationship direction described by theory.

It became clear that the pilot test for the sympathy items had not provided good information. I decided more items and more testing was needed to give a good assessment of these constructs. I drafted five additional items for sympathy and four for anger to be used with the pilot study items in Study 2 data collection with the understanding that the scales would be refined based on that sample. The unexpected phenomena and Heywood case did not repeat with the new data. See Table A.9 for pilot study items and newly generated items.

Table A.9

Final Emotion Measure Items

Sympathy
Item
How much sympathy did you feel for the person?
How much pity you did feel for the person?
How much compassion did you feel for the person?
How much did you feel like you understood where the target person was coming from?*
How much did you feel like you were on the same wavelength as the target person?*
How much did you identify with the person?*
How much forgiveness did you feel for the person?*

Anger
Item
How angry did you feel at the person?
How irritated did you feel by the person?
How aggravated did you feel by the person?
How displeased were you with the person?*
How outraged were you with the person?*
How much did you resent the person?*
How infuriated were you with the person?**

* Indicates items created after pilot testing.

Political Behavior Intentions. This scale was written to have two factors: intentions for work benefit and intentions for self-benefit. The items were mostly matched between the types of intention, with participants instructed to answer regarding one type of benefit or the other. In other words, in many cases, the behaviors were seen twice by participants; it was the reason for the intention that differed. This complicated

scale analysis as the matched pairs tended to load onto factors together, and produced a large number of factors that did not indicate the personal or work benefits they were intended to measure. A clear picture of the dimensionality of the scale was somewhat obscured.

An EFA of the items indicated 9 factors based on Eigenvalues (greater than one) and on the scree plot. These factors accounted for 63% of the variance. In some cases, the paired behaviors (personal and work benefit) loaded onto the same factor, but in some they did not. I tried EFA constrained to two factors and found that the personal and work benefit items often loaded onto the same factor. I used CFA to test how well a two-factor model would fit these data, and found that when they were modeled as two factors of a single construct, the overall model fit was poor ($\chi^2[463] = 1414.41$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .14; CFI = .45 NNFI = .41).

For these reasons, I thought it appropriate to evaluate each behavior intention separately.

Political behavior intentions for work benefit. This measure consisted of 17 items. Initial CFA of all items indicated a poor fit to the data ($\chi2[119] = 279.83$, p < .001; RMSEA = .12; CFI = .63 NNFI = .57). Four items loaded at or lower than .40 and were removed iteratively. See Table A.10 for all removed items.

Table A.10

Items Removed from the Political Behavior Intentions for Work Benefit Measure

Item
1. I would carefully check my work to ensure its quality.
2. I would use a forceful manner doing things like making demands.
3. I would act in a friendly manner prior to asking for what I wanted.
4. I would confront others face-to-face to accomplish my objectives.

After iterative removal of these items, CFA found improvement in the model fit, but it had not reached acceptability ($\chi 2[65] = 120.78$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .09; CFI = .82 NNFI = .78). Consulting the modification indices, I found two pairs of items that would improve model fit if they were covaried. As all behaviors for this scale are logically and theoretically related, I made these changes and the resulting model achieved acceptable fit ($\chi 2[63] = 87.49$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .92 NNFI = .90). Two items were included in pilot testing which were intentionally not related to interpersonal influence. One of those items (#1 in Table A.10) did not load adequately and was not retained, but the other showed a surprising relationship in the model. This item related to enrolling in training to improve skills, and in retrospect, it is possible that this could be viewed as impression management; my supervisor and others may be impressed by my efforts to improve. I decided to retain but flag the item for use in main data collection. Notably, this item had a weak loading ($\lambda = .17$) in the final data collection and was removed. See Table A.11 for the final 13 items for this measure. This scale had an alpha of .85.

