POLITICS, STRESS, AND EXCHANGE PERCEPTIONS: A DUAL PROCESS MODEL RELATING ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS TO EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES

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Christopher C. Rosen
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POLITICS, STRESS, AND EXCHANGE PERCEPTIONS: A DUAL PROCESS
MODEL RELATING ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS TO EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES

Christopher C. Rosen

Dissertation

Approved:

Advisor
Paul E. Levy, Ph.D.

Committee Member
Rosalie J. Hall, Ph.D.

Committee Member
Aaron M. Schmidt, Ph.D.

Committee Member
Dennis D. Doverspike, Ph.D.

Accepted:

Department Chair
Paul E. Levy, Ph.D.

Dean of the College
Ronald F. Levant, Ph.D.

Dean of the Graduate School
George R. Newkome, Ph.D.

Date

ii
ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the underlying mechanisms which relate perceptions of organizational politics to employee outcomes. A review of the literature suggested that there are two paths through which politics perceptions likely affect employee attitudes and behaviors. First, organizational politics may cause work-related stress which in turn relates to negative affective responses and undesirable work behaviors. Second, contemporary theorists have proposed that organizational politics has a negative impact on the employee-organization social exchange relationship. The study presented and tested a model in which these two mediating mechanisms—stress and exchange perceptions—translate high levels of organizational politics into less favorable employee attitudes (i.e., morale, trust) and behaviors (i.e., citizenship behaviors, task performance, counterproductive work behaviors, and withdrawal from the organization). In addition, it was proposed that political skill would buffer the negative effects of politics on stress and on exchange perceptions. Structural equation modeling analyses indicated that the feedback environment and organizational politics related to outcome measures of performance, counterproductive work behaviors, and withdrawal. The relationships involving OCBs and withdrawal were mediated by stress, social exchange perceptions, and morale. However, counter to the proposed mediational hypotheses, trust, task performance, and CWBs were only direct outcomes of organizational politics. In addition, moderated multiple regression analyses indicated that political skill
moderated the relationships between politics and both stress and exchange perceptions. As proposed, the relationship between politics and stress was weakest for those highest in political skill. However, counter to hypothesis, the negative relationship between politics and exchange perceptions was strongest for those high in political skill. Thus, this study provided support for the proposed dual process model. However, there was only limited evidence that political skill buffers the negative effects of politics on employees. Exploratory analyses further examined the relationships among politics, trust, stress, and political skill. These analyses indicated that trust may fully mediate the effects of politics on stress. In addition, there is evidence that political skill moderates the effects of politics on trust such that there is a stronger negative relationship between politics and trust for those who are higher in political skill.
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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Organizational politics is generally defined as activities that are self-serving, not officially sanctioned by the organization, and that are often harmful to the organization and its members (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999). Although scholars have recently acknowledged that politics may be necessary for organizations and can have constructive, positive outcomes (see Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002; Fedor & Maslyn, 2002), it is generally (and in the large majority of research studies) recognized that organizational politics are associated with attempts to benefit, protect, or enhance one’s self-interests without regard for the welfare of the organization or others (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Harris, James, & Boonthanom, 2005). In the present study, the way that organizational politics is conceptualized is based on Mintzberg’s (1983) description of organizational politics as “individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all in a technical sense, illegitimate” (p. 172). In keeping with this definition, the present study is couched in terms of Ferris, Russ, and Fandt’s (1989) traditional perspective that employees generally view politics as being associated with dysfunctional activities and, thus, demonstrate negative reactions to their perceptions of politics in the work environment.
In the past 15 years, research on perceptions of organizational politics has flourished. The surge in popularity of organizational politics research can be traced back to the publication of Ferris et al.’s (1989) now classic model of the antecedents, outcomes, and moderators associated with perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002). Following the publication of Ferris et al.’s (1989) model, researchers attempted to relate politics perceptions to a variety of important work outcomes. These outcomes include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, withdrawal behaviors, and performance (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 1996; Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda, 2002). However, this research has proceeded in a relatively fragmented fashion and, despite a plethora of empirical studies, our knowledge of the antecedents, outcomes, and processes through which politics affects employees remains incomplete (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999; Rosen, Levy, & Hall, 2006). Empirical studies have failed to provide consistent support for a linkage between perceptions of organizational politics and important employee outcomes (Aryee, Chen, & Budhwar, 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006), indicating that the mechanisms underlying the relationship between politics and work outcomes are not well understood. Furthermore, Kacmar and Baron (1999) argue that few empirical studies have extended our knowledge of perceptions of politics to constructs beyond those originally specified in the Ferris et al. (1989) model.

In the present study, these issues are addressed through an extension of a model recently presented by Rosen et al. (2006). Rosen et al.’s (2006) model adds the feedback environment (see Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004) as an antecedent to politics perceptions, and draws upon an expectancy-based social marketplace framework to propose that
politics perceptions are related to performance (e.g., task and OCBs) through employee morale (see Figure 1). In the following paragraphs, the theoretical rationale, results, and shortcomings of Rosen et al.'s (2006) study are discussed in more detail to provide a framework for understanding the present study.

Relating the Feedback Environment to Politics and Outcomes

The feedback environment refers to the extent to which the workplace encourages and supports the use of feedback for the purposes of improving work performance (Levy, Albright, Cawley & Williams, 1995; Steelman et al., 2004; Williams, Miller, Steelman & Levy, 2001). Rosen et al. (2006) recently demonstrated that organizational environments supporting high levels of informal supervisor and co-worker feedback are associated with lower employee perceptions of organizational politics. These lowered perceptions of politics in turn relate to higher levels of task performance and organizational citizenship through increased employee morale. Higher quality feedback environments may have these effects through decreasing ambiguity that surrounds performance standards in political environments. In particular, Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that employees who receive more feedback will be more likely to know and understand the standards of good performance, to believe that performing well will lead to desired rewards, and will be more likely to use feedback to improve their own performance.

Rosen et al. (2006) utilized a social-marketplace based interpretation of the relationship of politics to the general positivity or negativity of employees' work attitudes. According to this perspective, work settings can be viewed as social marketplaces in which individuals seek favorable returns on their investments (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999). Within the social marketplace of the
Figure 1. Rosen, Levy, and Hall’s (2006) model.

Note: † p < .10, * p < .05
organization, employees perceive that a reciprocal exchange relationship exists in which employees exchange time and effort (e.g., performance) for tangible rewards (e.g., pay and promotion) and socio-emotional benefits (e.g., recognition and esteem) from the organization (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

In political environments, there is a high degree of ambiguity and uncertainty because rewards are perceived as being distributed based on factors other than merit (Cropanzano et al., 1997). These conditions influence employee perceptions of the social marketplace by decreasing reward expectancies (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall, Hochwarter, Ferris, & Bowen, 2004), which has detrimental effects on employee attitudes and morale (e.g., Rosen et al., 2006; Valle, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2003). However, when organizations have high quality feedback environments, politics will likely be reduced, and the quality of the exchange relationship that employees have with the organization will be improved, resulting in improved morale and performance (Rosen et al., 2006). This suggestion is based on the empirical literature which indicates that employees holding negative attitudes are also likely to reduce the amount of time and effort put into meeting organizational objectives (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Riketta, 2002). In addition, employees in highly political organizations may decrease their levels of task and citizenship behavior in favor of political behaviors that advance their own careers but create little of value for the organization (Rosen et al., 2006).

Rosen et al.'s (2006) study indicated some aspects of the politics perceptions literature that are in need of further research. First, results demonstrated that the relationship between politics and performance is more complicated than the direct, bi-
variate relationship that has been specified by previous researchers (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999) and that intervening variables likely exist in this relationship. Second, although a social marketplace framework was used by Rosen et al. (2006), and has been presented by other researchers to explain relationships among politics perceptions and individual-level outcomes (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999), empirical studies have not directly assessed the suggested underlying mechanisms (e.g., perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship) that translate politics perceptions into employee attitudes and outcomes. In particular, the social marketplace framework is based on expectancy theory which specifies that individuals are motivated to perform when they believe that valuable outcomes (e.g., recognition and rewards) will be provided by the organization in exchange for their performance (Blau, 1964; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Vroom, 1965).

In political organizations, performance standards are ambiguous because factors other than merit are often rewarded (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006). Therefore, the link between performance and rewards is weakened and employees view the organization as unlikely to meet their needs in the long-run unless they are adept in the political arena. As a result, the social marketplace is perceived as a risky investment of time and effort and employees correspondingly reduce the contributions that they make to their jobs (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Yet, there are no empirical studies that directly examine the role of employee perceptions of the social marketplace (e.g., exchange perceptions) in mediating the relationship between politics perceptions and employee reactions. Therefore, previous researchers (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et
al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006) could not determine the adequacy of this framework for explaining the relationship between politics and outcomes.

In addition, the literature presents another explanation for the mechanism underlying the relationship between politics and work outcomes. Theorists (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 1996, Kacmar et al., 1999) have suggested that politics perceptions have a negative relationship with employee work outcomes because they result in heightened experiences of stress associated with the ambiguity, uncertainty, and interpersonal conflict that are inherent to organizational politics. However, the organizational politics literature is deficient in terms of integrating previous findings (Kacmar & Baron, 1999) and examining the processes which relate politics to adverse employee outcomes. For example, two studies (e.g., Huang, Chuang, & Lin, 2003; Vigoda, 2002) have directly assessed the mediational role of stress in the relationship between politics and employee reactions and these studies each examined only one outcome in relation to politics and stress (i.e., turnover intentions by Huang et al., 2003; aggression by Vigoda, 2002). In addition, no previous studies have simultaneously assessed the mediational roles of stress and employee perceptions of the social marketplace, making it difficult to determine the degree to which each path uniquely relates politics to employee outcomes. Therefore, our understanding of the processes which relate politics to many organizationally relevant outcomes remains incomplete.

The Present Study

The primary purpose of the present study is to enhance our understanding of the processes through which politics perceptions influence employee outcomes. As such, several shortcomings of the politics literature in general, and the Rosen et al. (2006) study
in particular, are addressed via a partial replication and extension of Rosen et al.'s (2006) study. Specifically, this study will attempt to replicate two negative relationships between the feedback environment and organizational politics and between politics and employee outcomes. In addition, the present study offers two unique contributions to the organizational politics literature.

First, and foremost, a wealth of empirical and theoretical knowledge is integrated to develop a process-based model linking organizational politics to employee outcomes (see Figure 2). Until recently, empirical studies have generally focused on the bi-variate relationships that exist between politics and many of the constructs included in the Ferris et al. (1989) model (see Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). Most of these studies have examined politics perceptions in relation to a narrow range of outcomes without integrating previous findings and have failed to examine the mediational mechanisms which explain why such linkages exist. The present study integrates many of these previously established relationships with new, theoretically derived linkages to provide a model which identifies the two psychological processes that link politics to a variety of employee outcomes. Thus, the present study is the first to focus on underlying mechanisms (e.g., exchange perceptions and stress) that may translate politics perceptions into adverse employee behaviors and intentions. Simultaneously examining these two pathways within an integrated framework will provide researchers with a better understanding of how politics perceptions exert influence on employee attitudes and behaviors.
Proposed process model linking politics to employee outcomes.

Note: SFE = Supervisor Feedback Environment; CFE = Co-Worker Feedback Environment; POPS = Perceptions of Organizational Politics
A second contribution of the present study is that it broadens the network of constructs associated with perceptions of organizational politics. While some outcomes that are included in the proposed process model have been examined extensively in the organizational politics literature (e.g., employee withdrawal and job attitudes), others have received little or no attention from politics researchers (e.g., task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, trust, and counterproductive work behaviors). For example, researchers (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006) have speculated that politics perceptions are related to outcomes through their impact on employee perceptions of the exchange relationship that they have with their employing organizations. However, no previous studies have directly examined employee exchange perceptions as an underlying mechanism which links politics to employee outcomes. Therefore, the present study includes measures of employees’ exchange perceptions and trust as parts of a mediational chain which links politics perceptions to employee outcomes.

In addition, it has been suggested that political skill is an individual difference that may be associated with employee reactions to politics perceptions (e.g., Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 2005). However, empirical studies have not examined political skill in relation to perceptions of organizational politics. Presently, political skill is included as a moderator in the proposed model and is expected to explain some of the apparent inconsistencies in the literature regarding how employees experience perceptions of organizational politics (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006). The inclusion of measures of exchange perceptions, trust, and political skill in the proposed model answers Kacmar and Baron’s (1999) call for researchers to extend the
network of variables related to organizational politics beyond those included in Ferris et al.'s (1989) model. Furthermore, by integrating these constructs with existing theory and research, our understanding of the processes that relate politics to employee outcomes will be advanced.

In sum, the organizational politics literature has proceeded in a relatively fragmented fashion. Any integration of previous research which has occurred has done so within Ferris et al.'s (1989) framework in which organizational politics is conceptualized as a source of stress in the work environment. However, contemporary researchers (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006) have suggested that there are additional explanations (e.g., the social marketplace) for the influences of politics perceptions on employee outcomes. The present study integrates previous research (e.g., Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 1996; Kacmar et al., 1999; Vigoda, 2002) with recently developed theory (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004, Hall et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006) to propose and test a model which identifies the two extended mediational paths through which organizational politics influence employee behaviors.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following sections provide a review of organizational politics, its relevant antecedents, and consequences. This literature review is intended to provide context for understanding the proposed process framework which relates politics perceptions to employee attitudes and behaviors (see Figure 2). The literature review provides an overview of the general concept of organizational politics, introduces the concept of perceptions of organizational politics, and is followed by a discussion of selected antecedents (feedback and the feedback environment) and consequences (OCBs, task performance, CWBs, organizational withdrawal) of politics perceptions.

The focus of the present study is to extend Rosen et al.'s (2006) model to incorporate the two predominant explanations relating politics to outcomes. In particular, the literature has indicated that politics perceptions are likely related to adverse employee outcomes because they are a source of stress (Ferris et al., 1989) and because they have a negative influence on employee perceptions of the social marketplace (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004). Following a discussion of consequences of perceptions of politics, the proposed process model depicted in Figure 2 of the previous chapter is elaborated. This model involves two extended mediational chains which include a number of intervening variables that translate politics perceptions into adverse employee outcomes. Each mediational chain is discussed in detail and relevant theoretical and empirical research is
provided to support the proposed linkages. In addition, several hypotheses are presented along with an overview of the experimental design.

*Perceptions of Organizational Politics*

Organizational politics is associated with activities directed towards acquiring desired outcomes in situations where uncertainty or disagreement exist (Pfeffer, 1992). Organizational politics have generally been described as behaviors which promote self (or group) interests at the expense of other individuals (or groups) in the organization (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Ferris et al., 2002; Randall et al., 1999). Political activities are prevalent in most organizations, occur throughout the organizational hierarchy, and are not formally sanctioned by the organization or its agents. At its most basic levels, organizational politics are associated with interpersonal influence tactics designed to gain and protect scarce resources. In addition, political activities in organizations often involve behind the scenes brokering and decision making which may be related to turf wars within and between departments.

However, the ability to effectively engage in organizational politics through interpersonal influence and the acquisition of power has often been described as imperative to the success of employees, especially managers. For example, managers frequently cite that an inability to negotiate the political contexts of organizations serves as one of the most prevalent boundaries to the successful advancement of employees (see Pomeroy, 2006). As such, organizational politics, while vital to achieving success in organizations, may also impede some employees from achieving their goals. Thus, depending on whether or not they benefit from organizational politics, the political climate of the organization may have either a positive or a negative affect on employees.
Traditionally, there have been two streams of empirical research in the organizational politics literature (for reviews, see Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). The first, and older of these streams, is focused on political influence tactics and behaviors. The second stream is concerned with individuals' perceptions of organizational politics in their work environments. What follows is a brief discussion of political behaviors and influence tactics to provide some background information on research that preceded work on perceptions of organizational politics. The section on political behaviors is followed by a discussion of the development and evolution of the focal construct of the present study—perceptions of organizational politics.

Discussion of organizational politics dates back to the early 1900s (see Farrell & Peterson, 1982). However, research on the topic of organizational politics as a scientific construct goes back to the 1960s when Burns (1961) discussed politics in the process of organizational change (see Ferris et al., 2002). In the 1970s, organizational politics researchers became interested in discussing workplace politics within the context of power, influence tactics, and decision-making (Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979; Pettigrew, 1973; Porter, 1976, Schein, 1977). These studies were influential and during the late 1970s and 1980s led to increasing interest in the study of politics as an individual level process involving specific tactics, or political behaviors, used by political actors in organizations. For example, Allen et al. (1979), Kipnis and Schmidt (1982), and Vredenburgh and Maurer (1984) each studied the types of influence tactics used by political actors in organizations. Summarizing the research on political influence tactics, Ferris and Judge (1991) noted that ingratiation, impression
management, and self-promotion are the political behaviors that have been studied most frequently.

Though some researchers continue to examine influence tactics within the context of organizational politics (Goltz, 2003; Valle & Perrewe, 2000; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002), perceptions of organizational politics have recently emerged as the dominant construct in organizational politics research (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). While studies of political behavior focus on self-serving influence tactics occurring at the individual and group level, studies of perceptions of organizational politics examine employees' subjective evaluations of the extent to which such behaviors are pervasive in work, decision-making, and resource allocation processes (Ferris et al., 2002).

Perceptions of politics involve: (1) an attribution of intent regarding the behavior of others, (2) the interpretation of these behaviors as self-serving actions, and (3) subjective feelings regarding political activity in the workplace (Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000; Ferris et al., 2002).

Contemporary empirical research on perceptions of organizational politics can be traced back to Gandz and Murray (1980), who published a study which examined politics in organizational processes as well as attitudes and beliefs toward workplace politics. In addition, the work of Mintzberg (1983), who described organizational politics as “individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and illegitimate” (p. 172) influenced later researchers (e.g., Ferris et al., 1989) to reconsider their conceptualizations of organizational politics. These studies (Gandz & Murray, 1980; Mintzberg, 1983) served as catalysts for the movement away from
research on the political behaviors themselves and toward the examination of the negative effects of perceptions of organizational politics on employees.

Following the publication of the now classic book chapter by Ferris et al. (1989), perceptions of organizational politics emerged as a popular stream of research. Research on politics perceptions has also flourished due to Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) development of the perceptions of organizational politics scale (POPS). The POPS provided the first generally accepted measure of organizational politics and allowed researchers to perform more systematic research on the topic. What follows is a discussion of the early history of research on perceptions of organizational politics. This discussion includes reviews of Ferris et al.'s (1989) conceptual work, Kacmar and Ferris' (1992) scale development, and relevant empirical research on perceptions of organizational politics.

Overview of the classic model of politics perceptions. A review of prior research (e.g., Gandz & Murray, 1980; Porter, 1976) led Ferris et al. (1989) to develop a model which emphasized the role of employee perceptions of politics in organizational life. Specifically, Porter (1976) was the first to suggest that perceptions, even misperceptions of actual events, are important to understanding organizational politics. However, Gandz and Murray (1980) are credited with being the first to empirically study how employees respond to their perceptions of politics in the workplace. Based on their empirical results, Gandz and Murray (1980) also made the bold (at the time) assertion that organizational politics is more of a state of mind than an objective state of reality. In addition, researchers (Ferris et al., 1989) studying perceptions of organizational politics often cite Lewin's (1936) notion that people respond on the basis of their perceptions of reality.
rather than to reality per se in support of the idea that employees respond to their perceptions of politics, rather than to some objective level of politics.

Under certain circumstances, organizational politics may be beneficial to the organization or work-group as a whole (see Ammeter et al., 2002; Fedor & Maslyn, 2002). For example, leaders may manipulate the performance appraisal process as a means of rewarding or repaying hard-working employees (Kozlowski, Chao, & Morrison, 1998). However, Ferris et al.’s (1989) use of the term organizational politics is limited to behavior that is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Ferris et al.’s (1989) definition is derived from studies showing that when employees are asked to describe political behavior, they typically list self-serving and manipulative activities (e.g., backstabbing and impression management) that observers do not evaluate positively (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Drory & Romm, 1988; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1980; Cropanzano et al., 1997). For example, in political environments managers may use the performance evaluation system for self-promotion or to show favoritism to a personal friend (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Gilliland & Langdon, 1998). As such, studies that utilize Ferris et al.’s (1989) conceptualization of organizational politics generally view it as a dysfunctional aspect of the organizational environment (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Randall et al., 1999).

Ferris et al.’s (1989) model focuses on employee perceptions of organizational politics. Therefore, the network of variables expected to be associated with politics typically includes individual-level beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Ferris et al.’s (1989) model detailed the antecedents and consequences of such employee perceptions. This
model described organizational (e.g., centralization, formalization), personal (e.g., age, sex), and environmental (e.g., feedback, interactions with others) influences on perceptions of organizational politics. In general, Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that these antecedents were related to perceptions of politics because they either influenced levels of ambiguity and uncertainty in the environment or were related to power differentials in the organization. Ferris et al. (1989) also identified perceptions of politics as being related to work outcomes such as job involvement, organizational withdrawal, job anxiety, and job satisfaction. In particular, it was suggested that politics perceptions are a source of environmental stress and that, depending on levels of understanding and control, politics could be interpreted as either an opportunity or a threat by employees (Ferris et al., 1989). According to the model and research which followed, politics is generally construed as a threat which is reflected by negative employee reactions.

*The POPS.* Although Ferris et al. (1989) provided a theoretical model of perceptions of organizational politics, empirical research on this topic did not progress until after the publication of Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) study which detailed the development and construct validation of the perceptions of organizational politics scale (POPS). Prior to the development of the POPS, organizational scientists had difficulty operationalizing perceptions of organizational politics. Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) scale consisted of 12 items composing three factors—general political behavior, go along to get ahead, and pay and promotion— which were purported to measure perceptions of organizational politics.

The factor of 'general political behavior' measures behaviors that emerge when rules and regulations are not available to govern actions. Such behaviors are often self-
serving and associated with the acquisition of scarce resources (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). For example, individuals may attempt to make themselves look good by taking credit for work that is not theirs and/or placing blame on their co-workers for negative outcomes. In addition, political actors may join powerful coalitions or influential groups in order to acquire desired outcomes or protect their resources. The ‘go along to get ahead’ factor is derived from the idea that organizational politics is intertwined with conflict due to the self-serving nature of political activities (Drory & Romm, 1988; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). In political work environments, non-threatening individuals may be rewarded for not interfering with powerful others (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Therefore, political actors may opt to not rock the boat (e.g., by agreeing with powerful others) in order to gain acceptance from the in-group. The factor labeled ‘pay and promotion policies’ measures how organizations reward and perpetuate political behavior through policy implementation (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). This factor taps the extent to which human resource systems are perceived as rewarding individuals who engage in political behaviors and penalizing those who do not. For example, pay and promotion decisions may be based on favoritism rather than objective levels of performance.

However, there are some criticisms of the POPS. First, the dimensionality of the POPS has been questioned. Though the POPS was initially developed and validated (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) as a three-factor scale, several researchers have treated the POPS as an aggregate measure of politics perceptions in which the scales serve as indicators of a higher-order construct (e.g., Rosen et al., 2006) and others have examined only portions of the POPS (e.g., the general political activity scale) in relation to other variables (Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Witt, 1998). Another criticism is that the POPS does
not tap into what have been termed positive organizational politics (Fedor & Maslyn, 2002; Ferris et al., 2002). In particular, theorists (Ammeter et al., 2002; Fedor & Maslyn, 2002; Ferris et al., 2002) have suggested that certain political activities that are not measured by the POPS are functional and beneficial to the organization as a whole. For example, in a recent study conducted by Buchanan and Badham (1999), managers reported that few organizational development interventions would be successful without involvement in political activities such as behind the scenes maneuvering. It has been suggested that the failure to include measures of such activities in studies examining organizational politics has resulted in a negative bias towards performance and outcomes. Despite these criticisms, a fifteen item, three factor version of the original scale continues to be the recommended measure of perceptions of organizational politics (Kacmar, 2002—personal communication; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997).