Table A.11

Final Items for the Political Behavior Intentions for Work Benefit Measure

Item	Loading
I would obtain the informal support of higher-ups.	.80
I would use my connections at work to achieve my objectives.	.77
I would offer an exchange (e.g. If you do this for me, I will do something for you).	.73
I would agree with major opinions outwardly.	.67
I would work late so that my supervisor and others would think that I'm a hard worker.	.62
I would compliment the other person on his or her dress or appearance.	.56
I would remind others of past favors that I'd done for them.	.54
I would make formal appeals to higher levels to back up my requests.	.53
I would obtain the support of co-workers to back up my requests.	.51
I would enroll in training to develop new skills and qualifications.*	.51
I would use my interpersonal skills to influence people at work.	.50
I would agree with my supervisor or important other's major ideas;	.48
I would work behind the scenes to see that my work group/department/ team objective was taken care of;	.43

*Non-interpersonal influence item flagged for main data collection.

Political behavior intentions for personal benefit. There were 17 in this measure

and an initial CFA had poor fit ($\chi2[119] = 249.79$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .10; CFI = .80

NNFI = .77). One item had very low loading ($< .35$) and was removed (item #1 in Table

A.11 below). Removal of this item did not improve the fit to an acceptable level ($\chi2[104]$

$= 229.89$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .11; CFI = .80 NNFI = .77). There were a number of items

with low but greater than .40 loadings, and I decided to use EFA to assess the factor

structure of the measure and see if that would produce a better fitting model. This

resulted in a three-factor solution accounting for 48% of the variance. The second and

third factors accounted for less than 10% of the variance and the items were similar,

making it unclear why they were distinct. I decided to constrain the model to a more

parsimonious two factors for future evaluation. The two-factor solution accounted for

44% of variance, but several items appeared to cross-load. Through an iterative process

of EFA, I removed six items for cross loading, and found the two factors accounting for

52% of the variance. Table A.12 shows all items removed, and it is noteworthy that all the

items removed from the political behavior for work benefit were also poor performing for

this measure. I examined the items within each factor and found that the first factor had a

focus on achieving objectives from others and the second had a greater focus on general

influence.

Table A.12

Items Removed from the Political Behavior Intentions for Personal Benefit Measure

Item
1. I would use a forceful manner doing things like making demands, setting deadlines, expressing strong emotion, etc.*
2. I would confront others face-to-face to accomplish my objectives.*
3. I would carefully check my work to ensure its quality.*
4. I would enroll in training to develop new skills and qualifications.*
5. I would work late so that my supervisor and others would think that I'm a hard worker.
6. I would use my interpersonal skills to influence people at work.
7. I would remind others of past favors that I done for them.

* Indicates items removed from both personal benefit and work benefit political behavior
intention scales.

The resulting two-factor model after item removals achieved acceptable fit (χ^2[34]

= 56.88, p < .001; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .94 NNFI = .92). The final scale had six items

corresponding to the objective-focused factor, and four corresponding to the general

influence factor, as shown in Table A.13.

Table A.13

Final Items for the Political Behavior Intentions for Personal Benefit Measure

Objective Focused	
Item	Loading
I would use my connections at work to achieve my objectives.	.77
I would obtain the informal support of higher-ups	.73
I would make formal appeals to higher levels to back up my requests.	.73
I would work behind the scenes to see that my objective was taken care of.	.68
I would offer an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you).	.64
I would obtain the support of coworkers to back up my requests.	.62
General Influence	
Item	Loading
I would agree with major opinions outwardly, even when I disagreed inwardly.	.81
I would agree with my supervisor or important other's major ideas.	.67
I would act in a friendly manner prior to asking for what I wanted.	.67
I would compliment the other person on his or her dress or appearance.	.65

Acceptance of Political Behavior. The acceptance of political behavior measure

consisted of two factors corresponding to acceptance of political behavior for work

benefit and political behavior to benefit oneself. As I had an a priori expectation of this

scale's factor structure, I started with a CFA of the two-factor model which was poorly

fitting ($\chi^2[251] = 671.81$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .13; CFI = .71 NNFI = .68). Results

indicated that several items loaded less than .35. Through an iterative process, five items

with low loading were removed. It was discovered after data collection for the main

study, one personal benefit item (*It is dishonest to use political tactics to accomplish*

personal benefit-related objectives) was mis-keyed as a work benefit item in syntax

during analysis and mistakenly removed. As shown in Table A.14, a total of six items

were removed, three from each factor. Modification indices suggested that covariance of

five pairs of items would improve the fit. These covariances were logical and

theoretically supported, and the final model achieved acceptable fit ($\chi^2[129] = 220.76$,

$p < .001$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .91 NNFI = .90). This scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .88

and a composite reliability of .94. See Table A.15 for the final items and their loadings.

Table A.14

Items Removed from the Acceptance of Political Behavior Measure

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Work-Benefit Political Behavior

1. To obtain your work-related objectives, you have to be willing to play the game.
2. Organizations in which people use political behaviors to achieve work objectives are happier than those in which people do not.
3. The use of politics to accomplish work-related objectives is detrimental to organizational effectiveness.

Personal-Benefit Political Behavior

1. To obtain personal benefit-objectives, you have to be willing to play the game.
2. Politics can help individuals achieve goals that primarily benefit themselves.
3. It is dishonest to use political tactics to accomplish personal benefit-related objectives.*

---

* Indicates item removed due to syntax mis-key error.

Table A.15

Final Items for the Acceptance of Political Behavior Measure

Work Benefit	
Item	Loading
Using political methods to accomplish primarily work-related objectives is unethical.	.82
It is wrong for employees to use political tactics to accomplish their work-related objectives.	.80
It is dishonest to use political tactics to accomplish work-related objectives.	.80
The use of politics to accomplish work-related objectives does more harm than good in organizations.	.77
Using political methods to accomplish work-related objectives creates an atmosphere of conflict, mistrust, and tension in organizations.	.74
There is nothing immoral about using political tactics to accomplish work-related objectives.	.68
Employees' use of politics to accomplish work-related objectives helps organizations function effectively.	.66
Successful executives must be effective organizational politicians to achieve their work-objectives.	.57
Politics can help organizations achieve their goals.	.54
Personal Benefit	
Item	Loading
It is wrong for employees to use political tactics to accomplish their personal benefit-objectives.	.80
The use of politics to accomplish personal benefit-objectives does more harm than good in organizations.	.79
Using political methods to accomplish objectives that primarily benefit oneself is unethical.	.75
There is nothing immoral about using political tactics to accomplish objectives that primarily benefit oneself.	.75
The use of politics to accomplish personal benefit-objectives creates an atmosphere of conflict, mistrust, and tension in organizations.	.74

Successful executives must be effective organizational politicians to achieve their personal benefit-objectives.	.58
Employees' use of politics to accomplish personal benefit-objectives helps organizations function effectively.	.53
The use of politics to accomplish personal benefit-objectives is detrimental to organizational effectiveness.	.47
When people use political behavior to primarily benefit themselves, organizations are a lot happier than those in which people do not.	.43

Appendix B: Video Stimulus Scripts

Participants viewed one of the following two situation videos, and then both conditions watched the same behavior video. The instruction to recall the phrase "violets are blue" was part of an attention check for the videos.

Organization-Serving (Positive) Politics Situation Script:

Please pay careful to the following information as it is important to the survey.

In the video you are about to watch, an accountant named Lisa will discuss a work situation with her friend and coworker, Jordan, and then interact with her boss, Carl. Please pay special attention to Carl's behavior. Carl is the target person in the video. Carl is pushing the employees in his department to work extra hours and accomplish their tasks more quickly than usual. Lisa is unaware that their department has been recommended for the Edison Award. This award recognizes departments throughout the organization for exemplary performance, and each member of the team gets a $2000 bonus. Carl was instructed by his boss to not tell his employees about the award and the bonus. Leaders of the organization want winners to be motivated by their work ethic and their supervisor, not a financial bonus. For this reason, Carl has not told Lisa and the other employees about the award. Carl has had to find other ways to motivate his workers to put in the additional time and effort to finish the quarterly reports so that they stand out among the departments nominated for the award.

At this time, please make note of the phrase, "violets are blue." You will be asked to recall the phrase, "violets are blue" later in the survey.

Self-Serving (Negative) Politics Situation Script:

Please pay careful to the following information as it is important to the survey.