Since the publication of the original POPS, this scale and its variations have been used to examine the network of antecedents and consequences that are related to organizational politics. The empirical literature has generally focused on direct linkages and has provided support for relationships between politics perceptions and a variety of individual and organizational antecedents and consequences (for reviews, see Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). However, Kacmar et al. (1999) recently noted that the majority of these empirical studies have been limited to working within the framework proposed by Ferris et al. (1989) and, with but a few exceptions (e.g., Kacmar et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006; Vigoda, 2000), studies in this area of research have failed to build on one-another by assimilating previous findings.
Recent literature reviews (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999) have indicated that politics perceptions are negatively associated with the majority of the predictors examined in empirical studies. For example, negative and significant relationships were repeatedly found with feedback, formalization, relationship with supervisor, and promotional opportunity; all of which were included as predictors in Ferris et al.'s (1989) model. Regarding consequences, empirical studies have consistently provided evidence for direct, negative relationships with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job anxiety. In addition, turnover intentions have been positively related to organizational politics. These outcome variables, each the subject of multiple empirical studies, were included in Ferris et al.'s (1989) model. Other important work outcomes (e.g., task performance, citizenship behaviors, and counterproductive work behaviors) have received much less attention in the organizational politics literature and empirical studies have generally provided mixed results for a relationship between these performance-based outcomes and organizational politics perceptions (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Maslyn & Fedor, 1998; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006).

In terms of moderators, researchers have generally focused on understanding and perceived control (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999), which were proposed by Ferris et al. (1989) to moderate the relationship between politics and stress-related outcomes. Ferris and colleagues have conducted the majority of empirical studies examining these moderators (Ferris et al., 2002). The results of their studies have provided modest (Ferris, Frink, Gilmore, & Kacmar, 1994; Ferris et al., 1996; Kacmar et al., 1999) support for the moderating effects of understanding and perceived control. In a recent replication and extension of the original Ferris et al. (1989) model, Kacmar et al.
(1999) found that understanding moderated only one of the three proposed politics-outcomes linkages. These results led Kacmar et al. (1999) to suggest that the moderators selected by Ferris et al. (1989) may not have been the most appropriate and are in need of revision. Furthermore, it may be possible that employees who have greater understanding and control are less likely to view their work environments as political.

In addition, some researchers (see Ferris et al., 2002; Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Castro, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2003; Rosen, Chang, & Johnson, 2006; Rosen, Chang, & Levy, in press) have suggested that numerous individual differences play an important role in moderating employees’ reactions to perceptions of organizational politics. However, this research is in its early stages and has generally focused on affective dispositions (e.g., Hochwarter et al., 2003) or Big Five personality traits (e.g., Rosen et al., in press; Witt, Kacmar, Carlson, & Zivnuska, 2002). For example, Valle et al. (2002) suggested that dispositional characteristics predispose individuals who are high in negative affect (NA) to perceive the ambiguity surrounding political environments as more threatening. In the only empirical study examining the moderating role of NA in the relationship between perceptions of politics and employee reactions, Hochwarter and Treadway (2003) found that the negative relationship between politics and job satisfaction is strongest for people high in NA.

From this review of the evolution of the perceptions of organizational politics construct, there are several important observations. First, empirical studies have maintained an almost explicit focus on linkages included in Ferris et al.’s (1989) model, and the few studies that have examined alternative predictors and outcomes have provided inconsistent results (Cropanzano et al., 1999; Kacmar et al., 1999; Randall et
al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006). Kacmar et al. (1999) suggested that the almost explicit focus on linkages predicted by Ferris et al. (1989) has limited the scope of the organizational politics literature and has impeded the advancement of organizational politics research. As a result, little attention has been directed towards identifying variables that mediate and/or moderate the relationship between politics and outcomes. In addition, the relationship between politics and supervisor ratings of performance-based outcomes has not been clearly supported by the empirical literature (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., in press). Furthermore, most studies which have examined the relationship between organizational politics and employee outcomes have relied on self-reported data to examine direct relationships between politics and a limited number of employee outcomes. Therefore, despite advancement of theory (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 2002; Rosen et al., 2006), there has been little integration of our knowledge to explain the mechanisms which relate politics perceptions to employee outcomes. The present study attempts to address these criticisms and other shortcomings of the organizational politics literature by presenting and testing a process model which explains how politics perceptions influence employees.

The proposed process model replicates and extends the findings of Rosen et al. (2006) who recently provided support for a model (Figure 1) which utilized a theory based on employees’ perceptions of the social marketplace to describe the relationships that exist between the feedback environment, perceptions of organizational politics, employee attitudes, and performance. According to Rosen et al.’s (2006) model, employee perceptions of politics mediate the relationship between the feedback environment and the general level of morale (as reflected by job satisfaction and
organizational commitment) and morale mediates the relationships between politics and various aspects of work performance (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors and task performance). In the current study, a process model is presented (see Figure 2) which assimilates previous theory and research to extend the findings of Rosen et al. (2006). Specifically, data from different sources is used to examine the extended mediational chains associated with two specific mechanisms—stress and exchange perceptions—which have been purported to relate politics to work outcomes (Ferris et al., 1989; Hall et al., 2004). In addition, a relatively new construct—political skill (see Ferris et al., 2005)—is examine to see whether it moderates the linkages between politics perceptions and both stress and the social exchange perceptions.

The proposed process model advances the literature in three important ways. First, the present study considers a wealth of existing theory and research to clarify our understanding of the underlying processes which translate politics perceptions into adverse employee outcomes. In particular, the present study extends the work of Ferris and colleagues (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 1996; Kacmar et al., 1999) and other organizational politics researchers (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006) by incorporating measures of employee perceptions of the social marketplace, stress, trust, and morale into a comprehensive model which identifies the paths through which politics perceptions exert their negative influence on employees. Therefore, the present study extends the literature by focusing on multiple mediational mechanisms and underlying processes, rather than bi-variate, direct relationships. In addition, data from supervisors and subordinates is utilized to more fully capture how politics affect employees. Finally, the present study answers the call of Kacmar and
Baron (1999) for researchers to expand the network of constructs associated with politics perceptions beyond those included in the original Ferris et al. (1989) model. Specifically, the present study will be the first to examine employees' perceptions of the exchange relationship that they have with their organizations, trust, and political skill in relation to politics perceptions. This is the first empirical study to examine how exchange perceptions and trust are part of a mediational chain which relates politics to employee outcomes (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997). In addition, incorporating political skill into research on perceptions of organizational politics is important because researchers (e.g., Ferris et al., 2002; Rosen et al., in press) have suggested that individual differences may be important to understanding why different people react in different ways to their perceptions of organizational politics.

In the sections that follow, theoretical and empirical evidence supporting the linkages in the proposed model is presented. This section begins with a review of relevant antecedents and hypotheses which link the feedback environment to politics perceptions. The review of antecedents is followed by a discussion of several relevant outcomes of perceptions of organizational politics, which are then integrated into the proposed process model.

*Relating the Feedback Environment to Politics Perceptions*

*The feedback environment.* Feedback refers to a type of information that is available in the work environment that guides and directs behaviors by indicating how well an individual is meeting his or her goals (Greller & Herold, 1975). Feedback communicates to employees which behaviors are desired by the organization and also provides an evaluation of the quality of performance (London, 2003; Steelman et al.,
Research has provided consistent evidence that feedback relates to important work outcomes such as employee learning and development, motivation, and work performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). However, most of the research in the feedback literature has been narrowly focused on the characteristics of the information seeker and his or her motivation to seek feedback (Ashford, 1986; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison & Bies, 1991). As a result, there has been, until recently, relatively little research on the organizational context in which feedback processes occur.

Recognizing this gap in the feedback literature, Levy and his colleagues examined how aspects of the organizational environment may be able to provide support for the use of feedback directed towards improving work performance (Levy et al., 1995; Williams et al., 1999; Steelman et al., 2004). More specifically, Steelman et al. (2004) examined how contextual characteristics of feedback processes in organizations may support day-to-day feedback processes between co-workers and supervisors. As such, Steelman identified two sources (i.e., supervisors and co-workers) and seven separate facets (i.e., source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, frequency of favorable feedback, frequency of unfavorable feedback, feedback availability, and support of feedback seeking) of the organizational context that may provide support for informal feedback processes. Taken together, these aspects of the organizational context comprise the feedback environment (Steelman et al., 2004). The presence of these facets serves to develop healthy feedback processes in organizations by increasing the acceptability and effectiveness of feedback (Steelman et al., 2004). Empirical studies have demonstrated that the feedback environment is associated with increased affective commitment, job satisfaction, and OCBs, as well as decreased absenteeism and perceptions of
organizational politics (Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Rosen et al., 2006; Steelman & Levy, 2001).

Regarding the feedback environment and organizational politics, Ferris et al. (1989) included feedback in the original model of perceptions of organizational politics. Ferris and colleagues (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris et al., 1989) suggested that politics flourish in ambiguous and uncertain work environments. Particularly, lack of clarity regarding performance standards and reward structures can create a system which favors political activities as a means of acquiring desired employee outcomes (Ferris et al., 1989; Randall et al., 1999). However, when more information is available regarding performance standards and when reward structures are clearer, employees tend to have a better understanding of the reward system, view the organization as less political, and engage in less politicking (Rosen et al., 2006). Therefore, environments high in feedback tend to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity by guiding, motivating, and reinforcing effective behaviors while reducing ineffective behaviors (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; London, 2003; Rosen et al., 2006). Organizations that have more favorable feedback environments are also likely to have more effective feedback processes (London, 2003; Steelman et al., 2004) and to communicate more information to employees that helps guide their behavior at work. Therefore, it has been suggested that high quality feedback environments are associated with lowered levels of organizational politics perceptions (Rosen et al., 2006).

Only one previous study has examined the feedback environment in relation to both politics perceptions and employee outcomes. In this study, Rosen et al. (2006) found that the feedback environment was negatively related to perceptions of politics. Rosen et
al. (2006) also found that the supervisor feedback environment had a more influential unique effect on perceptions of politics than the co-worker feedback environment. Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that these findings were due to the specialized roles that supervisors have with respect to their subordinates (e.g., Gerstner & Day, 1997). For example, supervisors may be viewed by employees as having more power because they make and communicate decisions to employees and have more control, relative to co-workers, over resource allocation. Supporting this perspective, there is evidence that employee’s relationships with their supervisors are an important determinant of perceptions of politics (Kacmar et al., 1999; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Therefore, based on theory relating feedback to organizational politics, Rosen et al. (2006) concluded that when one’s supervisor gives inadequate or unclear feedback about performance expectations and levels, decisions may appear much more politically driven than when coworkers are uncommunicative.

The present study replicates Rosen et al.’s (2006) findings relating the feedback environment to politics and outcomes and, as discussed in later sections, extends our understanding of the mediational chains through which the feedback environment and politics are related to employee behaviors. By providing additional support for the linkage between the feedback environment and perceptions of organizational politics, the present study will give future researchers a stronger foundation on which to base interventions which target the feedback environment as a means of countering the presence of perceptions of organizational politics. Thus, based on Rosen et al.’s (2006) findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:
Hypothesis 1: The supervisor feedback environment will be negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics.

Hypothesis 2: The co-worker feedback environment will be negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics.

Hypothesis 3: The supervisor feedback environment will have a stronger negative relationship with perceptions of politics than the co-worker feedback environment.

Outcomes of Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Traditionally, researchers have studied politics perceptions because organizational politics is considered an aspect of the work context which has a negative impact on employees (Ferris et al., 1989; Mintzberg, 1983). Researchers have found that politics perceptions are related to a variety of adverse work outcomes such as less favorable employee attitudes, increased withdrawal from the organization, and lower performance ratings (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Vigoda, 2000). In the following section, several specific consequences of perceptions of organizational politics are discussed. Outcomes that are explored include those that were originally presented in the Ferris et al. (1989) model of politics perceptions (e.g., withdrawal intentions/behaviors, job satisfaction, affective commitment) as well as contemporary additions to the organizational politics literature (e.g., supervisor ratings of task performance, citizenship behaviors, and counterproductive work behaviors). Each of these outcomes of organizational politics is first defined and then discussed within the context of its relationship to organizational politics perceptions. Empirical and theoretical evidence relating these outcomes to politics is also provided. In the section which follows the discussion of consequences of organizational politics, the proposed dual-process model is
presented. This model integrates existing research and theory into a framework which links each of these outcomes to organizational politics.

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction is one of the most researched topics in the field of I/O psychology (Levy, 2003). Job satisfaction is defined as “a pleasurable, positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976; p. 1300). According to Locke’s (1976) value-percept theory of job satisfaction, employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs when their employers meet their perceived needs. Empirical studies have tied job satisfaction to organizational effectiveness (Fulmer, Gerhart, & Scott, 2003; Koys, 2001), as well as a variety of employee outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Konovsky & Organ, 1996) task performance (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Petty, McGee, & Cavendar, 1984), and employee withdrawal (Blau, 1994; Sagie, 1998; Scott & Taylor, 1985).

Consistent with being one of the most researched areas in I/O Psychology, job satisfaction has received much attention from organizational politics researchers. In fact, Kacmar and Baron (1999) noted that “by far the most frequently examined organizational politics outcome variable is job satisfaction” (p. 19). Empirical studies have consistently provided support for a negative relationship between politics and satisfaction (Ferris et al., 2002). Though empirical studies have generally focused on the direct relationship between politics perceptions and job satisfaction, theorists have suggested that politics perceptions are related to job satisfaction because politics is a source of stress in the organizational environment (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 1996) and because politics influence employees’ perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships (Aryee et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006). In particular, it is likely that stress resulting from
organizational politics is associated with negative emotional and affective experiences at work (Spector & Fox, 2002; Ferris et al., 1989, 1996, 2002), which are reflected in decreased levels of job satisfaction reported by employees.

It also makes sense to speculate that politics is related to lower levels of job satisfaction through its impact on employees’ perceptions of the exchange relationship that they have with their organizations. For instance, it has been suggested (Rosen, Chang, Johnson, & Levy, 2005; Hall et al., 2004) that organizational politics impede the ability of the organization to fulfill employee’s needs in the long run and, thus, decrease the perceived likelihood that the organization will meet its obligations to employees. As a result, there is an increase in the perceived riskiness associated with the employee-organization exchange relationship (Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999). Congruent with Locke’s (1976) value-precept theory of job satisfaction, the literature has also shown that perceptions of the employee-organization relationship are directly related to job satisfaction (e.g., Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). Therefore, perceptions of organizational politics likely result in diminished job satisfaction because organizational politics weaken the performance-reward linkage (Rosen et al., 2006), thus decreasing employees’ confidence that organizations will meet their exchange obligations to employees in the long-run (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

Affective commitment. Affective commitment, the most studied aspect of organizational commitment, refers to an employee’s emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) identified three primary characteristics of affective commitment: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizations goals and values, (2) a willingness to
exert effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) a strong desire to remain a part of the organization. Affective commitment has been related to a variety of employee outcomes such as performance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000), withdrawal behaviors (Gellatly, 1995; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), and counterproductive work behaviors (Spector, 1997).

Several studies have examined the relationship between politics perceptions and organizational commitment (Vigoda, 2000; Witt, Patti, & Farmer, 2002). Similar to the relationship between politics and job satisfaction, it has been suggested that diminished affective commitment reflects an emotional response to higher levels of stress and the perceived riskiness of the organizational exchange relationship (Ferris et al., 1989; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006). However, the empirical evidence for this linkage is not as clear as the evidence supporting a relationship between politics and job satisfaction (Kacmar & Baron, 1999). In particular, Cropanzano et al. (1997) found a positive relationship between politics and commitment in their first study and negative relationship in their second study. Drory (1993) found a nonsignificant relationship between politics and commitment, however, Randall et al. (1999) and Rosen et al. (2006) recently found strong, negative correlations between politics and affective commitment (e.g., $r = -0.40$).

An examination of these studies indicates that there may have been methodological reasons for Cropanzano et al. (1997) and Drory’s (1993) nonsignificant findings. In particular, Cropanzano et al.’s (1997) utilized a relatively small sample ($N = 69$) in study 1. However, the sample used in study 2 was much larger ($N = 185$). Thus, the second study may have provided a more accurate picture of the relationship between
politics and commitment. Drory's (1993) findings may have been associated with the specific measures that were used. More specifically, Drory's (1993) study involved the use of a scale that was developed to tap the organization's general political climate and, thus, may not have been an equivalent measure to the perceptions of organizational politics scale. Additionally, Drory (1993) utilized a measure of commitment that may have tapped organizational identification (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), as opposed to affective commitment. Thus, further research is necessary to establish the nature of the relationship between politics perceptions and affective commitment.

Organizational withdrawal. Organizational withdrawal refers to activities associated with leaving the organization. Absenteeism, turnover, and job search behaviors are common measures of employee withdrawal (Levy, 2003). Each of these reflects employee’s attempts to leave organizational environments that they find unfavorable. Supporting these ideas, there is ample theoretical and empirical evidence that employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs also engage in a variety of withdrawal behaviors which are costly to organizations. For example, Steers and Rhode's (1978) influential model of employee absenteeism places job satisfaction as an antecedent to employee absences. Furthermore, the empirical literature has provided equivocal evidence for a relationship between voluntary absenteeism (absences that are under the employee’s control) and job satisfaction (Sagie, 1998; Goldberg & Waldman, 2000). Similarly, work attitudes (e.g., satisfaction and commitment) have generally been considered important predictors of turnover, turnover intentions, and job search behaviors (Blau, 1993; Blau, 1994; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999).
Organizational withdrawal was originally identified as an outcome of organizational politics by Ferris et al. (1989), who suggested that politics is a source of stress and employees often attempt to remove themselves from stressful situations. Leaving the organization is clearly one way that this can be achieved. Similar to other outcomes of organizational politics, researchers have also suggested that the impact of politics perceptions on employees' perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship results in employees withdrawing themselves from the organization as a means of rectifying imbalances in their exchange relationships with employers (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). For example, Cropanzano et al. (1997) speculated that employees may withdraw time, effort, and/or themselves because organizational politics are associated with perceptions that the exchange relationship is unbalanced (e.g., employees perceive that their contributions will not be adequately rewarded by the organization).

The empirical literature has provided consistent evidence that both stress and employees' perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship are linked to withdrawal from the organization (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Jamal, 1984; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Brown, 2004; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). However, there is mixed empirical support for a direct, negative relationship between politics perceptions and employee withdrawal behaviors and intentions (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 2002; Gilmore, Ferris, James, & Harrell-Cook, 1996; Randall et al., 1999). There is also reason to believe that there are intervening variables which relate politics perceptions to withdrawal from the organization. In particular, empirical studies have generally used the stress or social exchange frameworks to explain the relationship between politics and
employee withdrawal (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Gilmore et al., 1996; Hochwarter, Perrewe, Ferris, & Guercio, 1999; Kiewitz, Hochwarter, Ferris, & Castro, 2002; Randall et al., 1999). However, these studies have generally examined only the direct relationship between politics and forms of withdrawal rather than measuring important processes or mediating mechanisms. Therefore, researchers should empirically examine the mediating mechanisms which relate politics to employee withdrawal.

**Multi-dimensional job performance.** Recently, theorists have suggested that job performance is a multi-dimensional construct (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). The literature has identified at least three facets of performance: task performance, citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behaviors. Task performance and citizenship behaviors are discussed together because these constructs are highly correlated, positive aspects of work performance (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). However, counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) are considered to be a negative aspect of employee performance. Therefore, CWBs are discussed separately.

Task performance refers to activities that contribute to the technical core of the organization (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Such activities are generally identified in the job analysis, presented in the job description, and assessed during the formal performance appraisal process (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). As such, task performance includes behaviors for which employees believe that they will be formally rewarded for performing. Another aspect of work performance is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCBs are defined as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). More recently, Organ
(1997) expanded this definition to encompass all behaviors, not just discretionary ones, that help maintain the broader, social and psychological environments in which the technical core of the organization operates, which is conceptually similar to definitions of contextual performance (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmitt, 1997). Scholars generally associate such behaviors with employees who go the extra mile rather than only doing what is required of them on the job (Levy, 2003). Individual task performance and citizenship behaviors are similar because they both contribute to reaching organizational goals (Marcus & Schuler, 2004).

Though not originally linked to organizational politics in the Ferris et al. (1989) model, the relationships between politics perceptions and both task performance and OCBs has begun to receive attention from contemporary organizational politics researchers (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006; Witt, 1998). Consistent with theory relating politics to other outcomes, it has been suggested that politics perceptions relate to performance because politics is a source of stress (Kacmar et al., 1999; Ferris et al., 2002) and signal that the social marketplace of the organization is a risky investment of employee time and effort (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999). However, the majority of studies relating politics perceptions to performance have relied on self-report data and the few studies that have used supervisor ratings of performance have not provided consistent support for a relationship between politics and measures of work performance. For example, Cropanzano et al. (1997, Study 1) found that politics perceptions were not related to OCBs and Randall et al. (1999) failed to find a significant relationship between politics and task performance. In contrast, Rosen et al. (2006) found that politics were negatively related, through morale,
to a latent measure of performance, comprised of supervisor ratings of task performance, OCBO, and OCBI. Taken together, the extant literature indicates that the relationship between politics and performance is quite complex and it has been suggested that there are likely numerous mediators and moderators (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Rosen et al., 2006) of this relationship which have yet to be examined.

*Counterproductive work behaviors.* The extent to which employees voluntarily engage in destructive behaviors that are deviant and damaging to the goals of the organization has also been identified as another aspect of performance (Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Behaviors that are harmful to the organization or its members have been termed counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). According to the literature (Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002), CWBs can be classified as either self-destructive (e.g., drug and alcohol use, absenteeism, depression) or retaliatory (e.g. violence, aggression, sabotage, harassment) and can be directed towards individuals (e.g., violence and aggression) or the organization (e.g., theft).

Because self-interest is at the core of organizational politics, researchers have suggested that political environments create “hostile environments” (Gilmore et al., 1996, pp. 482) that are fertile grounds for interpersonal conflict and activities that may be considered antagonistic (e.g., arguing and gossiping), aggressive, and deviant work behaviors. The few studies that have examined politics perceptions in relation to counterproductive work behaviors have lent support to this perspective (Vigoda 2002; Cropanzano et al., 1997). For example, Vigoda (2002) provided evidence that politics
perceptions are related to aggressive behaviors. Vigoda (2002) suggested that as a result of politics, employees expend considerable emotional resources coping with stressors and, therefore, have fewer resources available for controlling their behaviors. As a result, it is less likely that they will be able to inhibit violent and/or aggressive responses to the activities that they perceive as political in others (Spector & Fox, 2002; Vigoda, 2002). There is also evidence that stress is related to a variety of other CWBs. The empirical literature has provided consistent evidence that stress is an antecedent to many forms of CWB (Lau, Au, & Ho, 2003) including: violence (Jones, 1980a,b), alcohol abuse (Parker & Brody, 1982), unexcused absences (Fitzgibbons & Moch, 1980); employee theft (Jones & Boyce, 1994; Lavelli, 1986), and unauthorized extension of work breaks (Jones & Boyce, 1994). Thus, further study of the relationship between politics perceptions and counterproductive work behaviors is warranted.

*Relating the Feedback Environment and Politics to Outcomes: A Process Framework*

Despite a plethora of empirical evidence linking perceptions of organizational politics directly to negative employee outcomes, our understanding of the psychological processes that relate politics to employee outcomes is underdeveloped. The preceding review indicates that there are likely two primary psychological mechanisms that relate perceptions of politics to its consequences The first of these is the traditional perspective that politics is associated with decreased employee morale and performance because it is a source of stress (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 2002). In addition, contemporary researchers (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2002; Rosen et al., 2006) have suggested that politics perceptions are associated with employee outcomes through the impact that they have on employees' perceptions of their organizational
exchange relationships. However, these two perspectives on how politics are related to negative employee responses are yet to be assimilated and considered simultaneously.