In the video you are about to watch, an accountant named Lisa will discuss a work situation with her friend and coworker, Jordan, and then interact with her boss, Carl. Please pay special attention to Carl's behavior. Carl is the target person in the video. Carl is pushing the employees in his department to work extra hours and accomplish their tasks more quickly than usual. Lisa is unaware that a vice president position has opened up, and Carl has been approached about it. Carl was told that the company leadership is interested in seeing Carl move into the executive suite, but they need him to show he can produce at a higher level. He was told that his department has done well, but they want him to show that he can use his leadership skills to push his employees to complete their reports significantly earlier than in previous months. Carl is relying on Lisa and his other employees to put in more time and effort to accomplish this faster timeline so that he will be seen more positively.

At this time, please make note of the phrase, "violets are blue." You will be asked to recall the phrase, "violets are blue" later in the survey.

Behavior Video Script (same video for both conditions):

Employee 1: Lisa

Employee 2: Jordan

Manager: Carl

<u>Scene 1</u>

Opens on Lisa standing at a copy machine. Lisa is shuffling papers as Jordan

approaches

Jordan: Hey, Lisa, how are things in accounting these days?

Lisa: They're ok, I guess. We're busy trying to get the quarterlies done, but

there's nothing new about that.

Jordan: I just don't know how you do it.

Lisa: *<laughs>* Do what? It's just work.

Jordan: How you handle the stress. The hours you put in!

Lisa: Yeah, but it is important work. How would this place get along without

us number crunchers?

Jordan: That's true. TimeCo couldn't function without an accounting

department. Do you like what you do?

Lisa: Yeah, I suppose. It's ok.

Jordan: You seem to get along well with Carl. Is he good to work for?

Lisa: Carl is a decent manager. He really pushes us, sometimes. Before last

quarter's report I was putting in 65 hours a week. It was pretty brutal,

honestly, but we got the job done.

Jordan: 65 hours?! That's a lot. At least you make overtime, right?

Lisa: Sure, the overtime pay is good, but I end up pretty exhausted. And it's

hard to get approval to take vacation and spend the extra cash. I try to

stay positive, though. Overall, it's a good job and I like what I do.

Jordan: I'm glad to hear that, and I am really glad you work here, too! Listen, I have to get back to my desk, but let's try to make time for lunch sometime in the next month. I know you'll be busy, but let's try.

Scene 2

Opens on Jordan at her desk. It is 2 weeks later.

Lisa approaches Jordan's desk looking frustrated and tired.

Lisa: Jordan, oh my god, I just have to vent for a minute.

Jordan: Hey, girl, no problem. What's up?

Lisa: The quarterly reports are killing me! Carl is asking us all to put in extra time, even more than last month. I feel like I live here, and now he's asking us to take work home. I'm already here till 8 most nights.

Jordan: Holy crap, that's terrible! Are there problems with the reports?

Lisa: Not that I can see, but the timeline has been sped up. I don't know. It's just one of those thing, y'know. Sometimes we just have to work more, but god this is exhausting. Carl has tried to make it easier on us. He usually brings in dinner of some sort, and often we have coffee and bagels delivered. He's really nice, and is great about telling us how great we're doing. He's just pushing us a lot.

Jordan: Are you going to quit?

Lisa: Oh, no, I'm not going to quit. It isn't that bad. I'm just tired, but I know it is only temporary. I just needed to blow off some steam. I like what I'm doing and the people I'm working with. I don't want to leave.

<u>Scene 3</u>

Opens on Lisa at her desk later that day

Carl approaches Lisa.

Carl: Hey, Lisa, how's it going?

Lisa: Oh, hi, Carl. It's going ok *<looking and sounding tired>*. I'm just about

          done with this P&L statement for you. It's getting late, so I'm going to

          head out when I'm done.

Carl: Ok, thanks for knocking this one out before you leave. Do you think

          you'll be able to get to the Smitherton report tonight? I'd like Juan to be

          able to start on it first thing tomorrow.

Lisa: *<hesitating>* Oh, um, I'm not sure I'll be able to get it done tonight.

Carl: I'll get you set up with dinner and I'll make it up to you-

Lisa: I don't know, I really need to get some rest.

Carl: Listen, Lisa, I know that I've kept you really busy lately and that you're

          putting in a lot of hours. I just want you to know how much I appreciate

          your hard work, and what a great job I think you're doing. I feel lucky

          to have an employee like you.

Lisa: Oh, well, uh, thank you. It's nice to hear that.

Carl: Oh, absolutely, and I want you to know that I'm going to recommend

          you for promotion at the end of the quarter. You've really proven

          yourself and you've earned it.

Lisa: Really? A promotion? Thank you!

Carl: *<smiling>* You're an asset to the firm and I want to make sure we move

          you up the ladder.

Lisa: Well, thank you again. I'll have the P&L for you in just a minute.

Carl: And the Smitherton report? Any chance you could finish that in time for

          Juan tomorrow morning?

Lisa: Um… yeah, yeah, of course. I'll take care of it.

Appendix C: Study Measures

Inferred Motivation

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you would agree with the following statements *regarding the motivations of the target in the video*.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree

The target person:

1. was motivated by concern for those they work with
2. was motivated to do what it takes to help his/her work group
3. wanted to see their work group succeed
4. was inspired to take one for the team
5. was motivated by a desire to see their work group do well
6. would rather do things that help others than only benefit themselves
7. was a moral person
8. was motivated by ethical principles.
9. wanted to help others
10. was mostly concerned about getting ahead
11. believed it was important to first look out for number one
12. had an ulterior motive
13. just wanted to gain power

Attribution

Select items adapted from the Self-Report Altruism Scale (Rushton, 1981) and items used in MIM research (e.g., Reeder et al., 2002; Reeder et al., 2004; Reeder et al., 2005). Some created for this study.

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you would agree with the following statements *about the target person in the video*.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree

The target person:

1. would take the attitude that "you snooze, you lose"
2. is a selfish go-getter
3. would take the attitude that "good guys finish last"

4. is generous
5. would delay an elevator and hold the door open for a coworker
6. would help carry a coworker's belongings (briefcase, parcels, etc.)
7. is altruistic
8. would help a coworker that he/she didn't know well to move households
9. would allow someone to go ahead of him/her in a lineup at the copy machine
10. would give a coworker a lift in his/her car
11. would help a coworker he/she did not know well with their work when he/she knew more about it
12. would give money to a coworker who needed it (or asked for it)
13. is helpful
14. would donate to a charity

Politics Perceptions

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements *if you currently worked in the work group in the video.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree

<u>**Positive Politics Items**</u> (Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, & Betternhausen; 2008)

If I worked in the organization in the video I would say:

1. I use political maneuvering to get the most benefits from my contributions at work.
2. I have seen necessary changes happen because of the use of politics.
3. Learning how to work the system has real benefits for me at work.
4. Bending the rules aids me in doing a superior job.
5. Influence others to primarily get the best results they can for themselves personally.
6. Use political behavior to get promotions rather than focus on good performance.
7. Use political maneuvering to get the greatest benefits from their contributions at work.

<u>**Negative Politics Items**</u> (Items modified from Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, & Betternhausen, 2008, and are from Kacmar & Carlson, 1997.)

If I worked in the organization in the video I would say:

8. Political behavior within my work group has wasted time and effort that could have been more productively channeled.
9. Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead in my work group.

10. To do well in this organization, who you know matters more than how good a job you do.
11. People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.
12. People in this organization who use their power are the ones who get what they want.
13. Political behaviors have more to do with raises and promotions than policies.

Likelihood of Future Behavior Items

Please rate how likely you think the people in the organization in the video would be to do the following:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely

1. Influence others to primarily get the best results they can for themselves personally.
2. Use political behavior to get promotions rather than focus on good performance.
3. Use political maneuvering to get the greatest benefits from their contributions at work.
4. Agree with major opinions outwardly, even when they disagreed inwardly.
5. Offer an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you).