The affective events theory framework can be used to integrate these two mechanisms to explain employee attitudes and behaviors. AET is based on the notion that work-related attitudes have both affective and cognitive components. More specifically, Weiss and Cropanzano’s (1996) affective events theory (AET) suggests that job attitudes have judgmental components and that affective reactions are also important to the development of attitudes. As such, AET proposes that the work environment influences employees’ attitudes and, ultimately, behaviors through two pathways. The first pathway is cognitive and is based on employees’ perceptions of whether or not some desired standards have been, or are likely to be, met by the organization (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Zalesny & Ford, 1990). Thus, the cognitive pathway is considered to be rational and, to a certain extent, based on some degree of conscious processing (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Features in the work environment may influence employees’ attitudes and behaviors indirectly or directly through the cognitive route (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Weiss & Shaw, 1979). An example of a behavior associated with the cognitive path would be if, following a cut in pay, an employee made a conscious decision to find a job at another organization which pays a higher salary.

AET also specifies the presence of an affective pathway through which the work environment may influence employee attitudes and behaviors. In particular, Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) maintained that various experiences in the work environment can be conceptualized as affective events, or general occurrences in the work environment, that trigger employees’ affective responses. Thus, instead of directly influencing the
development of employee attitudes and behaviors, workplace characteristics may
generate affective responses (e.g., emotions or mood) which in turn may lead to various
attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, AET suggests that affective responses may either
lead to employee behavior directly, or influence behaviors through their effects on
attitudes (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For example, receiving a promotion or
recognition for good performance may induce positive affect (i.e., happiness and pride),
which in turn contributes to the development of job satisfaction and, in some cases,
 improved levels performance. On the other hand, an undeserved reprimand from a
supervisor may trigger negative affect (i.e., sadness and anger) and thus result in lower
levels of job satisfaction and performance.

The stress and organizational exchange perceptions-based explanations of the
consequences of organizational politics are consistent with the cognitive and affective
mechanisms proposed by AET. As such, perceptions of organizational politics (as
conceptualized by Ferris and colleagues) may reflect employees’ experiences with a
series of related negative affective events in the work environment. These affective
events may be associated with interpersonal conflict or power struggles in which
individual employees experience negative work outcomes. Thus, within the framework
of AET it makes sense to view organizational politics as influencing employee attitudes
and behaviors through a rational, cognitive path associated with employees’ evaluations
of the likelihood that the organization will meet their long-term needs. Consistent with
the literature which suggests that the interpersonal conflict associated with organizational
politics causes employees to experience more stress and anxiety at work (Vigoda, 2002),
it makes sense to consider that politics have an influence on attitudes and behaviors
through a more affective, stress-based pathway. Further supporting this proposed path and AET, studies have shown that the experience of stress leads to negative mood, which in turn leads to less favorable job attitudes and performance (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Fuller et al., 2003; Spector & Fox, 2002).

Therefore, AET supports the simultaneous examination of these two pathways that explain the negative effects of politics on employee attitudes and behaviors. However, empirical studies in the area of organizational politics have rarely, if ever, measured job-related stress or exchange perceptions. Rather, empirical studies tend to examine only the direct relationship between politics and specific outcomes. As a result, the research on consequences of organizational politics has proceeded in a fragmented manner. Specifically, organizational politics researchers have failed to include measures of these pathways and relevant intervening variables in studies examining the outcomes of perceptions of organizational politics.

In the present study, these ideas are integrated into a process-oriented framework (see Figure 2) which explains the underlying mechanisms relating politics perceptions to adverse employee outcomes. This framework includes two extended mediational pathways. The first of these involves the relationship between politics, stress, employee morale, and outcomes. This path is derived from Ferris et al.’s (1989) suggestions that politics is a form of stress which is related to negative employee attitudes and outcomes. The second pathway is associated with the social marketplace perspective that has been discussed by Cropanzano and colleagues (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999). Utilizing this perspective, it is suggested that politics perceptions are related to outcomes through their impact on employees’ perceptions of the employee-organization exchange.
relationship, trust, and morale. Previous studies have provided support for some of the
linkages proposed in the first path. For example, Huang et al. (2004) and Vigoda (2002)
each provided evidence that stress mediates the relationship between politics and
outcomes. However, no previous studies have directly examined the role of social
exchange perceptions in mediating the linkage between politics and outcomes. The
inclusion of both of these paths in the proposed model will allow us to understand the
routes through which politics influence employee attitudes and behaviors. In the
following sections, each of these paths is explained in more detail and theoretical and
empirical research is used to support each linkage. In addition, several hypotheses are
developed and presented.

Path 1: Relating Politics to Outcomes through Stress and Morale

According to the first path of the proposed model, perceptions of organizational poli
cies are related to heightened levels of employee stress, which are linked to adverse
employee outcomes through morale. This extended mediational pathway is derived from
Ferris et al.'s (1989) work suggesting that politics perceptions indicate the presence of a
threat in the organizational environment, which results in an increase in the amount of
stress experienced by employees and this stress is translated into employee outcomes
through its impact on morale. As detailed below, some of these linkages (e.g., politics
and stress, stress and employee morale) have been investigated in isolation in the past.
The present study extends these findings by incorporating these linkages into a
mediational path which explains one of the processes through which politics perceptions
influence employee outcomes. The present study also extends the web of constructs
associated with politics through stress by including several outcomes that are new to this
line of research (e.g., supervisor ratings of performance and counterproductive work behaviors). In the sections that follow, the linkages of each path are discussed and previous research is used to support the inclusion of each construct in the proposed process framework of organizational politics perceptions.

*Linking politics perceptions to stress.* Researchers have often viewed stress as an individually experienced phenomenon that is based largely on perceptions of the environment (Beehr, 1995; Ferris et al., 1996; Schuler, 1980). Stress has been defined as a subjective feeling that results when work demands exceed an individual’s perceived capacity to cope with such demands (Edwards, 1992; Folkman & Lazarus, 1991). Lazarus (1990) further suggested that stress results from the interplay of system variables and processes which are related to employees’ appraisal of the person-environment relationship as one of opportunity or threat. When stress is perceived as providing a situation for potential gain, it is positively related to affective outcomes such as increased job satisfaction (Schuler, 1980; Ferris et al., 1996). However, when stress is perceived as related to a situation that may provide a potential loss, it is perceived as a threat and is related to depressed affect and both learning and motivational deficits (Evans & Stecker, 2004). Such perceptions of stress create a sense of anxiety and tension (Cropanzano et al., 1997) which consumes an individual’s time, energy, and attention (Jamal, 1985), thus leading to adverse employee reactions, such as decreased job involvement and satisfaction and increased job anxiety and turnover intentions (Ferris et al., 1989; Kacmar et al., 1999; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992).

Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that perceptions of organizational politics often have a negative relationship with employee attitudes and outcomes because politics
perceptions signal the presence of a threat in the work environment. Ferris et al., (1996) extended this explanation by using the terminology of stress researchers (e.g. Beehr, 1995; Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000; Jex & Beehr, 1991) to describe politics as a work-related stressor which leads to individually experienced strains, or stress-related outcomes. Ferris et al. (1989, 1996) speculated that when employees who are naïve to organizational contingencies are confronted with political realities of organizations, their beliefs in a fair and just system are challenged. This challenge to employees’ beliefs about the organizational system is perceived as threatening to the well-being of employees and, as a result, produces strong stress reactions that are reflected by less favorable attitudes and behaviors.

In addition, employees experience heightened levels of stress in politically charged organizational environments because they must expend resources coping with interpersonal conflict related to the self-serving behaviors associated with organizational politics (Huang et al., 2004; Vigoda, 2002). Empirical studies (Ferris et al., 1996; Vigoda, 2002) have generally supported the notion that politics perceptions are a source of stress. In a recent review, Vigoda (2002) identified several studies which provide evidence for a direct relationship between politics and stress-based outcomes. These outcomes include job anxiety (Ferris, Frink, Gilmore, & Kaemar, 1994; Ferris et al., 1996), job stress (Kaemar et al., 1999; Valle & Perrew, 2000), job tension, somatic tension, fatigue, and burnout (Croppanzano et al., 1997). As such, it is likely that politics perceptions are related to both experienced anxiety and tension as well as to physical health.

Only two studies have examined the role of stress in mediating the relationship between politics perceptions and undesirable work outcomes. In the first of these, Vigoda
(2002) hypothesized that perceived stress mediates the relationship between organizational politics and aggression in the workplace. Vigoda (2002) relied on House and Rizzo’s (1972) description of job distress as tensions and pressures growing out of job requirements which include the possible outcomes of feelings and physical symptoms. The results, which supported Vigoda’s (2002) hypotheses, indicated that the relationship between politics and physical and verbal aggressive behaviors is partially mediated by job distress and burnout. Thus, there is evidence that employees who have elevated perceptions of politics tend to experience more job distress and burnout, which translates into aggression towards co-workers, clients, and supervisors.

Similarly, Huang et al. (2003) hypothesized that burnout mediates the relationship between politics perceptions and turnover intentions. Huang et al. (2003) suggested that work environments are perceived as political when employees feel that certain groups of people gain rewards via personal influence instead of through hard work and competence. Furthermore, such perceptions are heightened to the extent that employees feel that they are unlikely to obtain good evaluations or promotions even after having demonstrated high levels of performance. These perceptions lead to stress and, after a period of time, result in emotional exhaustion and burnout followed by the arousal of turnover intentions. Results provided partial support for Huang et al.’s (2003) hypothesis by indicating that two of the three factors used to measure burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism) were partial mediators in the relationship between politics perceptions and turnover intentions. As such, Huang et al.’s (2003) study provided further evidence that stress plays a role in mediating the relationship between politics and outcomes.
However, these studies (Huang et al., 2003; Vigoda, 2002) examined politics and stress in relation to a limited number of self-rated employee outcomes (e.g., turnover intentions and counterproductive behaviors). Relying only on self-rated outcomes may be problematic because a third variable, such as negative affect, may explain the relationship among constructs measured from a single source. Additionally, self-generated validity may occur when participants attempt maintain cognitive consistency between attitudes and behaviors (Feldman & Lynch, 1988). As such, the inclusion of a path that is mediated by stress in the proposed model extends the literature by (1) examining the relationship between politics and stress as part of an extended mediational chain, which includes outcomes other than those (e.g., counterproductive work behaviors and turnover intentions) discussed by previous researchers (Huang et al., 2003; Vigoda, 2002) and (2) utilizing data reported from multiple sources (i.e., the self and supervisors) to support the relationships proposed in the model.

In sum, Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that politics is a source of stress in the work environment which results in negative employee reactions. According to theory, stress is negatively related to attitudes and behaviors when the demands of the situation exceed the capabilities of the employee (Jex & Beehr, 1991). Empirical studies show that politics perceptions relate to measures of stress and that stress mediates the relationship between politics perceptions and self-reported counterproductive behaviors and turnover intentions (Huang et al., 2003; Vigoda, 2002). The present study replicates and extends these findings by examining an extended mediational chain which relates politics to a variety of self and supervisor-rated outcomes. The first linkage of this chain is the relationship between politics and stress. Thus,
Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of organizational politics will be positively related to stress experienced by employees.

Morale as a mediator. In the framework presented in Figure 2, findings regarding the relationship between politics and stress (see Huang et al., 2003; Vigoda, 2002) are integrated with the empirical work of Rosen et al. (2006) and the theoretical work of Ferris and colleagues (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 1996; Ferris et al., 2002). In particular, it is proposed that politics lead to heightened experiences of stress, which are associated with decreased employee morale, and to adverse employee outcomes through morale. In this framework, employee morale refers to a two-factor, global construct that was proposed by Podsakoff et al. (2000). Podsakoff et al. (2000) observed that the work attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment are highly correlated and have been consistently related to a number of positive employee outcomes such as OCBs and task performance. From these observations, Podsakoff et al. (2000) theorized that job satisfaction and affective commitment likely comprise a single, global factor that is associated with affective employee morale.

Recently, Rosen et al. (2006) demonstrated that politics perceptions are related to employee performance through a general employee morale factor that is similar to the one described by Podsakoff et al. (2000). According to Ferris et al.'s (1989, 1996, 2002) perspective, one likely explanation for the linkage between politics and morale is that organizational politics perceptions are a form of stress which provokes negative affective responses in employees. Supporting this perspective, empirical studies have provided evidence for a relationship between job stressors and negative emotional and affective experiences at work, including job attitudes (Hollon & Chesser, 1976; Miles, 1976; Miles
& Petty, 1975). For example, Veloutsou and Panigyrakis (2004) recently identified lower levels of job satisfaction as an outcome of stress and Hart (1999) found that low levels of job satisfaction were consistently reported by employees who experienced stressful daily hassles.

Despite studies linking politics to stress (e.g., Huang et al., 2004; Vigoda, 2002) and stress to employee attitudes (e.g., Barsky, Thoreson, Warren, & Kaplan, 2004; Taris, Schreurs, & Van Iersel-Van Silfhout, 2001), previous studies have failed to examine the role of stress as a mediator of the relationship between politics and employee morale. The proposed model is intended to inform our understanding of the underlying mechanisms which relate politics to employee reactions. Therefore, Ferris et al.’s (1989, 1996, 2002) theoretical work and Rosen et al.’s (2006) research are used to explain how politics perceptions are related to diminished employee morale. Specifically, it is proposed that perceptions of organizational politics are associated with heightened experiences of stress by employees which are related to negative affective responses (Spector & Fox, 2002), reflected in diminished employee morale. Thus,

*Hypothesis 5: Stress mediates the relationship between politics perceptions and employee morale.*

Additionally, it is proposed that morale is part of an extended mediational chain which translates politics perceptions into adverse employee behaviors and intentions. Supporting this perspective, there is ample theoretical and empirical evidence that the attitudes that comprise the morale factor are associated with employee outcomes such as performance, CWBs, and withdrawal behaviors. For example, the studies by Meyer and colleagues clearly demonstrate that affective commitment relates both to task
performance and OCBs (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Riketta, 2002). Similarly, a recent review of the relationship between job satisfaction and performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001) estimates the correlation to be .30 between overall job satisfaction and job performance. In addition, Podsakoff et al. (2000) suggest that employee satisfaction and organizational commitment are among the strongest determinants of OCBs, with relationships ranging from .23-.31. They propose that these strong relationships may exist because job satisfaction and commitment are key indicators of employee morale, which should positively relate to employee performance. Furthermore, Rosen et al. (2006) provided empirical evidence that morale is positively related to a multi-dimensional performance construct composed of OCBs and task performance ($\beta = .45$).

There is also evidence that employee morale is associated with counterproductive work behaviors. According to theorists (Steers & Porter, 1991), affective work attitudes reflect a predisposition to respond to one’s environment in a favorable or unfavorable manner. Supporting this idea, empirical studies (e.g., Lau et al., 2003; Ostroff, 1992) have provided evidence that dissatisfied employees are more likely to engage in a variety of CWBs, such as theft, lateness, and sabotage. In addition, Fox and Spector (1999) recently suggested that affective responses (e.g., job satisfaction) are a proximal predictor of counterproductive work behaviors. The results of Fox and Spector’s (1999) study provided further support for the role of work attitudes in mediating the relationship between frustrating environmental events and behavioral responses; supporting the idea that morale mediates the relationship between work-related stress and counterproductive work behaviors.
In addition, the literature has shown that the attitudes that comprise employee morale are negatively related to withdrawal behaviors. In particular, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been identified as antecedents to turnover, turnover intentions, attendance motivation, and absenteeism. Empirical studies have consistently provided support for a linkage between turnover and both satisfaction (Freund, 2005; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Lee et al., 1999) and organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Somers, 1995; Whitener & Walz, 1993). Additionally, Gellatly (1995) suggested that absence behavior is a consequence of work-related attitudes. As such it is likely that affective commitment and job satisfaction are both negatively related to attendance motivation and absenteeism. Supporting these ideas, there is empirical evidence that job satisfaction and affective commitment predict absenteeism (Sagie, 1998; Scott & Taylor, 1985). Based on the results of his study, Sagie (1998, p. 167) concluded that "workers who are strongly committed to the organization or highly satisfied with their jobs show up at work more often than those with weak commitment and low satisfaction." There is also evidence that stress may have an indirect effect on other forms of employee withdrawal (e.g., turnover intentions) through job attitudes (Hendrix, Ovalle, & Troxler, 1985; Kemery, Bedian, Mossholder, & Touliatos, 1985).

As indicated by the studies reviewed in this section, there is evidence for a direct relationship between employee morale and many of these consequences of organizational politics. However, with the exception of Rosen et al.'s (2006) study, empirical studies have not examined morale as an aspect of the process that relates politics to employee behaviors. The present study assimilates findings from previous studies into a model which identifies the mediational processes through which politics influence a variety of
employee behaviors and intentions. Based on the preceding review, which linked politics perceptions to stress, morale, and outcomes, it is predicted that politics perceptions are related to employee outcomes through an extended mediational chain. In this mediational chain, morale mediates the relationship between stress and three employee outcomes which include a multi-dimensional measure of performance, counterproductive work behaviors, and employee withdrawal. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed.

_Hypothesis 6: Morale mediates the negative effects of stress on a multi-dimensional measure of work performance._

_Hypothesis 7: Morale mediates the negative effects of stress on a multi-dimensional measure of organizational withdrawal._

_Hypothesis 8: Morale mediates the negative effects of stress on counterproductive work behaviors._

Path 2: Relating Politics to Outcomes through Exchange Perceptions, Trust and Morale

According to the second hypothesized path of the proposed model, politics perceptions are related to employee outcomes through an extended mediational chain which includes perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship, trust, and morale. This path is derived from the theoretical work of organizational politics researchers (e.g., Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006) who have suggested that politics are related to employee outcomes through its influence on the employee-organization exchange relationship. In particular, it has been suggested (Hall et al., 2004) that organizational politics increase the amount of risk associated with employee involvement in the social marketplace of the organization. More specifically, organizational politics make the work environment more unpredictable and blurs the link between performance (e.g.,
employee contributions to the organization) and the attainment of desired outcomes such as recognition and rewards (e.g., Hall et al., 2004, Rosen et al., 2006). Additionally, employees often feel that their well-being and security are threatened by the actions of other members of the organization who are involved in the political arena (Ferris et al., 1989). As a result, employees may perceive that the organization will not meet its obligations to them by taking care of their needs in the long-run, which is a central aspect of the organizational exchange relationship (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Shore et al., in press).

However, studies that have utilized the social marketplace framework to describe the linkages between politics and employee outcomes have not provided clear support for such relationships (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006). Furthermore, none of these studies have directly evaluated the social marketplace framework by determining whether employee exchange perceptions relate to organization politics. Therefore, the present study includes measures of employees' perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships and related mediating variables (e.g., organizational trust) as part of the proposed process model (Figure 2). The following sections provide empirical and theoretical support for the linkage between politics and exchange perceptions, as well as a discussion of the mediating variables (e.g., trust and morale) which translate exchange perceptions into employee outcomes (e.g., organizational withdrawal, diminished performance, and counterproductive behaviors).

Linking POPs to social exchange perceptions. Researchers have suggested that politics perceptions are related to adverse work outcomes through their impact on employees' perceptions of their organizational exchange relationship (see Aryee et al.,
2004; Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999). Aryee et al. (2004) and Cropanzano et al. (1997) theorized that organizational politics have an influence on employee perceptions of allocation processes by diminishing the perceived linkage between performance and rewards and signaling that the organization is not concerned with meeting its exchange obligations to employees. As a result of these perceptions, employees withdraw or reduce their contributions to the organization.

Recently, Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) utilized Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale’s (in press) measure of social exchange perceptions to operationalize the perceived quality of the employee-organization exchange relationship, as viewed from the perspective of the employee. Shore et al.’s (in press) theoretical work, and the resulting scale (see Appendix A), identify social exchange perceptions as associated with employees’ perceptions that the organization: (1) rewards employee efforts, (2) makes significant investments in employees, and (3) is likely to look-out for the employee in the long-run. Similar to Rupp and Cropanzano’s (2002) study, the present study will utilize Shore et al.’s (in press) measure of social exchange perceptions to operationalize the employee-organization exchange relationship. An inspection of the items on this scale indicates that it taps the likelihood that the organization has or will reciprocate its exchange obligations to employees. Thus, at a general level, this scale measures the amount of risk that employees perceive in their organizational exchange relationships.

Researchers have provided evidence that aspects of the social context of organizations (e.g., workplace justice) are associated with the perceived quality of the employee-organization exchange relationship (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Konovsky,
Villanueva, & O'Leary, 2001; Lee, 1995). In particular, it has been suggested that when employees experience injustice, they perceive that the organization is not concerned for their welfare and feel that the organization will be unable to meet their needs in the over time (Randall et al., 1999). This communicates to employees that their organizations may not be willing or able to provide desired rewards. As a result, employees demonstrate less favorable attitudes toward their organizations and begin to withdraw time and effort from their jobs (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Supporting this perspective, Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) demonstrated that social exchange perceptions mediate the effects of organizational justice on employee citizenship behaviors.

Similarly, it has been suggested that organizational politics have an influence on employees' perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships. In particular, political environments make the social marketplace more volatile and unpredictable (Hall et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006). For example, employees in highly political organizations attain rewards through competition and by amassing power (Cropanzano et al., 1997) rather than through demonstrating high levels of performance (Hall et al., 2004; Rusbult, Campbell, & Price, 1990). Accordingly, “the immediate environment becomes unpredictable because the unwritten rules for success change as the power of those playing the political game varies” (p. 244). Uncertainty associated with reward allocation threatens the security of employees makes political work environments riskier, thus having a negative impact on employee perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships (Cropanzano et al., 1997). As a result, employees may demonstrate less favorable work attitudes and distrust in the organization (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004; Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004; Rosen et al., 2006). In addition, this lack of
confidence makes it less likely that employees will allocate resources (e.g., time and effort) to activities that add value for organization (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

In sum, the ambiguous reward structures that are innate to political climates threaten the perceived ability of the organization to reciprocate on its exchange obligations to employees (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999). In such environments, rewards are tied to relationships, power, and other less objective factors (Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). Therefore, employees in political environments may not have a clear understanding of the behaviors that the organization will reward and, as a result, will be likely to perceive a weaker relationship between their job performance and the attainment of desired rewards (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Witt, 1998). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that politics perceptions will have a negative impact on employees’ appraisals of their organizational exchange relationships (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Randall et al., 1999; Shore et al., in press).

_Hypothesis 9: Perceptions of organizational politics will be negatively related to the favorability of employees’ social exchange perceptions._

_Trust and morale as mediators._ According to the proposed model, social exchange perceptions are related to morale and trust in the organization. Furthermore, it is suggested that morale and trust mediate the relationship between social exchange perceptions and adverse employee outcomes (e.g., diminished performance and increased withdrawal behaviors). In a previous section, employee morale was discussed in relation to stress and employee outcomes. However, there is also reason to believe that morale will partially mediate the relationship between social exchange perceptions and employee outcomes.
The linkage between exchange perceptions, morale, and outcomes is based on Rosen et al.’s (2006) study in which the social marketplace framework was used to explain findings relating politics to employee outcomes through morale. Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that in political work environments, less favorable work attitudes are a reflection of employee perceptions that there is an imbalance in their organizational exchange relationships. In particular, employees in political environments do not have as much information regarding which behaviors will be rewarded because performance standards are more subjective and unstable (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2002). As a result, organizational politics signal that the organization will be less likely to provide expected outcomes to employees (e.g., remuneration, recognition, promotion, etc.) for fulfilling performance obligations. As a result, employees may perceive that political organizations are will not live up to their exchange obligations and these perceptions are converted into less favorable work attitudes and reduced contributions to the organization (Raja et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003).

The proposed relationships between exchange perceptions and work attitudes (e.g., satisfaction and commitment) follows from the work of researchers who have suggested that “job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing” (Locke, 1969, pp. 316). In other words, employees who perceive that the organization is unlikely to meet its exchange obligations (e.g., supplying desired rewards, recognition, and/or compensation) are more likely to demonstrate less favorable attitudes (Bunderson, 2001; Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino, 2002; Morrison & Robinson,
1997; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Supporting this perspective, empirical studies have consistently indicated that employees' perceptions of the organizational exchange relationship are related to job satisfaction (Bunderson, 2001; Lester & Kickul, 2001; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994) and organizational commitment (Bunderson, 2001; Coyle-Shapiro & Kesler, 2000; Hopkins, Hopkins, & Mallette, 2001; Lester, et al., 2002; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Shore et al., in press).