Social Attribution Style Questionnaire
(Thomson & Martinko, 2004)

Instructions: In this questionnaire, a number of situations are presented. Read each situation and imagine it happening to a coworker of yours in your current job or the last job that you held in which the situation is applicable. Based on what you know about people in general, write down what you think most likely to be the one major cause of the event in the space provided. Respond to each of the questions that follow the event by circling the number on the scale that best describes the cause you identified.

Items
1. Your coworker recently received a below-average performance evaluation from their supervisor.
2. Today you are informed that suggestions made by a worker in your organization to your boss in a recent meeting will not be implemented.
3. A coworker complains that they will not receive a promotion that they have wanted for a long time.
4. You recently discovered that a coworker of yours is being paid considerably less than another employee holding a similar position.

5. You find out that another employee failed to achieve all of their goals for the last period.
6. A fellow employee has a great deal of difficulty getting along with their coworkers.
7. A customer recently complained about the service another employee at your firm provided them.
8. A coworker was not selected for advanced training that they expressed a strong desire to attend.
9. A large layoff has been announced at your company, and a worker in your unit was told that they will be laid off.
10. You just learned that a coworker will not be reimbursed for expenses they recently submitted.
11. A new member of your work group is having a great deal of difficulty learning how to use the new computer.
12. You find out that another employee recently received a below-average raise.
13. All of the recent feedback your boss has given another worker about their performance has been negative.
14. A coworker was not nominated by their peers for a special award they wanted to receive.
15. Your boss does not take one of your peers seriously.
16. There is a serious accident at work involving one of your coworkers.

Scales

For each item above,

Write down the one major
cause:_____

1. Will this cause be present in future situations that are similar? (STABILITY)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never present						Always

2. To what extent is this cause something that they intended to have happen? (INTENTIONALITY)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not what they intended						Exactly what they intended

Emotion
(Reisenzein, 1986)

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about how you felt toward the target person in the video.

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Quite a Bit	A Lot

Sympathy:
1. How much sympathy did you feel for the person?
2. How much pity did you feel for the person?
3. How much compassion did you feel for the person?
4. How much did you feel like you understood where the target person was coming from?
5. How much did you feel like you were on the same wavelength as the target person?
6. How much did you identify with the person?
7. How much forgiveness did you feel for the person?
8. How much good will did you have for the person?

Anger:
1. How angry did you feel at the person?
2. How irritated did you feel by the person?
3. How aggravated did you feel by the person?
4. How displeased were you with the person?
5. How outraged were you with the person?
6. How much did you resent the person?
7. How infuriated were you with the person?

Political Behavior Intentions

Work Objective Political Behavior Intention Scale

At work there are formally established procedures and official channels that employees can use to get things done, however employees may also use their personal influence to accomplish work-related objectives.

Work related objectives include things like:
- needed resources (e.g., equipment, training) for your department/team.
- help in completing your projects
- approval to implement new ideas/projects
- improvement in your department/team's standing in the organization
- more funding or staffing

Instructions: Using the description above, please indicate how likely you would be to do the following behaviors to achieve **work-related** objectives *if you worked in the organization in the video.*

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely		Neither Likely nor Unlikely		Very Likely

To achieve my work-related objectives, I would:

1. agree with my supervisor or important other's major ideas
2. obtain the support of co-workers to back up my requests
3. use my interpersonal skills to influence people at work
4. work behind the scenes to see that my work group/department/team objectives were taken care of
5. remind others of past favors that I'd done for them
6. obtain the informal support of higher-ups
7. offer an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you)
8. compliment the other person on his or her dress or appearance
9. use my connections at work to achieve my objectives
10. enroll in training to develop new skills and qualifications
11. make formal appeals to higher levels to back up my requests
12. agree with major opinions outwardly, even when I disagreed inwardly
13. work late so that my supervisor and others would think that I'm a hard worker

Personal Objective Political Behavior Intention Scale

In addition to work-related objectives, employees often use their personal influence to accomplish obtain objectives that benefit them personally.

The following set of questions asks about <u>personal benefit</u> objectives. Personal benefit objectives include things like:
- better pay
- improved work schedule or time off
- better job assignments
- a promotion or transfer
- good performance ratings
- recognition

Instructions: Using the description above, please indicate how likely you would be to do the following behaviors to achieve **personal benefit** objectives *if you worked in the organization in the video.*

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely		Neither Likely nor Unlikely		Very Likely

To achieve my personal-benefit objectives, I would:

1. use my connections at work to achieve my objectives
2. make formal appeals to higher levels to back up my requests
3. obtain the informal support of higher-ups
4. work behind the scenes to see that my objective was taken care of
5. obtain the support of co-workers to back up my requests
6. agree with major opinions outwardly, even when I disagreed inwardly
7. compliment the other person on his or her dress or appearance
8. act in a friendly manner prior to asking for what I wanted
9. agree with my supervisor or important other's major ideas
10. offer an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you)

Acceptance of Political Behavior
(Schoel, 1995; Zahra, 1989)

Work-Related Objectives

Organizational politics is made up of the actions used to influence others to accomplish one's objectives (work or personal). These can include:
- relying on personal connections with influential people
- exchanging favors
- doing things to improve one's image
- using various types of personal influence

The following statements concern the use of influence to accomplish ***work-related*** objectives such as:
- getting additional help on projects
- obtaining needed resources and information
- gaining approval to implement new ideas or projects
- improving your department/team's standing in the organization

Instructions: Keeping in mind the above definition of ***organizational politics*** and the list of ***work-related*** objectives, please read the examples provided and indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree

1. It is wrong for employees to use political tactics to accomplish their work-related objectives.
2. Successful executives must be effective organizational politicians to achieve their work-related objectives.
3. Employees' use of politics to accomplish work-related objectives helps organizations function effectively.
4. There is nothing immoral about using political tactics to accomplish work-related objectives.
5. Using political methods to accomplish primarily work-related objectives is unethical.
6. Using politics to accomplish work-related objectives creates an atmosphere of conflict, mistrust, and tension in organizations.
7. It is dishonest to use political tactics to accomplish work-related objectives.
8. The use of politics to accomplish work-related objectives does more harm than good in organizations.
9. Politics can help organizations achieve their goals.

Personal Benefit-Related Objectives

Organizational politics is made up of the actions used to influence others to accomplish one's objectives (work or personal). These can include:
- relying on personal connections with influential people
- exchanging favors
- doing things to improve one's image
- using various types of personal influence

The following statements concern the use of politics to accomplish **personal-benefit related** objectives such as
- salary increases
- better job assignments
- promotions
- better work schedules
- good performance ratings
- time off
- personal recognition.

Instructions: Keeping in mind the above definition of ***organizational politics*** and the list of ***personal-benefit related*** objectives, please read the examples provided and then indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree

1. It is wrong for employees to use political tactics to accomplish their personal-benefit objectives.
2. The use of politics to accomplish personal-benefit objectives does more harm than good in organizations.
3. Using political methods to accomplish objectives that primarily benefit oneself is unethical.
4. The use of politics to accomplish personal-benefit objectives is detrimental to organizational effectiveness.
5. The use of politics to accomplish personal-benefit objectives creates an atmosphere of conflict, mistrust, and tension in organizations.
6. Employees' use of politics to accomplish personal-benefit objectives helps organizations function effectively.
7. When people use political behaviors to primarily benefit themselves, organizations are a lot happier than those in which people do not.
8. Successful executives must be effective organizational politicians to achieve their personal-benefit objectives.
9. There is nothing immoral about using political tactics to accomplish objectives that primarily benefit oneself.

Political Skill Inventory
(Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, & Frink, 2005)

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree

1. I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others.
2. At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected.
3. I am good at using my connections and networks to make things happen at work.
4. I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others.
5. I am good at building relationships with influential people at work.
6. It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do.
7. When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.
8. I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.
9. I try to show a genuine interest in other people.

10. I always seem to instinctively know the right thing to say or do to influence others.
11. I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others.
12. I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.
13. I pay close attention to people's facial expressions.
14. I understand people very well.
15. It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.
16. I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.
17. I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.
18. I am good at getting people to like me.