Presently, it is hypothesized that politics will be negatively associated with employee morale through its impact on employees' perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships. In particular, it is predicted that organizational politics are associated with employees' perceptions that their organizations will be unlikely to meet their needs in the long-term. As a result of the increased risk associated with the organizational exchange relationship, employees will demonstrate less favorable job attitudes, reflected by lower levels of morale. Thus,

Hypothesis 10: The negative effects of politics on employee morale will be mediated by social exchange perceptions.

In addition, it is predicted that morale mediates the relationship between stress (discussed previously), social exchange perceptions, trust (discussed in the section that follows) and outcomes. The linkages between morale and employee outcomes (e.g., employee withdrawal, performance, and CWBs) were discussed under a previous section in which Hypotheses 7, 8, 9 were introduced. Therefore, these paths will not be discussed again in this section. However, it is important to note that in Figure 2, exchange
perceptions are linked to both morale and trust, which are each associated with individual employee outcomes in the proposed model. Thus,

_Hypothesis 11: Morale will partially mediate the relationship between exchange perceptions and performance, withdrawal and counterproductive work behaviors._

_Relating exchange perceptions to outcomes through trust._ There are a number of definitions of trust in the literature. In the present study, trust refers to a willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Mayer & Davis, 1999). This willingness to be vulnerable is based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action that is important to the trustor, such as providing the trustor with desired outcomes (Mayer et al., 1995; Frost, Stimpson, & Maughan, 1978; Gambetta, 1988; Robinson, 1996). When organizations are perceived as likely to reciprocate employee contributions, trust is enhanced and employees are more likely to contribute extra time and effort because they feel that less risk is involved (Mayer et al., 1995).

Theoretical and empirical research has indicated that employees’ perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships have an influence on employees’ trust in their organizations (Guest, 2004; Robinson, 1996). Specifically, reactions to exchange perceptions are directly attributable to general beliefs about “respect of persons, codes of conduct, and other patterns of behavior associated with relationships involving trust” (Rousseau, 1989; p. 129). According to Robinson (1996), trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between exchange perceptions and outcomes because risky exchange conditions undermine two conditions that lead to trust—judgments of integrity and beliefs in benevolence. Specifically, Mayer et al.’s (1995) work indicates that trust
comes, in part, from judgments about integrity that are based on the perceived consistency of another’s actions and the extent to which such actions are congruent with the words of the other party. In addition, trust is associated with beliefs and assumptions that the trustee wants to do good to the trustor because of the specific attachment that they share (Mayer et al., 1995). Therefore, trust is cognitively established (Robinson, 1996) and is associated with probabilistic beliefs about another parties party’s future actions (e.g., meeting exchange obligations) based on rational reasons, such as past behavior or experience with that party (Good, 1988; Lewis & Weigert, 1985).

When the social marketplace is perceived as unfavorable (e.g., risky), employees perceive an inconsistency between the employer’s words and actions and begin to question the validity of assumptions that the trustee is concerned for the trustor’s welfare (Robinson, 1996). This perceived inconsistency and concern regarding benevolent intentions results in the employee losing confidence that his or her contributions to the organization will be reciprocated by the employer in the future. The result of this loss of confidence is that employees will be less likely to make themselves vulnerable to the organization. Supporting these ideas, Robinson (1996) demonstrated that employees report lower levels of trust when they perceive that the organization is not likely to reciprocate their efforts, which is a central component of employees’ organizational exchange perceptions (Shore et al., in press). According to the proposed process model, trust partially mediates the effects of social exchange perceptions on employee work behaviors. Individual employee outcomes that are considered in the present study include employee withdrawal from the organization and different aspects of performance (e.g., task performance, citizenship behaviors, and counterproductive work behaviors).
Psychological contract researchers (e.g., Guest, 2004; Robinson, 1996) have suggested that trust relates social exchange perceptions to employee behaviors. For example, Robinson’s (1996) results provided support for her proposition that “when promises are broken, trust is shattered, and as the relationship between the employee and employer dissolves, employees become less willing to invest further in the relationship and less willing to act in ways that maintain it” (p. 579). In addition, Robinson (1996) showed that trust mediates the relationship between exchange perceptions (operationalized as psychological contract breach) and performance (task and citizenship behaviors), and intentions to remain in the organization. Other studies (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Goris, Vaught, & Pettit, 2003; Yoon & Suh, 2003) have also demonstrated that employees’ levels of trust are related to important employee outcomes. In particular, Dirks and Ferrin’s (2002) meta-analytic review indicated that trust is associated with employee attitudes, citizenship behaviors, and performance. In addition, the magnitude of relationships between trust and outcomes is equivalent to the relationship between other commonly studied perceptual variables and outcomes (e.g., attitudes, justice, etc.). Therefore, these results support the suggestions of scholars and practitioners that trust is related to workplace behaviors.

There is also reason to believe that trust is related to CWBs. In the proposed process model, trust is part of a chain which links aspects of the situation (e.g., politics perceptions) to diminished exchange perceptions, morale, and CWBs. This fits within Marcus and Schuler’s (2004) model in which it is proposed that situational triggers, such as perceived injustice, may provoke counterproductive behaviors. Marcus and Schuler (2004) discuss trust as a sort of internal control which acts as a barrier against the
occurrence of counterproductive behaviors. According to this perspective, employees who have a high degree of trust that their organizations will meet their needs will be less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors because trusting employees perceive that they have more to lose by engaging in unacceptable behaviors. Marcus and Schuler's (2004) results provided evidence that general trust is negatively related to a measure of counterproductive work behaviors. As such, it is likely that trust, which is influenced by situational triggers (e.g., politics and the social exchange relationships), is associated with counterproductive behaviors.

Previous studies have not examined relationships that are implied by the social marketplace perspective as it has been applied to research on organizational politics (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 1997; Russell et al., 1999). However, this review indicates that the perceived quality of the employee-organization exchange relationship, which is likely affected by politics perceptions, is related to employees' trust in their organizations. In addition, there is evidence that trust is related to the outcomes that are included in the proposed model (e.g., performance, CWBs, employee morale, and withdrawal from the organization). Therefore, the present study incorporates social exchange perceptions and trust into the proposed process model to explain one of the extended mediational paths through which politics perceptions influence employee behaviors. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

_Hypothesis 12: Trust partially mediates the relationship between social exchange perceptions and supervisor ratings of performance such that exchange perceptions are associated with employee performance through their impact on trust._
Hypothesis 13: Trust partially mediates the relationship between social exchange perceptions and withdrawal behaviors such that exchange perceptions are associated with withdrawal from the organization through their impact on trust.

Hypothesis 14: Trust partially mediates the relationship between social exchange perceptions and counterproductive work behaviors such that exchange perceptions are associated with counterproductive work behaviors through their impact on trust.

In addition, it is also likely that employee morale will partially mediate the relationship between trust and employee outcomes. Empirical and theoretical evidence support a direct path linking trust to employee attitudes that are associated with morale (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Ferres, Connell, & Travaglione, 2004; Laschinger, Finegan and Shamian, 2001). Furthermore, there is evidence that morale will be directly related to the outcomes included in the proposed model (discussed in a previous section). Regarding the relationship between trust and morale, trust represents employees’ beliefs that the future actions of the organization will be likely to benefit employees and satisfy their needs and this belief is reflected by positive affective reactions to the organization (Aryee et al., 2002; Laschinger, Finegam, & Shamian, 2001). As such, employees who have greater trust in their organizations are likely to demonstrate more positive morale. Supporting this perspective, two recent studies (e.g., Aryee et al., 2002; Laschinger, Finegan and Shamian, 2001) have shown that trust mediates the relationship between antecedents (e.g., empowerment and justice) and work attitudes that have included affective commitment and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is likely that there will be a direct path linking trust to employee morale, which is related to employee outcomes (see Hypotheses 6, 7, and 8). Thus,

Hypothesis 15: Trust will be positively related to employee morale.
Political Skill as a Moderator

It is also likely that, due to individual differences, employees interpret and respond to their perceptions of organizational politics in different ways (Ferris et al., 1989; Rosen et al., 2006). An emerging stream of research in the organizational politics literature has focused on the construct of political skill (Ferris et al., 2005). Political skill is conceptually derived from the work of researchers (Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988; Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981) who have suggested that interpersonal factors (e.g., social astuteness, positioning, and savvy), that are independent of intelligence and hard work, are important for achieving career success. Following these suggestions, Ferris and colleagues (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, in press; Ferris et al., 1999; Ferris et al., 2005) examined a multi-dimensional construct that they termed political skill and 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 et al., 2004, p. 311). Ferris et al. (2005) suggested that politically skilled individuals know precisely what to do in different social situations at work and how to do it in a manner that disguises any ulterior, self-serving motives, and appears to be sincere (Ferris et al., 2005). Therefore, political skill, as defined by Ferris et al. (2005), has three notable characteristics: 1) political skill is associated with an ability to assess social cues and understand the behavioral motivations of others, 2) politically skilled individuals have special abilities in terms of influencing others and matching behavior to fit situations, and 3) political skill is related to the attainment of individual-level goals.
Ferris et al. (1999) provided the first measure of political skill, a short (six-item), unidimensional measure. More recently, Ferris et al. (2005) developed and validated a measure of political skill that has four dimensions (social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity). Social astuteness refers to an ability to comprehend social interactions and accurately interpret the behaviors of others in social settings. Interpersonal influence refers to the ability to adapt and calibrate behavior in order to elicit particular responses from others. Networking ability is the ability to develop friendships and build alliances and coalitions. Apparent sincerity refers to the extent to which an individual appears to be honest, open, and forthright; which is related to the interpretation and labeling of behavior. Ferris et al.'s (2005) measurement development and validation efforts supported a four-factor solution.

Ferris et al.'s (2005) study also provided evidence for convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity of political skill. Supporting convergent validity, political skill was related to self-monitoring ($r = .33$, $p < .05$), political savvy ($r = .47$, $p < .05$), and emotional intelligence ($r = .53$, $p < .05$). Ferris et al. (2005) suggest that these correlations are moderate, but not so high as to indicate construct redundancy. In addition, there was no significant correlation between political skill and general mental ability (Ferris et al., 1999; Ferris et al., 2005), indicating that political skill is independent of intelligence. Ferris et al. (2005) also demonstrated criterion-related validity by showing that political skill was a significant predictor of subordinate evaluations of leader effectiveness and supervisor ratings of job performance.

Presently, political skill is discussed within the context of moderating the negative effects that politics perceptions have on employees. In particular, it is likely that political
skill interacts with organizational politics to predict both stress and organizational exchange perceptions. These proposed linkages are based on theoretical and empirical evidence suggesting that the combination of extensive networks, personal ties, and ability to influence multiple constituencies allows politically skilled employees to be more successful in coping with interpersonal conditions and achieving desired outcomes in political work environments (Perrewe & Nelson, 2004; Perrewe et al., 2004). As such, it is likely that political skill buffers the effects that stressors in the environment have on individuals and serves as a valuable resource in ambiguous and uncertain environments that emphasize interpersonal interactions (Perrewe et al., 2004). The moderating effects of political skill on these linkages are discussed in further detail below.

Theorists (Ferris et al., 1999; Perrewe, Ferris, Frink, & Anthony, 2000) have suggested that political skill reduces the amount of strain that individuals experience as a result of environmental stressors. In particular, individuals high in political skill possess heightened levels of “social astuteness, savvy, and understanding of people, along with a fundamental belief that they can control the processes and outcomes of interactions with others” (Perrewe et al., 2000, p. 7.). In addition, Ferris and his colleagues have argued that political skill instills a sense of personal security from having developed a control over and keen understanding of individuals, events, and behaviors in organizations (Ferris et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2002). Therefore, political skill serves as a unique and effective coping resource for individuals experiencing stressors in their work environments because politically skilled employees: (1) have a belief they have more control over the process and outcomes of interactions with others, (2) possess an enhanced understanding of the work environment and the adverse stimuli encountered,
and (3) tend to interpret environmental stimuli related to interpersonal interactions as an opportunity rather than a threat (Perrewe et al., 2004). Supporting these ideas, Perrewe et al. (2004) recently provided evidence that political skill moderates the relationship between the stressor of role conflict and psychological anxiety, somatic complaints, and psychological strain (Perrewe et al., 2004).

There is also reason to believe that political skill moderates the effects of politics perceptions on employees’ perceptions of the organizational exchange relationship. In particular, in political environments it is less clear which behaviors are necessary to achieve rewards and, as a result, the performance-reward linkage is weakened (Randall et al., 1999; Rosen et al., in press). However, the combination of extensive networks, personal ties, and the ability to influence multiple constituencies provides politically skilled individuals with more understanding and control over allocation processes in political environments (Perrewe & Nelson, 2004; Perrewe et al., 2004). Furthermore, being politically skilled is associated with being able to effectively identify and interpret social cues and generate situation-specific political behavior (Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 2005). For example, Ferris et al. (1989) speculated that, under certain conditions, politics perceptions can stimulate opportunistic behavior by encouraging participants to play the political game and providing an opportunity for participants to do so. In such environments, politically skilled employees may be more successful in acquiring desired outcomes from the organization because they possess a better understanding of the types of behaviors that are rewarded in such environments. Thus, it is likely that the negative relationship between organizational politics perceptions and social exchange perceptions will be weaker for politically skilled employees because they (1) have more knowledge
of which behaviors are rewarded by the organization and (2) are able to effectively engage in those behaviors to achieve desired outcomes in environments that reward subjective, interpersonal behaviors. As such, politically skilled employees may be more effective in obtaining positive outcomes in political environments (Ferris et al., 2005; Perrewé et al., 2000). As a result, these employees likely view the employee-organization exchange relationship as more favorable because they perceive that the organization will be more likely to meet their needs in the long-run.

In sum, theoretical (Ferris et al., 2002; 2005; Perrewé et al., 2000) and empirical work (Perrewé et al., 2004) on political skill are used to support the propositions that political skill moderates the relationship between perceptions of politics and both stress and social exchange perceptions. Perrewé et al. (2004) suggested that political skill serves as an “antidote” to job stressors; especially when interpersonal aspects of the work environment are the source of stress. Individuals high in political skill likely experience less stress resulting from politics perceptions because of their beliefs regarding control over social processes and interactions with others (Perrewé, 2000; 2004). Thus, politically skilled employees view political situations as an opportunity rather than a threat. Additionally, the degree of fit between a person and his or her environment is a determinant of the amount of strain experienced (Lazarus, 1999), as well as that person’s success in such environments. Politically skilled employees are more likely to fit into political environments because they have the capability of adapting their behavior to fit into, and achieve success in, environments where interpersonal interactions (rather than merit) are important for achieving success. Therefore, in political environments, political
skill serves as a resource that aids individuals in coping with the political behaviors of others. Thus,

_Hypothesis 16: Political skill moderates the relationship between POPS and stress such that the positive relationship between POPS and stress will be weakest for those high in political skill._

_Hypothesis 17: Political skill moderates the relationship between POPS and social exchange perceptions such that the negative relationship between POPS and exchange perception will be weakest for those high in political skill._
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 422 undergraduate students at an urban, Midwestern university who received extra-credit points for their participation in the study. To participate, participants must have been working at least part time and willing to give permission to contact their supervisors. Supervisors returned a total of 231 surveys, yielding a response rate of 55%.

Procedure and Design

First, the survey packet was distributed in classes. Subordinates were asked to complete a survey which assessed demographic information, the feedback environment, perceptions of organizational politics, political skill, social exchange perceptions, work-related stress, morale, trust, counterproductive work behaviors, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and job search behaviors. After completing the surveys, participants were asked to complete a consent form allowing their supervisors to be contacted regarding their work performance. Participants who provided their consent were then asked to give a survey to their immediate supervisors. The supervisor survey assessed employee performance (e.g., task performance, OCBs), subordinate political skill, employee retention, and supervisor demographic information. Supervisors were asked to mail completed surveys directly to the researchers.

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Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all variables were assessed with a 7-point Likert-type response scale with anchors ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree. Table 1 provides lists of constructs, scales, and sources of data for all measures used in the present study. Items for all measures are also included in the Appendix A.

Demographics. Participants provided several pieces of demographic information. This information includes their age, gender, and ethnicity. In addition, participants were asked to provide information about their employment history with their current employer. This information includes their current employment status, occupation, length of employment, length of employment with supervisor, number of hours they work per week for their employer, and number of direct reports.

Perceptions of organizational politics. Kacmar and Carlson’s (1997) 15-item Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) was used to measure the extent to which subordinates view their work environment as political (e.g., “Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political”). This measure has three subscales: 1) general political behavior, 2) going along to get ahead, and 3) pay and promotion. Coefficient alpha values for this scale have ranged from .76 to .91 (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Kacmar et al., 1999; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991).

Feedback environment. The suggestions of Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, and Smith (2002) were applied to Rosen et al.’s (2006) data set to create a shortened version of Steelman et al.’s (2004) Feedback Environment Scale (FES; Supervisor FES, \( \alpha = .95 \); Coworker FES \( \alpha = .94 \)) which were used in the present study to assess subordinates’ perceptions of their feedback-related interactions with supervisors and co-workers. More specifically, data
Table 1.

**Table of Constructs, Sources, Measures, and Scale Authors.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Authors of Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Feedback Environment</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Feedback Environment Scale</td>
<td>Steelman et al. (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Worker Feedback Environment</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Feedback Environment Scale</td>
<td>Steelman et al. (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Organizational Politics</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale</td>
<td>Kacmar &amp; Carlson (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Skill</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Political Skill Inventory</td>
<td>Ferris et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job-Related Stress</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Work Tension Scale</td>
<td>House &amp; Rizzo (1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange Perceptions</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Social Exchange Perceptions Scale</td>
<td>Shore et al. (in press)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction Scale</td>
<td>Cammann et al. (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Affective Commitment Scale</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Organizational Trust Scale</td>
<td>Schoorman et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Dimensional Work Performance</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>In-Role Performance Scale</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Anderson (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Performance</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>OCBI and OCBO Scales</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Anderson (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship Behaviors</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Turnover Intentions Scale</td>
<td>Cammann et al. (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Withdrawal</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Voluntary Absenteeism Scale</td>
<td>Dalton &amp; Mesch (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Measures of Preparatory and Active Job Search</td>
<td>Blau (1993, 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Interpersonal and Organizational Deviance Scales</td>
<td>Bennett &amp; Robinson (2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

on the feedback environment, collected for Rosen et al.'s (2006) study, were examined following Stanton et al.'s (2002) judgmental, internal, and external reduction approaches.

First, judgment was used to identify items which should be dropped. In particular, items that were negatively worded or semantically redundant were removed from the scale.

Next, to examine the internal consistency of the scale, the reliability (α) of each facet was assessed before and after items were eliminated. The drop in reliability across the facets was trivial. Finally, correlation coefficients among sub-scales, scale scores, and external criteria (e.g., politics perceptions and job satisfaction) were assessed. Analyses indicated that, following item reduction, correlation coefficients did not show a significant change for these external criteria. As such, the shortened scale was used in the present study to assess the feedback environment.

The FES is divided into supervisor and co-worker source factors, each of which has the following seven facets: Source Credibility, Feedback Quality, Feedback Delivery,
Feedback Seeking. Sample items for each facet, respectively, include “My supervisor/co-workers is/are generally familiar with my performance”, “The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor/co-workers is helpful”, “My supervisor/co-workers is/are tactful when giving me performance feedback”, “I seldom receive praise from my supervisor/co-workers”, “On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor/co-workers tells/tell me”, “I have little contact with my supervisor/co-workers”, and “I feel comfortable asking my supervisor/co-workers about my performance.” The reliability of the reduced scale, assessed using the data set from Rosen et al. (in press) is adequate.

Political skill. Political skill of subordinates was measured using Ferris et al.’s (2005) Political Skill Inventory (PSI). This scale has 18 items and four factors: networking ability, apparent sincerity, social astuteness, and interpersonal influence. Sample items from each factor, respectively, include “I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others”, “It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do”, “I understand people very well”, and “I am good at getting people to like me.” In Ferris et al’s (2005) validation study, reliabilities for each of the subscales were adequate, ranging from .73 to .87

Social exchange perceptions. Employee perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships were measured using Shore et al.’s (in press) eight-item scale which assesses employees’ perceptions of the social exchange relationships that they have with their organizations (α = .87). Sample items include “I have not received
everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions” and “The things I do on the job today will benefit my standing with the organization in the long run.”

*Work Stress.* Work-related stress was measured with 7 items developed by House and Rizzo (1972) to assess job-induced tension and anxiety. Sample items include “I work under a great deal of tension” and “If I had a different job, my health would probably improve.” Coefficient alpha values for this scale have ranged from .71 to .89 (Bunce & West, 1996; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1998; Netemeyer, Johnston, & Burton, 1990; Sanchez & Brock, 1996).

*Organizational trust.* The four items used by Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis (1996) were adapted to measure subordinate’s trust in the organization. Sample items from this scale include “If I had my way, I wouldn’t let top management have any influence over issues that are important to me” and “I would be willing to let the organization have complete control over my future in this company.” Coefficient alphas for this scale have ranged from .59 to .82 (Schoorman et al., 1996; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Gill, Boies, Finegan, & McNally, 2005).

*Counterproductive work behaviors.* An adaptation of Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) interpersonal and organizational deviance scales was used to assess subordinates’ counterproductive behaviors. The interpersonal deviance scale has 7 items (e.g., “Said something hurtful to someone at work”) and the organizational deviance scale contains 12 items (e.g., “Taken property from work without permission”). Responses are obtained using a 7-point Likert-type scale where 1 = never and 7 = very often. The reported reliabilities of these scales have been adequate; .86 and .82 respectively (Dunlop & Lee,
2004). Items for the scales are introduced with the statement “In the past six months, how often have you . . .”

Absenteism. Absenteism was measured using an adaptation of two items that were developed by Dalton and Mesch (1991) to tap avoidable absence. The first of these items measures absenteism due to health-related issues and asks “How many days were you off the job in the last six months because of your health (colds, flu, injuries, etc.)?” The second question comprised the total absence variable and states “Excluding vacation time, excused time, and holiday time, how many days were you off in the last six months?” The difference between responses to these two questions can be used to assess avoidable absenteism. However, Dalton and Mesch (1991) suggest that these questions should be placed in different sections of questionnaires in order to maximize the accuracy of the measure. Therefore, these questions will be placed in separate sections of the subordinate surveys. The reported coefficient of stability for this measure was .91 (Dalton & Mesch, 1991).

Job search. Job search behavior was measured using a 12-item behavioral scale based on Blau’s (1993, 1994) measures. Of these 12-items, 6 represent preparatory job search behaviors (e.g., “Read the help wanted/classified ads in a newspaper, journal, or professional association”) and the remaining 6 items represent active job search behaviors (e.g., “Listed yourself as a job applicant in a newspaper, journal, or professional association”). Subjects were asked to indicate the frequency with which they carried out each behavioral item in the last 6 months on a 7-point scale where 1 = “Never” (0 times), 4 = “Occasionally” (3 to 5 times), and 7 = “Very frequently” (at least
10 times). The reliability of the preparatory job search and active job search behavior scales has been acceptable in the past (α = .79, α = .76, respectively).

**Turnover intentions.** A three item scale by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) was used to measure turnover intentions. Response options for two of the items ("I often think about quitting my job with my present organization" and "I will probably look for a new job in the next year") ranged from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree', and for the last item ("How likely is it that you will actively look for a new job in the next year?") ranged from (1) 'not at all likely' to (7) 'extremely likely.' The scale has a reported reliability of .84 (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1982; Harris et al., 2005).

**Morale.** Morale was assessed using scales that measure affective commitment and job satisfaction. Organizational commitment of subordinates will be measured using Allen and Meyer’s (1990) 8-item Affective Commitment Scale. A sample item is "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me." The reported reliability of this scale is adequate (α = .77 to .88: Allen & Meyer, 1990; Rosen et al., 2006). Job satisfaction was measured using 3 items developed by Cammann et al. (1979). A sample item is "All in all, I am satisfied with my job." Reliability for this scale has ranged from .67 to .95 (McFarlin & Rice, 1992; McLain, 1995; Rosen et al., 2006; Sanchez & Brock, 1996; Siegall & McDonald, 1995).

**Performance.** Supervisors rated the performance of subordinates using the task (seven items), OCBI, and OCBO scales developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). The seven OCBI items tap those behaviors that benefit specific individuals in the organization (e.g., "Helps others who have been absent.") whereas the six OCBO items
tap those behaviors that benefit the organization as a whole (e.g., “Adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order.”). Task performance data were collected using Williams and Anderson’s (1991) seven-item measure of task behavior, shown by them to be independent of the OCBs (e.g., “Meets formal performance requirements of the job.”). Coefficient alphas ranged from .61 to .88 for OCBs, .70 to .75 for OCBOs, and .80 to .94 for task performance. (Funderburg & Levy, 1997; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Thompson & Werner, 1997; Williams & Anderson, 1991; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Retention. Retention was measured by five items (e.g., “Employee indicated an intention to leave or quit his or her job”) that were developed by Andrews, Witt, & Kacmar (2003). These items assess the probability that the employee will remain with the organization. The reported reliability of this scale is .89 (Andrews et al., 2003).

Statistical Analysis Strategy

With the exception of hypotheses 16 and 17, all hypotheses involve tests of the relationships among latent constructs, which will be estimated using the structural equation modeling software Mplus v. 2.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2004). For these analyses, maximum likelihood estimation will be used. First, a measurement model will be created using multi-item composites that will be created for each of the ten latent constructs. These composites will be created from subscales of the existing measures or from preliminary exploratory factor analytic results. Following the creation and evaluation of the measurement model, the extended mediation model will be tested. The analyses will utilize Hu and Bentler’s (1999) fit criteria, which recommend the following cutoff values when evaluating model fit: 0.09 or below for the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), values approaching .95 for the Comparative Fit Index (CFI),

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and .06 or below for the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). Goodman statistics derived from Sobel tests will also be provided as supplemental evidence for mediation.

In addition to model fit indices, the mediated effects proposed in the model will be assessed using supplementary guidelines. First, the significance and direction of all the hypothesized paths comprising the proposed mediational chains will be assessed. Second, Baron and Kenny’s (1986) criteria for mediation will be used to evaluate the relationships in the model. In addition, Goodman statistics (Goodman, 1960; Sobel, 1982) will be calculated to test the statistical significance of the proposed indirect effects included in the model. The interactive webpage developed by Preacher and Leonardelli (2001) will be used for these calculations.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that the negative relationship between the supervisor feedback environment and politics perceptions will be higher in magnitude than the relationship between the co-worker feedback environment and politics perceptions. Hypothesis 3 will be tested using Mplus to compare two models. In the first model, the co-worker and supervisor feedback environments paths will be freely estimated. In the second model, equality constraints will be set on the two paths. The chi-square statistics for these two models will then be compared to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the magnitude of the two paths.

Hypotheses 16 and 17 predict that political skill will interact with politics perceptions to predict stress and social exchange perceptions. Specifically, it is proposed that the relationship between politics perceptions and stress will be weaker for those who are high in political skill and the negative relationship between politics perceptions and
the social exchange perceptions will also be weaker for those who are higher in political skill. Moderated multiple regression will be used to assess the hypothesized moderated relationship. Since all the predictor variables are continuous, the variables will first be centered to reduce the effects of multicollinearity, and then the interaction terms will be calculated. A single regression analyses will be run to examine the interaction effects of the predictors on stress. Participants’ age, tenure and working hours will be entered in the first model as control variables. Participants’ perceptions of politics and political skill will be included in the second model. The interaction terms between perceptions of organizational politics and political skill will be entered in step three. Results will be presented in a table and a figure will be provided to illustrate the interaction.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The present section summarizes the results of the current study. It begins with a discussion of the sample and the data screening and cleaning techniques that were applied to the data prior to the development of the measurement and structural models. The screening and cleaning section provides a discussion of missing data, outliers, and confirmatory factor analyses that were used to examine the measures used in the present study. Following the data screening and cleaning sections, Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach is used to development measurement and structural models. Following the development of a well-fitting structural model, the relationships proposed in Hypotheses 1 through 15 are discussed. Hypotheses 16 and 17 are then tested exclusively by a series of moderated multiple regression analyses. Following the discussion of hypothesis testing, there is a section which details the results of exploratory analyses where alternative models were examined.

Sample Description

Four hundred-twenty two undergraduate students at an urban, Midwestern university provided the subordinate responses. The participants were all working at least part time and gave us their permission to contact their supervisors. Supervisors returned a total of 231 surveys, yielding a response rate of 55%. The average age of the subordinate participants was 23 years old. Women made up 70% of the sample. Approximately 81%
were Caucasian, 11% were African American, and the remaining 8% classified themselves as Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, or Other. Average job tenure was approximately two years, with an average of 26 hours worked per week. Approximately 40% of the participants worked 30 or more hours per week. Respondents represented a variety of organizations and occupations including service and sales (40%); professional, technical, and management (30%); clerical (11%); education (10%); healthcare (6%); and other (5%). The average age of supervisors was 38 years old. Approximately 58% of the supervisors were female and 85% were Caucasian. They had supervised the target employee for an average of two years and had worked with their organizations for an average of 8 years.

Data Screening and Cleaning

An examination of the data revealed that four cases needed to be dropped because these participants supplied incomplete data on entire scales. An inspection of the missing data indicated that the responses of these participants were missing at random. In particular, these participants each skipped a single page of the questionnaire, apparently by accident. These four cases that were dropped represented less than 2% of the total sample. Nine additional cases were dropped because these participants were under the age of 18.

Three more cases were dropped because analyses indicated that these cases were univariate and multivariate outliers which had undue influence on the results. To detect such observations, the scale scores of each observed variable for each respondent were screened using standardized residuals, Cook’s D, and Mahalanobis distance criteria. Observations that exceeded the recommended cutoff values on these criteria (Fox, 1991;
Lambert, Edwards, & Cable, 2003) and which were shown by scatterplots to have undue influence were discarded from further analyses. Unless otherwise noted, data from 215 participants were used for the structural model analyses presented in this chapter.

Confirmatory Factor Analyses. All measures used in the present study were from established scales. However, prior to examining the measurement model, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted on the items of each scale to ensure that there were no major deviations from the expected factor structures when the scales were used in the present sample. These CFAs were performed in Mplus 2.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2004) using maximum likelihood estimation. In addition to examining fit statistics, factor loadings for the items were examined to determine whether any items needed to be dropped from the scales. Items were dropped if they met the following three criteria: (1) CFAs showed that the items loaded on their scales below .30, (2) Fit statistics for the a priori factor structure improved after the items were removed, and (3) the reliability of the scale increased after the item was dropped.

A total of four items met these criteria. Three items from the perceptions of organizational politics scale met all three of these criteria for dropping items from the scales. These items included item 1 from the Going Along to Get Ahead subscale of the POPS and items 1 and 2 from the Pay and Promotion subscale (see Appendix A). A closer inspection of these items indicated that all three were reverse scored, two of these were double-barreled items, and one contained a double-negative. In addition, an examination of previously collected datasets, including the one used by Rosen et al. (2006), reveals that these particular items have consistently shown low loadings on their respective factors in previous studies. Therefore, these three items were dropped from
further analyses. One item from the trust scale (item 2) was also dropped because it met the three aforementioned criteria for dropping items from the scales. This item was the only reverse-scored item on the scale, which may explain why it had such a low loading on the factor. After dropping these four items, CFAs indicated that the remaining items loaded on each of the factors and scales as anticipated, fit indices were adequate, and reliabilities were acceptable. Thus, the remaining items and factor structures were retained when assessing the measurement model.

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

Table 2 presents mean values, standard deviations, bi-variate correlations, and reliabilities (on the diagonals) for the observed scale score variables in this study. In addition, Table 3 presents the measurement model correlations among the latent variables that were the focus of this study. These correlations may be viewed as disattenuated (i.e., adjusted for unreliability). As can be seen in Table 3, only three of the latent correlations are not statistically significant (i.e., stress-performance, stress-CFE, and exchange-performance).
Table 2.

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities.

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Note: SFE = Supervisor Feedback Environment; CFE = Co-Worker Feedback Environment, POPS = Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale; AC = Affective Commitment; JSAT = Job Satisfaction; CWBI = Counterproductive Work Behaviors-Individual; CWBO = Counterproductive Work Behaviors-Organizational; OCBI = Organizational Citizenship Behaviors-Individual; OCBO = Organizational Citizenship Behaviors-Organizational; TO/Int = Turnover Intentions; PSI = Political Skill Inventory.

* p < .05
### Table 3.

**Correlations of Latent Constructs.**

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Note: SFE = Supervisor Feedback Environment; CFE = Co-worker Feedback Environment; POPS = Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale; CWB = Counterproductive Work Behaviors

*p < .05

**Model Testing – The Measurement Model**

For the measurement model, scale scores, multiple-item parcels (see Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999), and single items were used as indicators of latent constructs.

Specifically, indicators for the supervisor and coworker feedback environment constructs consisted of the seven relevant FES subscale scores. Indicators for the politics construct consisted of the three relevant POPS subscale scores. The morale factor was modeled using the job satisfaction and affective commitment scales as indicators (see Rosen et al., 2006). The multi-dimensional performance construct had three indicators, consisting of the scale scores for task performance, OCBI and OCBO. The Counterproductive Work Behaviors construct had two indicators consisting of the scale scores for CWBI and CWBO. Initially, four indicators were used for employee withdrawal. These included scale scores for turnover intentions, job search behaviors, retention, and an overall measure of voluntary absenteeism. Following the suggestions of Hall et al. (1999), multi-
item parcels were used to create two indicators of social exchange perceptions and three indicators of stress. Finally, three items from the trust scale were used as indicators of trust.

In the structural equation model (SEM) analyses, a two-step approach for testing a latent variable model was used (see Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). All confirmatory and structural analyses were estimated using the SEM software Mplus v. 2.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2004). Rather than simply relying on chi-square change statistics to determine the viability of the models, model fit was assessed using the two-index presentation approach of Hu and Bentler (1999). This approach results in lower Type II error rates with acceptable costs of Type I error rates (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Therefore, the following cutoff values were used when evaluating model fit: .09 (or below) for the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), values approaching .95 for the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and .06 (or below) for the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). The same cutoff criteria approach was applied to the subsequent measurement and structural models used to test hypotheses. Fit statistics for all of the measurement models tested in this study are reported in Table 4.

Table 4 reports fit statistics for the hypothesized measurement model (see Figure 3). As can be seen in Figure 3, not all indicators loaded on their specified latent constructs adequately (e.g., absenteeism on withdraw). In addition, Table 4 indicates that the fit statistics for the hypothesized measurement model are lower than desirable for showing adequate model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). A closer inspection of the model, residual variances, and loadings indicated two major problems with the model, which were both centered on the latent construct of withdrawal. First, absenteeism did not load
Figure 3.

Hypothesized measurement model.

Note: All latent constructs were allowed to freely intercorrelate.
Table 4.

*Fit Indices for Measurement Models.*

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<th>Model</th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>$\chi^2/df$</th>
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<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>CFI</th>
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highly on withdrawal ($\lambda = .09, p < .05$), indicating that this measure of voluntary absenteeism accounted for a nonsignificant amount of variance in the withdrawal construct. A closer inspection of the data indicated that, because the participants were from a student sample, many reported summer vacation days as voluntary absences. In particular, many participants reported 30-60 days of voluntary absenteeism. In addition, the standardized residuals associated with this variable were quite large (equal to one). Thus, this measure may not have captured voluntary absenteeism in the way that was anticipated.

A second problem with the withdrawal construct was illuminated by the modification indices which indicated that retention should also load on performance. An inspection of the correlation matrix (Table 2) indicates that the correlation between retention and indicators of performance is quite high (greater than .40), and actually greater than the correlation between retention and measures of withdrawal (e.g., turnover intentions and search behaviors). This relationship likely created problems with
multicollinearity that could detrimentally affect the interpretation of measurement and structural models and affect the stability of the loadings being tested in this analysis (Klein, 1998). Furthermore, an inspection of this scale indicated that the items likely do not tap employee withdrawal, but rather job satisfaction (e.g., "This employee expresses dissatisfaction with work requirements") and (anti)citizenship behaviors (e.g., "This employee has been involved in serious conflicts or disputes with co-workers"). Therefore, to simplify analyses and understanding and because neither construct was a major element of the study, absenteeism and retention were dropped from further analyses.

Table 4 reports the fit statistics and chi-square test for the modified measurement model, labeled Modified Measurement Model I. The measurement model included ten latent constructs representing the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments, perceptions of organizational politics, exchange perceptions, stress, morale, trust, counterproductive work behaviors, multi-dimensional work performance, and employee withdrawal. These were all allowed to freely intercorrelate, so that model fit indices reflected the adequacy of the proposed relationships between the constructs and their indicators. Though this model had better fit than the hypothesized measurement model, modification indices indicated that fit might be improved if the residuals of indicators within the FES, politics, and trust subscale were allowed to co-vary. Because these modifications also made conceptual sense, they were included in another modified
Figure 4.

*Modified measurement model.*

Note: The residuals of the following indicators were allowed to co-vary: cunfav with sunfav; csocred with ssocred; cfbs with sfbs; cfavfb with sfavfb; trust3r with trust1r; cfbs with cfavfb; savail with sunfav; cunfav with cfbdel; cavail with savail; cfbqual with csocred; popf1 with popf2; cavail with cfbdel
measurement model (Modified Measurement Model II). This model fit the data adequately ($\chi^2 = 748, df = 470, p < .05, SRMR = .06, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .05, \chi^2 / df = 1.59$) and all loadings of the measured variables on their respective constructs were statistically significant (see Figure 4).

With a reasonably well-fitting measurement model, a structural model was tested and paths between the latent variables were estimated. As mentioned previously, the fit of this model to the data was assessed using multiple fit indices including the SRMSR, RMSEA, and CFI (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Figure 5 presents the subsequent structural model with standardized path estimates. As shown in Table 5, this model (Structural Model I) had adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 875, df = 497, p < .05, SRMR = .09, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .06, \chi^2 / df = 1.76$).

Inspection of the path coefficients in Figure 5 indicates that morale linked politics, stress, and exchange perceptions to employee outcomes (e.g., CWB and withdrawal). However, the mediating role of trust was not as clear. In particular, the path linking exchange to trust was significant, however, none of the paths linking trust to employee outcomes (e.g., counterproductive work behaviors, performance, withdrawal behaviors) were statistically significant. Therefore, all nonsignificant paths associated with trust were trimmed from the model. As a result of trimming these paths, trust becomes an outcome variable along with performance, CWBs, and withdrawal. This did not result in a change in fit of the model (see Row 2 of Table 5); and the resulting trimmed structural model (Figure 6) is more parsimonious. Thus, further analyses were performed on the trimmed structural model.
Next, a model was tested that included not only the hypothesized mediating (i.e., indirect) paths, but also direct paths from politics to employee outcomes. The purpose of this estimation was to determine whether additional direct paths should be included in the proposed model, in order to capture possible partial mediation effects. If paths were statistically significant and their inclusion resulted in a significant change in chi-square, then they were retained for further analyses. Results (see Table 5) indicated that model fit changed significantly ($\Delta \chi^2 = 60; p < .05$) with the inclusion of direct paths from politics to: 1) performance, 2) CWB, 3) withdrawal, and 4) trust. However, this was an omnibus test of all direct paths (see Row 3 of Table 4). Each direct path was then examined separately to determine if it was significant and if its inclusion resulted in a significant change in fit to the model. As shown in Table 5, direct paths from politics to CWB, trust, withdraw, and performance were statistically significant and resulted in significant changes in chi-square (CWB: $\Delta \chi^2 = 26; p < .05$; Trust: $\Delta \chi^2 = 19; p < .05$; Performance: $\Delta \chi^2 = 6; p < .05$; Withdraw: $\Delta \chi^2 = 11; p < .05$) from the trimmed model (Structural Model II in Table 5). Thus, these paths were retained. In addition, a direct path from politics to morale was examined. This path was not statistically significant and its inclusion did not change the fit of the model and, as such, was not used in further analyses.
Figure 5.

A priori structural model.

Note: † p < .10, * p < .05
Table 5.

*Fit Statistics For Structural Models.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
<th>SRMSR</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>CFI</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Priori Model</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>1.76</td>
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<td>.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trimmed A Priori Model</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.89</td>
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<td>All Direct Paths</td>
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<td>817</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct to Performance</td>
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<td>Direct to Withdraw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct to Trust</td>
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<td>858</td>
<td>497</td>
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<td>.89</td>
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<td>8. Structural Model VIII:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct to CWB, Trust, POPs, Withdraw</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>1.66</td>
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<td>.06</td>
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<td>9. Structural Model IX:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct to CWB, Trust, and Performance</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<td>10. Structural Model X:</td>
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<td>Exploratory Model</td>
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<td>1197</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.92</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.

Trimmed structural model.

Note: † p < .10, * p < .05
As a result of including direct paths from politics to CWB, performance, and trust, the paths from morale to CWB and performance and exchange to trust became nonsignificant. In addition, when the direct paths from politics to trust, CWB, performance, and withdraw were examined simultaneously, the direct path from politics to withdraw became nonsignificant. Thus, for the sake of parsimony, these paths were trimmed from the model. Figure 7 illustrates the best-fitting structural model which was re-specified to include direct paths from politics to CWB, performance, and trust. These findings provide preliminary evidence that the effects of politics withdrawal are fully mediated by stress, exchange, and morale. Finally, contrary to the a priori model, Figure 7 indicates that the effects that politics have on CWB, performance, and trust are direct, rather than through the proposed mediational chain.

Because some of these direct paths are inconsistent with the a priori model, the multi-dimensional outcome variables were broken down into their components to help explain the findings that were contrary to the a priori model (e.g., the existence of only a direct path from politics to performance). As such, latent constructs representing each dimension of performance (OCBI, OCBO, task performance), CWBs (CWBI and CWBO) and employee withdrawal (job search and turnover intentions) were examined as outcomes in these analyses. This allows for a more fine grained analysis of the results and provides more information regarding how politics are related to specific outcomes. In particular, this analysis allows the researcher to determine if there are direct paths from politics to all performance measures (OCBI, OCBO, task performance) or if the relationship between politics and performance is driven primarily by a single dimension of performance.
Figure 7.
Latent structural model with significant direct paths.

Note: † p < .10, * p < .05
Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) suggestions, a two-step approach was used to develop a new measurement model (see Figure 8) which was used to examine the structural relationships among focal variables. In the new measurement model, multi-item parcels, as opposed to scale scores, were used as indicators of the dependent variables (e.g., OCBI, OCBO, task performance, CWBI, CWBO, job search, and turnover intentions). Correlated residual variances found in Measurement Model II were retained in the final measurement model. The new measurement model (Modified Measurement Model III in Table 4) had adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 1090, df = 757, p < .05, SRMR = .06, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .05, \chi^2 / df = 1.44$) and all indicators loaded significantly on their corresponding latent constructs. Thus, this measurement model was retained for developing the expanded structural model.

With the exception of trust, which was previously re-specified as a direct outcome of politics, a fully mediated model was tested (see Figure 9). With the exception of the path linking morale to OCB, all paths in this model were statistically significant ($p < .05$) and in the anticipated direction. In addition, the model fit the data adequately ($\chi^2 = 1232, df = 805, p < .05, SRMR = .09, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .05, \chi^2 / df = 1.53$). These results are consistent with the initial trimmed structural model presented in Figure 6. Next, the direct paths from politics perceptions to performance, CWB, and withdrawal variables were examined. Each of these paths were examined independently because multicollinearity in the dependent variables may inflate path estimates when they are examined simultaneously. Table 6 presents the results of the tests of direct effects. Results indicated the presence of four significant direct paths: politics $\rightarrow$ CWBI; politics $\rightarrow$ CWBO; politics $\rightarrow$ in-role, politics $\rightarrow$ search. Inclusion of these direct paths indicated
that only the direct effects from politics to CWBI, CWBO, and task performance were statistically significant. In addition, when all significant direct paths were estimated simultaneously, the direct path linking politics to job search became nonsignificant.

The Final Structural Model, in which all nonsignificant paths were trimmed, is presented in Figure 10. These results serve to clarify and explain the findings presented in Figure 7 that are inconsistent with the a priori model. In particular, Figure 7 indicated that the relationship between politics and performance may not be mediated as expected in the proposed model. However, the structural model presented in Figure 10 reveals that politics are directly related to only task performance and the proposed mediational chains still hold for OCBI and OCBO. These results are further discussed in the following section within the context of hypothesis testing.
Table 6.

*Fit Statistics For Scale-Level Structural Models.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>(\chi^2/df)</th>
<th>SRMSR</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>CFI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Scale-level Structural Model I</td>
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<td>805</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scale-level Structural Model II: All direct paths</td>
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<td>1188</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scale-level Structural Model III: Direct to CWBI</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>6. Scale-level Structural Model VI: Direct to OCBI</td>
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<td>7. Scale-level Structural Model VII: Direct to Task</td>
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<td>8. Scale-level Structural Model VIII: Direct to TO/Int</td>
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<td>9. Scale-level Structural Model IX: Direct to Job Search</td>
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<td>10. Scale-level Structural Model X: Direct to Task, CWBI, CWBO, Job Search</td>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.92</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8.

*Measurement model with scale-level outcomes.*
Figure 9.

*Structural model with outcomes at the scale level.*

Note: † *p* < .10, * *p* < .05
Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The Final Structural Model (see Figure 10), in which the a priori latent constructs are examined at the scale level, was used to test hypotheses 1 through 15. Many of these hypotheses propose direct relationships between variables. However, some of these hypotheses are associated with mediated relationships. To determine whether the results supported the hypotheses associated with direct relationships, fit statistics and path estimates were examined. For the mediational hypotheses, fit statistics and path estimates were supplemented with an examination of Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria along with the presentation of Goodman statistics. These techniques are consistent with the suggestions of researchers (e.g., Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; Preacher & Hayes, 2004) regarding the examination of extended mediational chains in SEM.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. The first three hypotheses focused on the relationship between the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments and politics perceptions. Hypothesis 1 proposed that the supervisor feedback environment would be negatively related to employees' perceptions of organizational politics. Hypothesis 2 proposed that the co-worker feedback environment would be negatively related to employees' perceptions of organizational politics. In addition, Hypothesis 3 proposed that the supervisor feedback environment would have a stronger negative relationship with politics perceptions than the co-worker feedback environment. In support of Hypothesis 1, the path estimate between the supervisor feedback environment and politics perceptions in Figure 7 indicates that the supervisor feedback environment had a statistically significant effect ($\beta = -.59, p < .05$) on politics perceptions. Similarly,
results supported Hypothesis 2 by indicating that the co-worker feedback environment had a statistically significant effect on politics perceptions ($\beta = -0.30, p < 0.05$). A further examination of the results reveals that a total of 56% of the variance in perceptions of organizational politics was explained by the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments. The supervisor feedback environment accounted for 63% of the variance accounted for in perceptions of politics, whereas the CFE accounted for 17% of the variance accounted for in perceptions of politics. Additionally, the shared variance of the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments explained 20% of the variance accounted for in the POPS.

A comparison of these two path coefficients provides support for Hypothesis 3. In particular, the path from the supervisor feedback environment to politics ($\beta = -0.59$) is higher in magnitude than the path from the co-worker feedback environment to politics ($\beta = -0.30$). In addition, equality constraints were imposed on these two paths to test the significance of the difference between these coefficients. Supporting Hypothesis 3, the model constraining these two paths to be equal showed significantly worse fit than the unconstrained model which allowed the two paths to vary ($\Delta \chi^2 = 8, p < 0.05$).

Hypotheses 4 and 5. Hypotheses 4 and 5 were associated with the role of stress in linking politics to morale. Hypothesis 4 proposed that politics perceptions would be positively related to stress experienced by employees. As shown in Figure 10, politics perceptions did indeed have a positive effect on stress reported by employees ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.05$). Hypothesis 5 proposed that stress mediates the relationship between politics perceptions and employee morale. The path coefficients between politics and stress ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.05$) and stress and morale ($\beta = -0.17, p < 0.05$) provided some initial support for
this hypothesis. In addition, results of SEM analyses did not indicate the presence of a
direct path from politics to morale.

To provide additional evidence for mediation, Hypothesis 5 is discussed within
the context of Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria. According to Baron and Kenny (1986),
mediation can be said to occur if the following conditions are met: (1) the independent
variable is related to the dependent variable, (2) the independent variable is correlated
with the mediator, (3) the mediator has a unique effect on the dependent variable, and (4)
the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable weakens upon the
addition of the mediator to the model. Recently, Kenny and colleagues (Kenny et al.,
1998; Kenny, 2006) have suggested that, when examining extended mediational chains,
the essential steps to showing mediation are Steps 2 and 3 because Step 1 is implied if
these steps are met and Step 4 is only crucial if the expectation is full mediation. Thus,
mediation will be discussed in the context of Baron and Kenny's (1986) second and third
criteria for mediation.

An examination of the correlation matrices (Tables 2 and 3) along with
hierarchical regression analyses, indicated that Baron and Kenny's (1986) essential steps
for showing mediation are met for Hypothesis 5. To supplement these findings, Goodman
statistics were calculated to test the statistical significance of the hypothesized indirect
effects on the morale factor. In this procedure, the magnitude of the unstandardized
indirect effect and its accompanying standard error are calculated, using procedures based
upon the work of Sobel (1982) and Goodman (1960). The ratio of the indirect effect over
its standard error is compared to a z-distribution to determine statistical significance. The
interactive web page developed by Preacher and Leonardelli (2001) was used for these calculations.

Table 7 presents the results of these tests which assessed the statistical significance of the indirect effects of the feedback environment and politics on stress and morale. The first two rows of Table 7 provide the results of tests of the indirect effects of the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments on stress. Both of these three-variable mediational chains were statistically significant (SFE: z = -2.01, p < .05; CFE: z = -2.62, p < .05), indicating that the co-worker and supervisor feedback environments have an impact on stress through politics perceptions. The third and fourth rows provide estimates of the indirect effects of the feedback environment, politics, and stress on morale. There are no accepted analogous tests to Goodman statistics that can be calculated on these more extended mediational chains. However, the magnitude of the indirect effects can be calculated in this situation by multiplying the path coefficients in the mediational chain. The magnitudes of the indirect effects (αβ) are presented in rows three and four of Table 6. Finally, row five provides a Goodman test of the three-variable mediational chain which links politics to morale through stress. Results indicate that this indirect effect is marginally significant (z = -1.91, p < .10). Therefore, there is evidence that the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments have effects on stress through politics (Table 7, Rows 1 and 2) and that politics perceptions are related to morale through stress (Table 7, Row 5). In addition, politics do not have a direct effect on employee morale. Taken together, the structural model, Goodman statistics, and Baron and Kenny’s (1986) criteria provide evidence that stress mediates the effects of politics and the feedback environment on morale.
Hypotheses 6, 7, and 8. Hypotheses 6, 7, and 8 pertain to the role of employee morale in mediating the relationship between stress and employee outcomes. In particular, Hypothesis 6 proposes that stress mediates the relationship between politics perceptions and a multi-dimensional measure of work performance. Hypothesis 7 proposes that morale mediates the relationship between stress and employee withdrawal from the organization. Hypothesis 8 proposes that morale mediates the relationship between stress and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). As previously discussed, the multi-dimensional latent construct model (Figure 7) indicates that the relationships between politics, task performance, and CWBs are not mediated and that the relationship between politics and withdrawal is fully mediated. As such, Figure 10 fails to support Hypotheses 6 and 8 but provides some preliminary support for Hypotheses 7. To further explain these relationships, an expanded structural model was examined (Figure 10). As previously mentioned, this model is used to discuss hypotheses 6, 7 and 8 because it provides a better explanation for the direct relationships that exist among politics and certain employee outcomes (e.g., CWBs, task performance).

Table 7.

Summary of Empirical Evidence for Stress as a Mediator (Hypothesis 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Indirect Path</th>
<th>$\alpha \beta$</th>
<th>Component Paths Sig?</th>
<th>Baron &amp; Kenny (1986) Criteria Met?</th>
<th>Goodman Statistic</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4. CFE $\rightarrow$ Politics $\rightarrow$ Stress $\rightarrow$ Morale</td>
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<td>5. Politics $\rightarrow$ Stress $\rightarrow$ Morale</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-1.91†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SFE = Supervisor Feedback Environment; CFE = Co-worker Feedback Environment.
† $p < .10$ *$p < .05$
In the expanded structural model (see Figure 10), the path coefficients between stress and morale ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$) and morale and both OCBI ($\beta = .25, p < .05$) and OCBOs ($\beta = .14, p < .10$) are at least marginally significant and in the anticipated direction. Thus, Hypothesis 6 received partial support because there is only a direct path from politics to task performance and the path linking morale to OCBO is only marginally significant. Similarly, the presence of only direct paths from politics to CWBI ($\beta = .36, p < .05$) and CWBO ($\beta = .48, p < .05$) show that this relationship is not mediated by the variables included in the proposed model and fail to provide support Hypothesis 8.

However, results provide evidence that the effects of politics on OCBI and OCBO are mediated by morale. Additionally, the statistically significant path coefficients between stress and morale ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$) and morale and both turnover intentions ($\beta = -.78, p < .05$) and job search ($\beta = -.26, p < .05$) provide preliminary support for hypothesis 7. For Hypothesis 6, Baron and Kenny’s (1986) mediational criteria were met only when OCBI, turnover intentions, job search and CWBO were the outcome variables. These findings provide partial support for Hypotheses 6 and 8. Goodman statistics were calculated to further examine the role of morale in mediating the relationship between stress and performance, counterproductive work behaviors, and withdrawal. Results from these tests are presented in Table 8. The first row of Table 8 shows that the indirect effects of politics on morale are marginally significant ($z = 1.91, p < .10$). Rows 2-8 show the magnitudes of the indirect effects ($ab$) for the four-variable mediational chains which link politics to various outcomes through stress and morale. Rows 9-15 provide the
results of Goodman tests for various outcomes when morale is the mediator. These tests provide evidence for the significance of the indirect effects of stress on OCBI ($z = -2.25, p < .05$), job search ($z = 2.46, p < .05$), CWBO ($z = 2.16, p < .05$), and turnover intentions ($z = 2.82, p < .05$). Among the three-variable mediational chains, the ones involving OCBO ($z = 1.05, p > .05$), task performance ($z = -1.58, p > .05$), and CWBI ($z = 1.18, p > .05$) were nonsignificant.

Taken together, the significant indirect effects and lack of direct paths from politics and stress to OCBI, job search, and turnover intentions, provides evidence that morale mediates the effects of politics and stress on these dependent variables. These results, along with the indirect and direct paths included in the final structural model (Figure 10), provide evidence that the relationships between politics and OCBs and both forms of withdrawal behavior are mediated by morale. Also of note, the Goodman statistics indicate that the indirect effects of politics on task performance are not statistically significant. This provides further evidence that the effects of politics on task performance are not mediated by the variables in the model and supports the re-specification of task performance as a direct outcome of politics in Figure 10. Additionally, these results, along with the tests of the direct paths, provide support for re-specifying the model so that politics have only direct effects on CWBs.

Hypotheses 9 and 10. Hypotheses 9 and 10 focus on the role of exchange perceptions in linking politics to morale. Hypothesis 9 proposed that politics perceptions are negatively related to exchange perceptions. As shown in Figure 10, politics perceptions did indeed have a negative effect on exchange perceptions ($\beta = -.70, p < .05$). Hypothesis 10 proposed that exchange perceptions would mediate the relationship
between politics perceptions and employee morale. The path coefficients between politics and exchange perceptions ($\beta = -.70, p < .05$) and exchange perceptions and morale ($\beta = .78, p < .05$) provide some preliminary support for this hypothesis.

Supporting hypothesis 10, all of Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria were met and the relationships were in the predicted directions. To supplement these findings, Goodman statistics were calculated to test the statistical significance of the hypothesized indirect effects of the feedback environment and politics on morale via exchange perceptions. The first two rows of Table 9 indicate that the indirect effects of the Supervisor and Co-Worker Feedback Environments on exchange perceptions are significant (SFE: $z = 3.57$, $p < .05$; CFE: $z = 3.32$, $p < .05$). Rows 4 and 5 show the magnitudes of the indirect effects of the Supervisor and Co-worker feedback environments on morale (SFE: $a\beta = .41$; CFE: $a\beta = .21$) when politics and exchange are mediators. Finally, Row 5 indicates that the indirect effects of politics on morale are statistically significant ($z = -5.71$, $p < .05$). This pattern of results provides strong evidence that exchange perceptions are part of a chain which mediates the effects of politics and the feedback environment on morale.
Table 8.

Summary of Evidence for Morale as a Mediator of Stress (Hypotheses 6, 7, and 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Indirect Path</th>
<th>αβ</th>
<th>Component Paths Sig?</th>
<th>Baron &amp; Kenny (1986) Criteria Met?</th>
<th>Goodman Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Politics→Stress→Morale</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-1.91†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Politics→Stress→Morale→OCBO</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Politics→Stress→Morale→OCBI</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Politics→Stress→Morale→Task</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>Yes†</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Politics→Stress→Morale→CWBI</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>Yes†</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Politics→Stress→Morale→CWBO</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Politics→Stress→Morale→TOINT</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Politics→Stress→Morale→Search</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Stress→Morale→OCBO</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stress→Morale→OCBI</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-2.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Stress→Morale→Task</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>Yes†</td>
<td>Yes†</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Stress→Morale→CWBI</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>Yes†</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Stress→Morale→CWBO</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Stress→Morale→TOINT</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Stress→Morale→Search</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.46*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: † p < .10 *p < .05

Table 9.

Summary of Evidence for Exchange as a Mediator (Hypotheses 9 and 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SFE→Politics Exchange</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CFE→Politics Exchange</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SFE→Politics Exchange→Morale</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CFE→Politics Exchange→Morale</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Politics→Exchange Morale</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-5.71*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: † p < .10 *p < .05
Hypothesis 11. Hypothesis 11 focuses on the role of morale in mediating the effects of exchange perceptions on performance, withdrawal, and counterproductive work behaviors. As previously mentioned, the mediational paths for performance do not hold when the dependent variables are analyzed at the latent level (Figure 7). Examining the outcome variables at the scale level indicates that the mediated model holds for two out of three of the performance indicators (OCBI and OCBO). Because examining these constructs at the scale level provides a more fine grained analyses of these relationships (e.g., more specific information about these relationships is conveyed), the final structural model (Figure 10) is used to discuss relationships pertinent to Hypothesis 11.

An inspection of Figure 10 indicates that the paths from exchange perceptions to morale ($\beta = .78$, $p < .05$) and morale to OCBI ($\beta = .25$, $p < .05$), OCBO ($\beta = .14$, $p < .10$), Job Search ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .05$), and Turnover Intentions ($\beta = -.78$, $p < .05$) are all at least marginally significant and in the anticipated directions. In addition, there are direct paths from politics to CWBI ($\beta = .36$, $p < .05$), CWBO ($\beta = .48$, $p < .05$), trust ($\beta = -.68$, $p < .05$), and task performance ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .05$). When these paths are included, the paths from morale to each of these dependent variables become nonsignificant, and thus were trimmed from Figure 10. As such, these direct relationships indicate that the linkages between politics and these outcomes are not mediated by exchange perceptions and morale.

Baron and Kenny’s (1986) criteria were not met for the paths which included OCBO, task performance, CWBI, and CWBO, as outcomes (see Table 10). In particular, the mediator (morale) did not have a significant relationship with these variables after controlling for the independent variable (exchange perceptions) and covariates. These
findings indicate that the relationships between exchange perceptions and these
dependent variables may not be mediated by morale. Baron and Kenny’s (1986) criteria
were met for the other dependent variables (e.g., OCBI, job search, turnover intentions).
Goodman statistics were calculated to provide more information regarding the
significance of the indirect effects of exchange perceptions on all of the dependent
variables (see Table 10). Results of the Goodman tests indicate that the indirect effects
are significant when OCBI ($z = 2.58, p < .05$), job search ($z = -4.12, p < .10$), and
turnover intentions ($z = -6.67, p < .05$) are the dependent variables, but not when OCBI,
task performance, CWBI, and CWBO are the dependent variables.

Taken together, these findings around hypotheses 9, 10, and 11 provide evidence
that exchange perceptions and morale mediate the relationship between politics
perceptions and OCBI, job search, and turnover intentions. In addition, these results
support the re-specification of the model (Figure 10) to include only a direct path from
politics to task performance. However, interpretation of the results pertaining to CWBs is
a bit more complex. When Tables 7 and 9 are compared, it appears that morale mediates
the effects of stress on CWBO, but not the effects of exchange perceptions on CWBO. In
particular, the indirect effects of stress on CWBO were significant, but the indirect effects
of exchange perceptions on CWBO were not. It should be further noted that model
testing did not support adding a direct path from exchange perceptions to CWB.
However, the final structural model (Figure 10) did support the inclusion of direct paths
from politics to both forms of CWB. When these paths were included, the paths relating
morale to CWBI and CWBO became nonsignificant. Thus, it is likely that the effects of
politics on CWBs are direct, rather than mediated by stress, exchange perceptions, and morale.

_Hypotheses 12, 13, 14, and 15._ Results of the structural equation analyses did not provide support for hypotheses 12, 13, 14, and 15 which proposed that trust mediates the relationship between exchange perceptions and performance, counterproductive work behaviors, withdrawal, and morale. In particular, trust was not directly related to any of the dependent variables in the present study. As mentioned previously, the re-specified structural model (Figure 10) indicates that there is a direct relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and trust.

As specified in Figure 10, politics mediates the effects of the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments on trust. In addition, Baron and Kenny’s criteria were met for all of these paths and Goodman statistics indicated that the indirect effects of politics on trust are statistically significant \( z = -4.36, p < .05 \). As shown in rows 1 and 2 of Table 11, the indirect effects of the SFE and CFE on exchange perceptions are significant (SFE: \( z = 3.57, p < .05 \); CFE: \( z = 3.32, p < .05 \)). Rows 3 and 4 provide estimates of the indirect effects of the SFE \( (\alpha\beta = .22) \) and CFE \( (\alpha\beta = .11) \) on trust when politics and exchange perceptions are the mediators. Row 5 indicates that the path from politics to trust is significant and in a direction that is consistent with the theory presented in this paper \( (\beta = -.49, p < .05) \). Therefore, despite a lack of support for Hypotheses 12, 13, 14, and, 15, the results do indicate that politics perceptions are associated with employees’ trust in the organization. Specifically, there is evidence that politics perceptions mediate the effects of the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments on trust.
Table 10.

Evidence for Morale as a Mediator of Exchange Perceptions (Hypothesis 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Indirect Path</th>
<th>$\alpha \beta$</th>
<th>Component Paths Sig?</th>
<th>Baron &amp; Kenny (1986) Criteria Met?</th>
<th>Goodman Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-5.71*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ OCBO</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ OCBI</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ Task</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ CWBO</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ CWBI</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ Job Search</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Politics $\rightarrow$ Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ OCBO</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ OCBI</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.58*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ Task</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ CWBO</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ CWBI</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ Job Search</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-4.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Exchange $\rightarrow$ Morale $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-6.67*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11.

_Empirical Evidence for Exchange as a Mediator of Politics._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SFE→Politics →Exchange</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CFE→Politics →Exchange</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SFE→Politics →Exchange →Trust</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CFE→Politics →Exchange →Trust</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Politics→Exchange →Trust</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-4.36*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: † p < .10 *p < .05*

*Hypotheses 16 and 17.* Hypotheses 16 and 17 proposed that political skill moderates the effects of politics perceptions on stress and exchange perceptions. Specifically, hypothesis 16 predicted that the positive relationship between politics and stress would be weakest for those high in political skills and hypothesis 17 proposed that the negative relationship between politics and exchange perceptions would be weakest for those high in political. These hypotheses were tested using a series of moderated multiple regression analyses, which are appropriate when the moderator variable is on a continuous scale (Jaccard & Turrisi, 2003). All independent variables in these analyses were centered in order to mitigate the effects of multicollinearity in the data set.

To increase the statistical power of the tests for moderation, data from all complete subordinate surveys were used to examine the interactions between politics perceptions and political skill. After dropping the three aforementioned outliers and participants who were under the age of 17, the sample size for these tests of moderation was 398. Results of the moderated multiple regressions provided support for hypothesis
16. As can be seen in Table 11, the control variables entered in the first step accounted for 9\% of the variance in job-related stress. In Step 2, politics perceptions were found to have a main effect on job-related stress ($\beta = 0.28, p < .05$). Step 2 accounted for an additional 7\% of the variance in job-related stress. Finally, the interaction term was entered in Step 3. The interaction term was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01, p < .05$), indicating that political skill moderates the relationship between politics and stress. This effect can be seen in Figure 11 where the relationship between politics perceptions and stress was weakest when political skill was high. These findings are further discussed in the next chapter.

Next, political skill was examined as a moderator of the relationship between politics and exchange perceptions. As can be seen in Table 11, the control variables entered in the first step accounted for 3\% of the variance in exchange perceptions. In Step 2, politics perceptions ($\beta = -0.43, p < .05$) and political skill ($\beta = 0.44, p < .05$) were found to have significant main effects on exchange perceptions. In addition, the variables entered in Step 2 accounted for an additional 28\% of the variance in exchange perceptions. Results of Step 3 indicated that the interaction term was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02, p < .05$). However, as shown in Figure 12, the pattern of relationships was opposite of what was predicted. In particular, the negative relationship between politics perceptions and exchange perceptions was strongest when Political Skill was high. Although an obvious explanation for this pattern may not exist, an interesting explanation will be discussed in the next chapter.
Table 12.

*Regression Analyses of Stress and Exchange Perceptions on Politics and Political Skill.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Job-Related Stress</th>
<th>Exchange Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>-.43*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Skill</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \Delta R^2 )</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions</td>
<td>.85*</td>
<td>-.46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Skill</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.98*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions X Political Skill</td>
<td>-.64*</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \Delta R^2 )</td>
<td>.01*</td>
<td>.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total R^2</strong></td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.33*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Correlations in the table are standardized Beta Coefficients.*

N = 398, * p < .05
Figure 11.

Politics perceptions, political skill, and stress.

Figure 12.

Politics perceptions, political skill, and exchange perceptions.
Exploratory Analyses

In this section, an alternative model is examined to provide insight into possible relationships that exist among the focal constructs. This model was created based on modification indices which suggested that trust mediates the relationship between politics and stress. Along with the presentation of this model, political skill is examined as a moderator of the relationship between politics and trust. To maintain consistency, Figure 10 will be used as the base model for examining the exploratory model.

An examination of the Mplus output for the model presented in Figure 10 indicated that model fit might be improved if a path were added from trust to stress. Adding this path would imply that trust mediates the effects of politics on stress. Because this path also makes conceptual sense (i.e., those who have less trust in management experience more stress at work), it was included in the model. Figure 13 presents the results of adding this path to the model. In addition, model fit is presented in Table 5.

Politics has significant effects on trust ($\beta = -.59, p < .05$) and trust has a significant effect on stress ($\beta = .44, p < .05$). In addition, the direct path from politics to stress becomes nonsignificant ($\beta = .08, p > .05$), suggesting that trust fully mediates the relationship between politics and stress. Additionally, all of Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria are met for this relationship and results of the Goodman I test provides further evidence that the indirect effects that politics has on stress through trust are significant ($z = 3.90, p < .05$). Furthermore, fit is adequate for the structural model following the addition of the path from trust to stress ($\chi^2 = 1197, df = 811, p < .05$, $SRMR = .07$, $CFI = .92$, $RMSEA = .05$, $\chi^2/df = 1.48$). However, there is not a significant change in chi-square following the addition of this path (see Table 5; Structural Model X).
In addition to testing the direct path between trust and stress, political skill was examined as a moderator of the relationship between politics and trust. Previous analyses indicated that political skill moderated the relationship between politics and exchange and politics and stress. However, the moderating effects of political skill on the relationship between politics and exchange perceptions were in an unexpected direction (i.e., the relationship between politics and stress was stronger for those higher in political skill). Trust has often been described as being closely associated with employee’s exchange relationships. As such, an examination of the moderating role of political skill on the politics-trust relationship may provide some clarity to the counterintuitive effects that Political Skill had on the politics-exchange perceptions relationship.

Data from all 398 complete subordinate surveys were used to examine the role of political skill in moderating the relationship between politics perceptions and trust. Results of the moderated multiple regressions provided evidence that political skill moderates the relationship between politics and trust. As can be seen in Table 13, the control variables entered in the first step accounted for 4% of the variance in trust. In Step 2, politics perceptions ($\beta = -.32, p < .05$) and political skill ($\beta = .15, p < .05$) were found to have main effects on trust. Step 2 accounted for an additional 13% of the variance in trust. Finally, the interaction term was entered in Step 3. The interaction term was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p < .05$), indicating that political skill moderates the relationship between politics and trust. This effect can be seen in Figure 14 where the relationship between politics perceptions and trust is strongest when political skill is high. These findings are consistent with the counterintuitive results that were found for exchange perceptions and are further discussed in the next chapter.
Figure 13.
Exploratory model with path from trust to stress.

Note: * p < .10, * p < .05
Table 13.

*Exploratory Analysis of Political Skill Moderating Politics-Trust Relationship.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions</td>
<td>-.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Skill</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions</td>
<td>.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Skill</td>
<td>.48*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions X Political Skill</td>
<td>-.72*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total $R^2$</strong></td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Correlations in the table are standardized Beta Coefficients. N = 398, * p < .05*
Politics perceptions, political skill, and trust.

As discussed in the literature review, Hochawarter and Treadway (2003) found that negative affect moderates the effects of politics on job satisfaction. Therefore, exploratory analyses were conducted to determine the role of negative affect in moderating the negative effects of politics perceptions on key variables measured in the present study. Moderated multiple regression analyses were used to examine negative affect as a moderator of the relationship between politics perceptions and job-related stress, exchange perceptions, trust, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. As can be seen in Table 14, negative affect only moderated the relationship between politics perceptions and job-related stress. The control variables, entered in the first step, accounted for 9% of the variance in stress. In Step 2, politics perceptions ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) and negative affect ($\beta = .32, p < .05$) were found to have main effects on stress. Step 2 accounted for an additional 16% of the variance in stress. Finally, the interaction term
was entered in Step 3. The interaction term was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p < .05$), indicating that negative affect moderates the relationship between politics perceptions and stress. This effect can be seen in Figure 15 where the relationship between politics perceptions and stress is strongest when negative affect is high. These findings are consistent with Hochwarter and Treadway’s (2003) study which showed that individuals with higher negative affect reported more negative reactions to their perceptions of organizational politics.
Table 14.

*Exploratory Analyses of Negative Affect as a Moderator.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Exchange Perceptions</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
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<td>-.01*</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions</td>
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<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
<td>-.37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
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<td>-.13*</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.19*</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.14*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Employment</td>
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<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Perceptions</td>
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<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.59*</td>
<td>-.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.47*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPS X NA</td>
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<td>-.12</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total R^2</strong></td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Correlations in the table are standardized Beta Coefficients.

$N = 398, \ast p < .05$
Figure 15.

Politics Perceptions, negative affect, and job-related stress.

Summary of Results

Prior to examining the proposed hypotheses, Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) two-step approach was used to develop a measurement model to be used for an examination of the structural relationships among the focal constructs. Results of these analyses indicated that two observed variables, absenteeism and retention, contributed significant amounts of error to the model. Thus, these variables were dropped from further analyses. Once the measurement model was created, a structural model was developed and trimmed. Trimming of nonsignificant paths in the initial structural model indicated that trust should be moved to the outcome side of the model.

Following an examination of the trimmed model, direct paths were included to determine whether politics perceptions had direct effects on outcomes. After testing
a series of nested models, it was determined that there were direct paths from politics to three (e.g., CWB, trust, and performance) of the four latent variables that were outcomes in the model. With the addition of these direct paths, the effects that the mediators had on performance, CWB, and trust became nonsignificant. To provide a better understanding of these relationship (especially the politics-performance linkage), a new structural model was developed in which outcomes were assessed at the scale level. The final structural model (Figure 10) indicated that there were only direct relationships between politics and CWBO, CWBI, trust, and task performance. Finally, the results of the SEM analyses and an examination of additional mediational criteria provided evidence that the effects of politics on OCBI, OCBO, job search, and turnover retention were mediated by variables included in the proposed model. The final structural model presented in Figure 10 was used to evaluate Hypotheses 1 through 15.

For a summary of results of the hypothesis tests, see Table 14. For the most part, support was provided for the mediational hypotheses that were not associated with CWBs, task Performance, or trust. With the exception of Hypothesis 8, an examination of path coefficients provided at least partial support for the direct and mediated relationships predicted in hypotheses 1 through 11. The reasons why full support was not provided for these hypotheses are that the effects of politics on task performance and CWBs were direct, rather than mediated. Thus, only partial support was provided for Hypotheses 6 and 11 and Hypothesis 8 was not supported.

In addition, hypotheses which dealt with the role of trust in mediating the effects of exchange perceptions on employee outcomes and morale were not supported (Hypotheses 12, 13, 14, and 15). Specifically, there was evidence for a direct
relationship between politics and trust and trust was not associated with any of the dependent variables in the model. Thus, trust was re-specified as an outcome of politics perceptions, rather than a mediator of its effects on the dependent variables.

Moderated multiple regressions were used to examine Hypotheses 16 and 17. Hypothesis 16 was supported by these tests and it appeared that political skill buffered the effects of politics on stress. However, the moderated multiple regressions provided results counter to what was anticipated for Hypothesis 17. In particular, political skill seemed to amplify the negative effects that politics had on exchange perceptions. These findings are discussed in further detail in the section which follows.

Finally, exploratory analyses were conducted to examine (1) trust as a mediator of the relationship between politics and stress (Figure 13) and (2) the role of negative affect in moderating the effects of politics perceptions on employees. Evidence is provided for the role of trust in partially mediating the effects of politics on stress. Though the findings of these exploratory analyses are quite interesting, the overall fit of the model did not improve significantly with the addition of a path from trust to stress. As such, the more parsimonious model presented in Figure 10 seems to be the best representation of how the focal constructs are related.

In addition, political skill was examined as a moderator of the relationship between politics and trust. Results of these analyses were similar to the counterintuitive ones that were found when exchange perceptions were the dependent variable (Hypothesis 17). In particular, the negative relationship between politics and trust was strongest when political skill was high. In addition, negative affect was found to moderate the effects of politics perceptions on job-related stress. Specifically, the
relationship between politics and stress was strongest when negative affect was high. These findings are consistent with those of Hochwarter and Treadway (2003) and lend indicate that affect may play an important role in how employees interpret and respond to their perceptions of organizational politics.
Table 15.

Summary of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 1</strong>: The supervisor feedback environment will be negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics.</td>
<td>Full Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 2</strong>: The co-worker feedback environment will be negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics.</td>
<td>Full Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 3</strong>: The supervisor feedback environment will have a stronger negative relationship with perceptions of organizational politics than the co-worker feedback environment.</td>
<td>Full Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 4</strong>: Perceptions of organizational politics will be positively related to stress experienced by employees.</td>
<td>Full Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 5</strong>: Stress mediates the relationship between politics perceptions and employee morale.</td>
<td>Full Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 6</strong>: Morale mediates the relationship between stress and a multi-dimensional measure of work performance.</td>
<td>Support for OCBI and OCBO -Mediation not supported for task performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 7</strong>: Morale mediates the relationship between stress and a multi-dimensional measure of withdrawal.</td>
<td>Full support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 8</strong>: Morale mediates the relationship between stress and counterproductive work behaviors.</td>
<td>Not Supported -Politics directly related to CWBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 9</strong>: Perceptions of organizational politics will be negatively related to exchange perceptions.</td>
<td>Full support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 10</strong>: The negative effects of politics perceptions on employee morale will be mediated by exchange perceptions.</td>
<td>Full support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 11</strong>: Morale will partially mediate the relationship between exchange perceptions and performance, withdrawal, and counterproductive work behaviors.</td>
<td>Support for withdrawal, OCBO, OCBI -Mediation not supported for CWB or task performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 12</strong>: Trust partially mediates the relationship between exchange perceptions and performance.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 13</strong>: Trust partially mediates the relationship between exchange perceptions and withdrawal.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 14</strong>: Trust partially mediates the relationship between exchange perceptions and counterproductive work behaviors.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 15</strong>: Trust will be positively related to employee Morale.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 16</strong>: Political skill moderates the relationship between politics perceptions and stress such that the positive relationship between politics perceptions and stress is weakest for those high in political skill.</td>
<td>Full support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 17</strong>: Political skill moderates the relationship between politics perceptions and exchange perceptions such that the positive relationship between politics perceptions and exchange perceptions is weakest for those high in political skill.</td>
<td>Moderation supported -Opposite of hypothesized direction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Organizational politics is a pervasive aspect of the organizational social context. At its most basic levels, organizational politics is rooted in interpersonal power and influence, which are each vital to the success of employees (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). For example, successful managers must understand how to engage in behind-the-scenes maneuvering to acquire resources for employees in their work groups. However, organizational politics may also be associated with turf wars, interpersonal conflict, and alienation of individuals and groups within the organization (Lencioni, 2006). Those who are not the direct beneficiaries of political activities often view politics as a threatening aspect of the work environment (Ferris et al., 1989). Furthermore, when resources are distributed based on subjective, interpersonal factors (e.g., favoritism) as opposed to more objective, meritocratic methods, employees begin to view politics as a negative aspect of the work environment. Presently, organizational politics are examined in the context of Ferris and colleagues’ research which was traditionally viewed politics as a dysfunctional aspect of the work environment.

The goal of the present study was to further explore the underlying mechanisms that relate perceptions of organizational politics to negative employee work behaviors (e.g., performance, counter-productive work behaviors, withdrawal). Previous research has indicated that politics may be related to adverse employee work behaviors because it
is a source of stress in the work environment and because politics signal the presence of an imbalance in the employee-organization exchange relationship. However, due to an almost explicit focus on variables included in Ferris et al.’s (1989) model, the underlying mechanisms which relate politics perceptions to employee work behaviors have not received much attention from empirical researchers (Kacmar et al., 1999).

To address this deficiency in the literature, the present study examined an integrated model in which stress and exchange perceptions mediate the effects of politics on employee attitudes and behaviors (see Figure 10). More specifically, the model discussed in the present study replicates and extends the work of Rosen et al. (2006) who suggested that the feedback environment and organizational politics are related to employee work behaviors through a mediational chain which involves employee morale. Furthermore, in response to Kacmar et al.’s (1999) call to extend the network of constructs associated with organizational politics, political skill was introduced as a moderator of the relationship between politics perceptions and variables associated with employee reactions (e.g., stress and exchange perceptions). Additionally, the proposed model included several constructs (e.g., trust, CWBs, exchange perceptions) that have not been previously examined in relation to organizational politics.

With the exception of paths associated with trust, CWBs, and task performance, the key mediational relationships in the a priori model were supported. Data collected from 215 employed undergraduates indicated that the feedback environment and politics perceptions have an impact on employee work behaviors through the two proposed mediational pathways. More specifically, as a result of perceiving politics in the work environment, results indicated that employees experience heightened levels of job-related.
stress and perceived a lower quality exchange relationship with the organization. Tests of the proposed model further indicated that employee morale translates politics, stress, and exchange perceptions into job performance (e.g., OCBs) and withdrawal from the organization. In addition, results indicated that those who are higher in political skill experience less stress as a result of perceiving organizational politics. Political skill also interacted with politics perceptions to predict exchange perceptions. However, this relationship was not in the direction that was anticipated. In particular, those who were higher in political skill reported lower exchange perceptions in response to the presence of politics in the work environment. These findings will be further discussed in the sections that follow.

These relationships provide a general description of the model that was developed and supported in the present study (Figure 10). The results of this study extend our understanding of the processes through which contextual aspects of the work environment (e.g., the feedback environment and politics perceptions) affect employees' attitudes and behaviors. In the sections that follow, findings pertaining to each variable of interest will be reviewed. Then, limitations, directions for future research, and implications will be discussed.

*Replication: The Feedback Environment and Politics Perceptions*

According to Ferris and colleagues (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris et al., 1989), organizational politics flourish in environments where performance standards and reward structures are unclear and marked by uncertainty. Lack of clarity regarding performance standards and rewards structures creates a system that favors politics as a means of acquiring desired employee outcomes (Randall et al., 1999). Rosen et al. (2006)
suggested that higher quality feedback environments would serve to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty in the work environment and, as a result, would be associated with lower levels of perceived politics. Rosen et al.'s results supported these ideas and indicated that the supervisor feedback environment had a stronger relationship with politics perceptions than did the co-worker feedback environment. The present study replicated these findings by showing that the supervisor and co-worker feedback environments were each negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics. Also consistent with the Rosen et al. study, the relationship of the supervisor feedback environment to politics perceptions was greater than the relationship between the co-worker feedback environment and politics perceptions.

These results provide further support for the idea that higher quality feedback environments result in lower perceptions of politics by reducing ambiguity and uncertainty in the work environment. In addition, these findings support the idea that employees who have access to feedback regarding the behaviors that are rewarded and desired by organizations are less likely to attribute that rewards are being distributed based on subjective, political means (e.g., favoritism, group membership, etc.). Finally, these results reinforce the notion that supervisors hold a specialized role because they are somewhat responsible for reward distribution and, thus, have a greater impact on employees' perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar et al., 1999; Rosen et al., 2006).

Extension: Two Mediation Paths Linking Politics to Employee Outcomes

Since the publication of Ferris et al.'s (1989) influential model, empirical studies have examined the relationship between organizational politics and a variety of employee
attitudes and behaviors. In general, these studies have focused on the bi-variate relationships that exist between politics and outcome variables included in Ferris et al.'s (1989) model. These studies have provided inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between politics and employee work behaviors (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997), indicating that our understanding of the mechanisms that relate politics to employee outcomes are not well understood. As discussed in the literature review, theorists have identified job-related stress (Ferris et al., 1989) and exchange perceptions (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004) as two mechanisms that likely relate politics perceptions to adverse employee behaviors. However, to date, there are no published studies which have examined how these constructs relate politics perceptions to work-related behaviors.

In the present study, the effects of politics perceptions on job-related stress, exchange perceptions, and subsequent employee attitudes and behaviors were tested in the structural model. Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria and Goodman statistics (Goodman, 1960; Sobel, 1982) were used to further evaluate the role of job-related stress and exchange perceptions in mediating the effects of the feedback environment and politics perceptions on employee outcomes. Finally, moderated multiple regression analyses were used to examine political skill as a moderator of the relationship between politics and both stress and exchange perceptions.

Politics, stress, and morale. Traditionally, organizational researchers have suggested that organizational politics are related to adverse employee outcomes because politics is a source of stress in the work environment (Ferris et al., 1989). Thus, the current study proposed that job-related stress is one of the two mechanisms which relate
politics to employee outcomes. In particular, it was hypothesized that politics would be positively related to stress and that stress would mediate the negative effects of politics perceptions on employee morale. An examination of the final structural model (see Figure 10), Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria, and Goodman statistics provided strong support for these relationships. As such, the present study lends further support to the traditional perspective that politics is a source of stress in the work environment which exceeds individuals' coping capacities and, as a result, elicits negative affective responses (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 1996; Vigoda, 2002).

*Politics, exchange perceptions, and morale.* Recently, researchers have also suggested that organizational politics influence employee behaviors through its impact on employees' perceptions of the exchange relationship that they have with their organizations (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004). However, these ideas have not been examined in the empirical literature. Therefore, the current study examined the role of employees' organizational exchange perceptions as another mechanism which may be responsible for linking perceptions of organizational politics to adverse employee work behaviors. Specifically, it was proposed that politics perceptions would be negatively related to exchange perceptions and that exchange perceptions would mediate the negative effects of politics perceptions on employee morale. Exchange perceptions were operationalized by Shore et al.'s (in press) Social Exchange Perceptions scale which, in a general way, assesses the perceived risk associated in the employee-organization exchange relationship. An examination of the final structural model (see Figure 10), Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria, and Goodman statistics provided strong support for these relationships. Thus, results of the present study support the emerging perspective
that organizational politics signal that the organization may not be a good exchange partner and, as a result, have a negative effect on exchange perceptions and employee attitudes (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999). Together with the findings relating politics to morale through stress, these findings provide initial support for the two proposed mechanisms which underlie the relationship between politics and employee outcomes.

**Morale as a mediator.** Rosen et al.'s (2006) findings showed that politics perceptions are related to performance through employee morale. Extending these findings, the current study examined the role of morale in mediating the effects of politics, exchange perceptions, and stress on employee work behaviors. As in the Rosen et al. (2006) study, it was proposed that lower levels of employee morale reflect a negative affective response to the presence of politics in the work environment. In addition, the present study hypothesized that higher levels of job-related stress and less favorable exchange perceptions, both associated with politics perceptions, would be indirectly related to adverse employee work behaviors through their negative impact on employee morale.

As predicted, the relationship between stress and morale was negative and the relationship between exchange perceptions and morale was positive (see Figure 10). Additionally, after controlling for the direct effects of politics perceptions, morale had positive relationships with OCBI and OCBO and negative relationships with job search behaviors and turnover intentions. Tables 7 and 9 provide information regarding the significance of the indirect effects of stress and exchange perceptions on employee outcomes. Taken together, these results indicate that morale mediates the effects of stress
on: OCBI, job search behaviors, and turnover intentions. In addition, the results also indicate that morale mediates the effects of exchange perceptions on OCBI, Job Search Behaviors, and Turnover Intentions. Finally, the structural model provides evidence that the effects of politics on OCBO may be mediated by exchange perceptions, stress, and morale.

Following the inclusion of direct paths in the model, the indirect effects of exchange perceptions and stress on CWBs and task performance were not significant (Tables 8 and 10). This pattern of results indicates that exchange perceptions, stress, and morale contribute little beyond the direct effects of politics in explaining variance in these particular dependent variables. Thus, the direct effects of politics (discussed below) explain the majority of the variance in CWBs and task performance. These findings provide a clearer picture of how politics affect employee behaviors through multiple routes (e.g., direct and indirect paths).

Politics may have been only directly related to CWBs because, by definition, these behaviors closely resemble those that are associated with organizational politics. For example, CWBs, such as theft, fit with the definition of politics as unsanctioned self-serving behaviors that are harmful to the organization and its members. Thus, the conceptual similarity of these behaviors may serve to partially explain the direct relationships between these constructs. Additionally, politics may serve to directly elicit, or motivate certain CWBs. For instance, retaliatory behaviors (e.g., incivility, retaliation, and revenge) may occur in direct response to organizational politics. These ideas are consistent with the literature that has described political work environments as marked by
interpersonal conflict which is dysfunctional and disruptive to the workforce (see Vigoda, 2004).

Similarly, organizational politics may have been directly related to task performance in the current study because politics disrupt the work environment and hinder the ability of employees to sufficiently complete assigned, or expected, tasks at work. When employees are forced to constantly deal with interpersonal conflict in their work environments and to fight for resources, it likely makes it difficult to concentrate and focus attention on completing the task at hand. Thus, politics perceptions may be construed as a more proximal predictor of task performance than the other variables included in the model because politics are disruptive to job performance. Additionally, there may be other factors that were not measured (e.g., emotional exhaustion) that mediate the effects of politics on task performance. These findings are consistent with previous research which, in general, has had difficulty establishing the nature of the relationship between politics and performance (Aryee et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2006). However, unlike previous studies (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997), the present findings show that politics are related to all three forms of performance (e.g., task performance, OCB1, and OCBO) in either a direct (task performance) or indirect (OCBI, OCBO) way.

Organizational trust. The a priori model also predicted that trust would mediate the effects of politics and exchange perceptions on CWBs, withdrawal behaviors, and performance (Hypotheses 12-15). In particular, it was hypothesized that politics perceptions would be related to less favorable perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship and, as a result, employees would be less likely to make
themselves vulnerable on behalf of the organization. Thus, it was predicted that less favorable exchange perceptions, associated with heightened politics perceptions, would be associated with lower levels of reported trust in the organization and subsequent employee outcomes (e.g., morale, performance, CWB, withdrawal). However, these relationships were not supported by the present study. Yet, results of model testing did indicate that politics have a direct, negative effect on trust. Thus, the model was re-specified to incorporate these findings. As discussed later in this section, an exploratory model, in which trust mediates the effects of politics on stress, was also examined to provide further understanding of the relationship between politics perceptions and trust.

Results may not have supported the hypotheses associated with trust as a mediator of the effects of exchange perceptions on employee behaviors because there were unanticipated problems with the specific measure of trust (e.g., Schoorman et al.'s 1996 measure) that was used in this study. In particular, Schoorman et al.'s (1996) measure of trust has only 4 questions, one of which had to be dropped from analyses because its loading on the latent factor was not acceptable and scale reliability improved after the item was dropped. Even after this item was dropped, the reliability of the trust scale was lower (.66) than the desired cut-offs that have been suggested in the literature (e.g., Nunnally, 1978).

Another reason why results may not have supported trust as a mediator of the relationship between exchange perceptions and employee work behaviors is related to the focus of trust in Schoorman et al.'s (1996) measure. In particular, Schoorman et al.'s (1996) measure focuses on trust in the agents of the organization (e.g., top management), as opposed to trust in the organization itself. As such, a more direct measure of trust in
the organization should be utilized in future studies. Furthermore, like organizational commitment (Becker et al., 1996), it is possible that trust may have different foci (e.g., organization, supervisor, co-workers) which are important to understanding how it is related to organizational phenomena. Therefore, future studies should examine how the different foci of trust are associated with perceptions of organizational politics and subsequent employee outcomes.

**Political Skill as a Moderator**

Political skill was hypothesized to interact with perceptions of organizational politics such that when political skill was high, organizational politics would have a weaker positive relationship with job-related stress and a weaker negative relationship with exchange perceptions. Results of moderated multiple regression analysis indicate that the hypothesized interaction between politics and political skill existed when stress was the dependent variable. As seen in Figure 11, participants who were higher in political skill reported experiencing lower levels of stress when organizational politics were high. It is likely that political skill moderates the relationship between politics and stress because political skill is associated with increased understanding of political work environments, provides individuals with a sense of control, and provides extra coping resources to deal with interpersonal aspects of political work environments (Perrewé et al., 2004). These results also provide general support for the idea that political skill mitigates the amount of strain that individuals experience as a result of environmental stressors (Ferris et al., 1999; Perrewé et al., 2000). So, in other words, individuals with political skill are able to handle high levels of politics without it affecting their stress levels.
Results of moderated multiple regression analyses also indicated that political skill moderates the relationship between organizational politics and exchange perceptions. However, when this effect was plotted (Figure 14), it was clear that the nature of the effect found in the current study was inconsistent with what was expected. As seen in Figure 12, the relationship between politics and exchange perceptions was stronger for participants who were higher in political skill. While unexpected in direction, this finding does provide further support for the notion that political skill alters reactions to politics perceptions.

A possible explanation for these findings relates to the idea that exchange perceptions represent a general appraisal of the likelihood that the organization will meet its exchange obligations to employees (Shore et al., 2004). More specifically, the favorability of organizational exchange perceptions is associated the extent to which employees believe that there efforts on behalf of the organization will be reciprocated. The results of the present study indicated that politically skilled employees may be more sensitive (e.g., likely to detect) to exchange violations, or perceptions that the organization has or will fail to meet its obligations to the employee. Supporting this idea, Ferris et al. (2005) suggest that political skill is associated with improved environmental scanning abilities and increased access and attention to information from the work environment. Thus, politically skilled employees are likely less naïve to the role of power and politics in influencing the decisions of agents of the organization. As a result, these employees may be more likely to expect that the organization will fail to meet its exchange obligations to them.
These ideas are consistent with the work of psychological contract theorists (e.g., Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Morrison & Robinson, 1997) who have suggested that vigilance, or active monitoring of the psychological contract for violations, is related to perceptions of psychological contract breach. Monitoring of the organizational exchange relationships for fulfillment may be a means of uncertainty reduction that is used to prevent the organization from reneging on exchange obligations when such violations are anticipated. For instance, vigilance may be associated with organizational conditions which increase uncertainty or decrease trust (Robinson & Brown, 2004; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Furthermore, vigilant employees seek out, attend to, and interpret information in a way that supports their expectations (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). As a result, exchange violations are more likely to be perceived when employees are continually monitoring their exchange relationships for discrepancies in employee–organization obligations (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson and Morrison, 2000).

Thus, politically skilled employees may be more likely to perceive that the organization has failed or will fail to meet its exchange obligations because they may be more actively monitoring their relationship with the organization for such violations. In this case, political skill increases the likelihood that employees will recognize the negative relationship between politics and the favorability of the exchange relationship that they have with the organization. For instance, politically skilled employees may have a better understanding of the biased methods through which rewards are distributed in organizations that are characterized by politics (Cropanzano et al., 1997).
The interactions between politics perceptions and political skill should be interpreted with caution for two reasons. First, political skill may have a modulation effect on politics perceptions. As indicated by the social astuteness factor of the political skill inventory, politically skilled individuals likely have an ability to understand the motives of others and are good at sensing hidden agendas. Thus, employees who are more politically skilled may be more likely to detect the presence of organizational politics. If such a modulation effects exists, this would place a limit on our ability to detect and interpret interactions between perceptions of organizational politics and political skill. In particular, it would be difficult to disentangle reciprocal effects and interactions that exist between these variables. Another reason why these results should be interpreted with caution is because none of the tests for moderators indicated the presence of a cross-over interaction. As such, the pattern of results in the present study provided less than optimal support for differential relationships between politics and outcomes for those who are politically skilled.

*Exploratory Analyses*

Figure 13 shows the Exploratory Structural Model. The majority of relationships in this model are similar to those in the Final Structural Model (Figure 10) and the dependent variables are assessed at the scale level. However, in this model, trust is specified as mediating the relationship between politics perceptions and job-related stress. The fit statistics for this model can be found in Table 5. As indicated by these statistics, the Exploratory Model fit the data reasonably well as assessed against Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria. Supporting mediation, the paths linking politics to trust and trust to stress were statistically significant and in a direction that is consistent with the
ideas expressed in the introduction. Additionally, Baron & Kenny's (1986) criteria were met for this relationship and Goodman statistics indicated that the indirect effects that politics has on stress through trust are significant. Finally, after including paths linking politics to trust and trust to stress, the direct path from politics to stress became nonsignificant. These results indicate that the negative effects of politics on stress may be fully mediated by trust. These findings are consistent with empirical and theoretical research that have suggested that trust represents a general appraisal of the organizational climate which plays a direct role in determining employees' levels of stress (Hart & Cooper, 2001; Harvey, Kelloway, & Duncan-Leiper, 2003). Thus, lower levels of trust are associated with climates that are less favorable to employees (e.g., those in which politics are widespread) and, as a result, employees experience greater levels of stress and strain associated with their jobs (Harvey et al., 2003).

In the a priori model, it was proposed that political skill would buffer the effects of politics on exchange perceptions and stress. As part of the exploratory analyses, political skill was examined as a moderator of the relationship between politics and trust. A set of exploratory moderated multiple regressions (Table 13) indicated that the interaction of organizational politics and political skill on trust was significant. When this effect was plotted (Figure 14), the effect was similar to the one found for the effects of politics and political skill on exchange perceptions. In particular, there was a stronger negative relationship between politics perceptions and trust for participants higher in political skill. Thus, these results counter the a priori predictions which hypothesized that political skill would buffer the negative effects of politics perceptions on employees. Interestingly, these results are consistent with those that were found when this interaction
was examined with respect to exchange perceptions. Similar to exchange perceptions, trust also seems to reflect an appraisal of the general likelihood that the organization will meet its exchange obligations to employees. Thus, these findings further support the notion that increased vigilance may be associated with political skill and, as a result, may predispose employees to perceive that the organization has or will fail to fulfill its exchange obligations.

These exploratory analyses indicate that a possible place for trust in this model is as a mediator of the effects of politics on stress. Therefore, these findings support the notion that trust reflects a general appraisal of the organizational climate and that such appraisals are associated with the levels of stress experienced by employees. Furthermore, these analyses indicated that political skill mediates the effects of politics on trust. In particular, the negative relationship between politics perceptions and trust was strongest for those high in political skill. These results were consistent with findings in the current study that were counter to hypothesized results (e.g., the negative link between politics and exchange perceptions was strongest when political skill was high). However, despite the useful information that was generated by these exploratory analyses, the Exploratory Model is not as parsimonious as the Final Structural Model (Figure 10) and there is not a significant difference in fit between the two models.

Additional exploratory analyses were conducted to examine the role of negative affect in moderating the effects of politics perceptions on employee reactions (e.g., job-related stress, exchange perceptions, trust, job satisfaction, and affective commitment). Results indicated that negative affect only moderated the effects of politics perceptions on job related stress. In particular, there was a stronger relationship between politics and
job-related stress for those who were high in negative affect. These results are consistent with Hochwarter and Treadway’s (2003) findings and lend further support to the notion that negative affect predisposes employees to perceive the ambiguity surrounding political environments as more threatening.

Limitations

The results of the present study provided initial support for the proposed dual-process model. It was found that perceptions of the feedback environment and organizational politics are related to employee outcomes. This relationship works through job-related stress and employees’ perceptions of their organizational exchange relationships. Additionally, morale was identified as a key mediator which relates stress and justice to employee work behaviors. Furthermore, the present study answered the call of Kacmar et al. (1999) by introducing a number of constructs into the organizational politics literature (e.g., political skill, CWBs, exchange perceptions, and trust). Despite these contributions and the fact that the theoretical rationale for the present study is well-developed and rooted in the scholarly literature, there are still some notable limitations. These limitations will be discussed below.

First, this study relied primarily on self-reported data from employed undergraduates who had only modest job tenure. Therefore, there may have been some boundary conditions placed on the generalizability of the findings of this study. This is especially relevant when considering that (1) employees with shorter tenure show a proclivity for perceiving that the organization has failed to fulfill its obligations to them (Sutton & Griffin, 2004) and (2) age has been shown to moderate the effects of politics on employees (Witt, Treadway, & Ferris, 2004). In particular, it has been suggested that
younger employees, who generally have less experience working, tend to believe that the organization has higher exchange obligations to them (Sutton & Griffin, 2004). However, employees tend to lower their expected obligations from the organization as they become more aware of the realities of the exchange relationship.

Regarding age, politics seem to differentially effect employees depending on their age (Treadway et al., 2005; Witt et al., 2004). However, this relationship is not well understood. In particular, Witt et al. (2004) suggest that younger employees will be more negatively affected by politics perceptions, whereas Treadway et al. (2005) suggest that older employees will respond more negatively to politics perceptions. As such, tenure and age likely play an important role in determining how employees respond to organizational politics in general, and how politics affect exchange relationships in particular. Thus, it is important for future studies to utilize samples that better represent employees of different ages, tenures, and career stages. However, it should be noted that a benefit of the current sample is that the collection of data from subordinates from different organizations (and thus differing organizational feedback environments and political contexts) does work to increase the generalizability of the findings.

A second limitation pertains to the use of self-report data in the present study. Any time that self-reported data are used, common method variance (CMV) may affect participant responses to items and subsequent inferences that result from analysis of the data. Though CMV may have accounted for some of the variance in subordinate responses, these problems may have been countered by the inclusion of supervisor ratings of performance in the present study. In addition, recent research suggests that CMV may
not systematically bias results and is likely to not be as problematic as researchers have suggested (Doty & Glick, 1998; Keeping & Levy, 2000).

Finally, because data were collected during a single time period, the present study captured only a cross-sectional snapshot of the relationships among these variables. This may be a problem because many of the relationships in the hypothesized model are likely to develop over time through an unfolding process. For example, the effects of politics perceptions on stress may be compounded over time and, thus, have a stronger relationship with employee outcomes when time is considered. In addition, relationships among variables such as exchange perceptions and trust may also have a time component that can not be detected at a single point in time. Another problem with cross-sectional data is that it is difficult to determine the causal ordering of variables when an experimental manipulation is not involved (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). For example, in the present study, it is suggested that lower levels of job performance represent a negative reaction that employees have to organizational politics. However, it could also be argued that politics perceptions are simply an attribution that employees make when they have low levels of performance. Thus, future studies should utilize longitudinal data collection techniques to analyze how these processes unfold over different points of time and to understand the causal ordering of relationships among variables included in the model.

_Future Research_

Despite these limitations, the results were quite interesting and supportive of the theoretical modeling. The findings of the present study provide several avenues for future research. There remain several questions regarding how perceptions of
organizational politics develop and why organizational politics have an adverse influence on employee behaviors. As previously mentioned, future studies should utilize longitudinal designs to replicate the findings of the current study with more varied samples.

Another advantage of a replication study would be that it would allow researchers to further explore some of the findings that were inconsistent with the a priori model and hypotheses. In particular, future researchers should utilize alternative measures of trust to more fully capture how politics and exchange perceptions are associated with trust as related to different foci (e.g., the organization, supervisors, and co-workers). In addition, extra attention should be directed to understanding the direct relationships between politics and both CWB and task performance. For instance, future studies should present a more fine-grained analysis of the relationship between politics and CWBs to determine if politics are directly related to the specific behaviors that comprise CWB (e.g., verbal aggression, theft, etc.).

Future studies should also attempt to understand the interaction effects of politics and political skill on exchange perceptions (and trust) that were counter to the hypothesized direction. As previously mentioned, these results may have been associated with heightened vigilance for monitoring the employee-organization relationship that might be associated with politically skilled employees. Thus, researchers should directly examine how political skill is related to vigilance and monitoring of the employee-organization relationship for exchange violations. Similarly, researchers should further examine how the interaction effects of politics and political skill are related to trust. This
relationship was examined as part of the exploratory analyses and, considering the significant interaction effects, should be explored further.

Although the results of the present study are quite strong and consistent, there are certainly other variables beyond the feedback environment which may have as large or potentially larger effect on perceptions of politics. For example, previous studies (e.g., Byrne, 2005; Rosen, Chang, & Johnson, 2006) have indicated that several aspects of the situation that were not included in the present model may be associated with employees' reactions to perceptions of organizational politics. For example, organizational justice and perceived organizational support have been identified as variables that influence how employees respond to politics in the work environment. Recently, Rosen, Chang, et al. (2006) demonstrated that organizational support buffers the effects of politics on stress and job satisfaction. Regarding fairness, Byrne (2005) suggested that procedural and interactional justice may reduce the negative effects of organizational politics on turnover intentions, OCBS, and job performance. As such, future research that integrates additional situational variables into the model presented in this study would provide a clearer understanding of how and why politics are associated with adverse employee outcomes.

Attempts should also be made to understand how organizational politics may exert a positive influence on employees. In the present study, organizational politics is described as primarily a negative, dysfunctional aspect of work. However, researchers (e.g., Ammeter et al., 2002; Fedor & Maslyn, 2002; Ferris et al., 2002) have suggested that, under certain conditions, politics may be related to more positive reactions by employees. Additionally, researchers (Darr & Johns, 2002; Johns, 1999; Maslyn &
Fedor, 2002) have suggested that politics may have differential effects on employees depending on the level (e.g., individual, group, top management) at which they occur. In particular, political activities by supervisors may be necessary for optimal performance of the group (Kozlowski et al., 1998). For example, supervisors may need to manipulate the system through political means in order to acquire resources for their work groups and rewards for individual employees. Thus, future studies should further examine the conditions under which organizational politics have positive effects on employees and these studies should identify specific political activities (e.g., behaviors associated with interpersonal influence) which have a positive impact on employees.

Another direction for future research is related to the assumption that politics is associated with uncertainty and ambiguity in the work environment (Darr & Johns, 2002; Cropanzano et al., 1997). According to the literature, there may be a reciprocal relationship between politics and uncertainty (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 2002). In particular, it has been suggested that ambiguity regarding performance standards seems to allow for more politicking in the work environment (Cropanzano et al., 1997). In this case, politicking deals with engaging in, and being rewarded for, behaviors other than objective work performance. As a result of the presence of these activities, ambiguity surrounds reward structures in highly political organizations (Ferris et al., 1989, Randall et al., 1999). However, no published studies have explicitly examined the relationship between politics perceptions and uncertainty in the work environment. Furthermore, organizational politics researchers have used the terms uncertainty and ambiguity in a very general sense to describe the work environment and reward structures (e.g., Rosen et al., 2006). As a result, it is not clear to what researchers are referring. As
such, future studies should focus on identifying and fleshing out the types of uncertainty which are related to organizational politics. For example, role clarity may be what is being described by organizational politics researcher. In particular, previous research (Bliese & Castro, 2000) has shown that role clarity is associated with stress levels of employees and, as demonstrated in the present study, stress is an outcome of organizational politics. Thus, it is possible that the effects of politics on stress are mediated by the uncertainty associated with role clarity.

Future research should also examine how individual differences are related to employees’ reactions to organizational politics. The present study showed that political skill is important to how individuals respond to perceptions of politics. However, studies have shown that there are several additional personality traits that have an impact on how employees respond to politics in their work environments (see Rosen et al., in press). For example, psychological hardiness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, negative affect have been found to moderate the relationship between politics perceptions and OCBs (Rosen et al., in press), job satisfaction (Hochwarter & Treadway, 2003), depressed mood at work (Byrne, Kacmar, Stoner, & Hochwarter, 2005), and stress (Rosen, Chang, et al., 2006).

In addition, it has been suggested that researchers should take a person-environment fit approach to understanding employees’ responses to organizational politics (Christiansen, Villanova, & Mikulay, 1997). According to this perspective, certain individuals may actually thrive in political work environments because they have a preference, tolerance, or desire for situations which require them to play the political game by engaging in activities that involve the use of interpersonal influence. To explore these ideas, Mattern, Rupp, and Burrus (2006) recently developed the Preference for
Politics Scale and found that one’s preference for organizational politics moderates the relationship between politics perceptions and attitudes towards supervisors. In particular, Mattern et al.’s (2006) results indicated that the negative relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and satisfaction with, and commitment to, supervisors was weakest when preference for politics was high. Therefore, researchers should seek to understand how individual differences and fit with the political climate of the organization has an impact on employee outcomes.

Implications

Politics is a common feature of organizational life. The effective use of power and interpersonal influence are essential to the success of employees (Pfeffer, 1992). However, because resources are scarce in organizations, not all employees benefit from organizational politics. The present study provides further evidence that organizational politics has both direct and indirect influences on employees. Furthermore, the findings supported the presence of mediational paths which have cognitive (exchange perceptions) and affective (job-related stress) components which, ultimately, are related to motivation and performance. These findings provide evidence that, as operationalized by the POPS, individuals may experience organizational politics as a series of negative affective events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) emanating from the work environment. As such, organizational leaders should recognize that, while essential to the function of the work-group and the department, organizational politics may have unanticipated negative consequences at the level of the individual. Therefore, decision-makers should consider how their own political actions may have negative psychological consequences for their employees and, as a result, harm the organization.
As an example, consider that managers often manipulate performance appraisal systems to reward employees who, due to budgetary constraints, may not have received deserved rewards in the past (Kozlowski et al., 1998). The current study provides evidence that such manipulations of the appraisal system, while beneficial to the recipient of the favorable treatment, may have extensive negative effects on other employees directly and by causing employees to experience stress, creating unfavorable perceptions of the organizational exchange relationship, and decreasing the morale of employees. Therefore, it is important for top management to minimize organizational politics in decision making by being supportive of appraisal and reward systems that are based on objective standards.

The findings of this study indicate that the organization may be able to change the attitudes and behaviors of its employees by managing the political climate. More specifically, the present study shows that the feedback environment is related to organizational politics and that politics are related to employee work behaviors through an extended process which involves stress, exchange perceptions, and employee morale. Regarding the relationship between the feedback environment and politics perceptions, the findings of the present study provide further support for Rosen et al.’s (2006) ideas that organizations may be able to deliberately control ambiguity, and thus lower perceptions of politics, by creating environments where employees have access to information regarding which behaviors are acceptable and desired at work. Thus, future studies should examine how feedback-environment based interventions may be used to reduce perceptions of politics in the work environment. By integrating the feedback environment into coaching and training programs, the organization could create a
feedback-oriented culture in which employees are encouraged to actively seek and utilize feedback to improve performance (London, 2003; Steelman et al., 2004). The results of the present study suggest that a by-product of creating a feedback-oriented culture may be to lower employees' perceptions of politics, improve work attitudes, and raise performance.

At a macro level, organizational agents may be able to reduce the negative effects of politics by encouraging communication among employees and work groups. In particular, employees within a specific organization should be working towards the same goals. However, a lack of resources makes it necessary for employees to engage in political activities to achieve desired outcomes. These activities often result in political game playing, turf wars, in-fighting, and, as demonstrated in the present study, a variety of negative consequences for employees. Furthermore, when standards are not objective, employees may become preoccupied with acquiring resources and desired rewards through political means. As a result, employees place a higher priority on acquiring resources for themselves, often at the expense of obtaining organizational goals (e.g., working together as a team to meet objectives).

Thus, organizational leaders should communicate and follow objective standards in decision-making which involves resource allocation. Furthermore, work groups should be encouraged to discuss their goals with each other so that they can understand the resources that are required by other groups to function. Developing such networks of communication will allow employees to develop a deeper understanding of how their political behaviors may harm others (individuals and groups) in the organization (Lencioni, 2006). The findings of the present study indicate that by taking steps such as
these to reduce political activities and subsequent perceptions of organizational politics, organizations will foster the development of healthier attitudes and better performance in their workforces.

In addition, the findings of the present study indicate that organizational leaders should recognize that politics have the potential to affect employees in a number of ways. In particular, organizational politics appears to have effects on employees’ perceptions of the exchange relationship, stress levels, attitudes, and a number of work-related behaviors. Based on the findings of the present study, leaders of organizations in which political behaviors are widespread may be able to counter the negative effects of these activities by focusing on aspects of the two processes which relate politics to employee behaviors.

The relationship between politics and stress indicates that the harmful effects of politics may be curbed by creating programs that reduce or address the levels of stress that are experienced by employees. Political skill and psychological hardiness have been identified as capable of neutralizing the negative effects of stressors on employees (Wiebe, 1991; Perrewe et al., 2004). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that it may be possible to develop political skills and psychological hardiness in employees (Ferris et al., 2002, 2005; Steinhardt, Dolbier, Gottleib, & McCalister, 2003). Thus, interventions that focus on developing these skills may serve to increase employees’ coping capacities in political work environments and, as a result, employees may be less adversely affected by organizational politics.

Another implication is that organizational politics have a detrimental impact on the employee-organization exchange relationship. Thus, leaders of organizations that are
marked by excessive levels of politics should be especially sensitive to the employee-organization exchange relationship. If a pervasive political culture exists, agents of the organization should focus on maintaining a healthy exchange relationship with employees. Such a relationship can be maintained by providing employees with evidence that they are valued by, and important to, the organization. For example, both procedural justice and organizational support signal to employees that the organization cares for their well-being and will take care of their needs in the long run (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Korsgaard, Sapienza, & Schweiger, 2002; Lind & Earley, 1991; Tyler, 1989). Furthermore, both of these constructs have been associated with reduced psychological contract breach and improved perceptions of the exchange relationship. Considering the role that exchange perceptions play in the politics-employee outcomes relationship, it is especially important that organizations provide support to employees and ensure procedural justice when organizational politics are high. By creating environments that foster support and procedural justice, it is likely that organizations can eliminate or curb some of the negative effects that politics have on employees.

Conclusion

The organizational politics literature has proceeded in a relatively fragmented fashion. Previous studies have focused primarily on bi-variate relationships between politics and a limited number of variables that were included in Ferris et al.’s (1989) model (Kacmar et al., 1999). As a result, the underlying mechanisms which relate politics to employee work behaviors are not well understood. To address these issues, the current study integrated information from existing theory and research to develop and test a model explaining the processes through which perceptions of organizational politics are
related to employee attitudes and work behaviors. The analysis of data from 215 subordinate-supervisor dyads indicated that job-related stress and employees’ perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship play important roles in linking organizational politics to employee attitudes and behaviors. Results showed that the feedback environment and perceptions of organizational politics are related to employee morale, OCBs, and withdrawal from the organization through two extended mediational pathways involving stress and exchange perceptions. In addition, the results provide evidence that organizational politics have a direct, positive relationship with CWBs and task performance.

These findings provide initial support that stress and exchange perceptions are the underlying mechanisms which link politics to employee outcomes. However, it is likely that other variables also serve to translate politics into adverse employee outcomes. In addition, there are other negative outcomes of organizational politics that were not included in the present study (see Ferris et al., 2002). Furthermore, there are additional aspects of the social context (e.g., justice and support) and individual differences that are related to employees’ stress levels and exchange perceptions. Therefore, it is necessary for future research to incorporate these constructs into the model presented in this study. The present study also has important implications for practitioners. First, results indicate that organizations may be able to improve work attitudes and performance by reducing employee perceptions of organizational politics. The findings of the present study indicate that levels of perceived politics may be decreased by increasing informal communication processes between employees. For example developing feedback-oriented cultures and more transparent decision-making processes may serve to reduce
employees' perceptions of politics and its negative consequences. A second implication is that organizational agents may be able to reduce the harmful effects of politics on employees by focusing on the specific parts of the process (e.g., stress experienced by employees and perceptions of the exchange relationship) which relate politics to employee outcomes. Specifically, by reducing stressors in the work environment, providing training to employees to manage stress, and by improving the quality of the employee-organization exchange relationship (e.g., through the provision of support), organizations may be able to reduce the negative behaviors that employees demonstrate in response to organizational politics. Nonetheless, additional research is needed to advance understanding of how organizations may be able to curb the negative effects of politics on employees.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Since the publication of Ferris et al.'s (1989) influential model, research on perceptions of organizational politics has increased in popularity (Ferris et al., 2002; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). However, the empirical literature has generally proceeded in a piecemeal fashion, focusing primarily on the bi-variate relationships between politics perceptions and variables included in Ferris et al.'s (1989) model (Kacmar et al., 1999). In addition, studies relating politics perceptions to employee work behaviors (e.g., performance and OCBs) have provided inconsistent findings (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999). Together, the focus on bi-variate relationships and inconsistent findings in the literature indicate that the processes which relate politics perceptions to employee behaviors may not be well understood. The current study attempted to address these issues by developing and testing a model which our extends knowledge of the processes which link organizational politics to employee outcomes.

A review of the literature identified two possible paths through which politics are likely related to employee outcomes. According to the traditional perspective presented by Ferris and colleagues (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris et al., 2002), politics perceptions are related to negative employee reactions because politics are a source of stress in the work environment. In particular, Ferris et al. (2002) suggest that organizational politics
threaten the safety and security of employees and heightened levels of conflict surrounding organizational politics tax employees' psychological coping resources. As a result, politics is associated with negative affective responses in the work environment and employees demonstrate less favorable attitudes and withdrawal from the organization (Ferris et al., 1989, 2002). More recently, theorists have suggested that organizational politics is an aspect of the social context which signals that the organization is to maintain a bilateral commitment to the employee-organization relationship by meeting employees' needs in the long-run (e.g., Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hall et al., 2004; Randall et al., 1999). Therefore, organizational politics has an adverse impact on employees' perceptions of the exchange relationship that they have with the organization (Hall et al., 2004). In particular, employees in organizations where politics are widespread begin to view their employment relationship as a risky investment of time and effort and respond by reducing their contributions (e.g., time and effort) to the organization (Cropanzano et al, 1997). However, empirical studies have failed to examine how these two mechanisms (e.g., stress and exchange perceptions) translate politics perceptions into undesirable employee behaviors.

In the present study, ideas relating politics to stress (e.g., Ferris et al., 1989, 2002) and exchange perceptions (Cropanzano et al, 1997; Hall et al., 2004) were integrated with a recent study by Rosen et al. (2006) to create a model of the processes which link the feedback environment and politics to employee behaviors. Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that the feedback environment is related to organizational politics because it serves to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty in the work environment which reduces the politicking by members of the organization. In addition, Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that

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organizational politics are related to employee behaviors through employee morale, which reflects a negative affective response to politics in the work environment. Extending these ideas, the present study considers research which has suggested that employee attitudes and affect are influenced by stress and the perceived quality of the employee-organization exchange relationship (Spector & Fox, 2002; Ferris et al., 1989, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). The literature also indicates that the attitudes which comprise employee morale (e.g., job satisfaction and affective commitment) are linked to a variety of employee work behaviors including OCBs (Podsakoff et al., 2000), withdrawal from the organization (Griffeth et al., 2000), and CWBs (Fox & Spector, 1999). Thus, the present study predicted that morale would mediate the effects of the feedback environment, politics, stress, and exchange perceptions on employee work behaviors (see Figure 2). Additionally, research has shown that trust mediates the relationship between perceptions of the employee-organization exchange relationship and employee work behaviors (Robinson, 1996). Thus, trust was also proposed to mediate the effects of lower quality exchange perceptions, associated with politics perceptions, on employee work behaviors.

To test this model, employed students from undergraduate psychology classes were recruited and asked to complete a questionnaire measuring the focal variables of the study. The employed undergraduates were asked to provide their immediate supervisors with an additional questionnaire which was to be completed and returned to the experimenter. A total of 215 matched supervisor-subordinate surveys were returned and analyzed. The hypotheses for this study were tested using Structural Equation Modeling, and Moderated Multiple Regression. Because relationships between global constructs
(e.g., general measures of perceptions of organizational politics, job attitudes, and performance) were examined, a partial aggregation technique was used to develop latent constructs associated with the proposed hypotheses (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998). Using accepted practices for SEM testing and presentation (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hu & Bentler, 1999), the hypothesized measurement model was modified twice before structural relationships were tested. With the exception of paths associated with trust, CWBs, and task performance, the results (see Figure 10) supported the proposed model. In particular, the Supervisor and Co-worker Feedback Environments were negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics. Perceptions of organizational politics were subsequently related to employee work behaviors through the two proposed mediational chains involving job-related stress and exchange perceptions. Trust, CWBs, and task performance were found to be only direct outcomes of organizational politics. However, exploratory analyses indicated that trust might mediate the relationship between politics perceptions and stress.

As anticipated, moderated multiple regressions indicated that political skill buffered the negative effects of politics perceptions on stress. Specifically, the positive relationship between politics perceptions and stress was weakest for those who were politically skilled (see Figure 11). However, the interactive effects of politics perceptions and political skill on exchange perceptions were in an opposite direction of what was expected. In particular, the negative relationship between politics perceptions and exchange perceptions was strongest for those who were higher in political skill (see Figure 12). Interestingly, similar results were found in exploratory analyses when political skill was examined as a moderator of the relationship between politics
perceptions and trust. These findings led to a reconsideration of how political skill may influence the relationship between politics perceptions and employee reactions. It was suggested that political skill may be associated with increased monitoring of the employee-organization exchange relationship for perceived violations. Supporting this perspective, theorists (Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Morrison & Robinson, 1997) have suggested that vigilant employees are more likely to detect an exchange violation when it has occurred (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Thus, a possible explanation for these findings is that politically skilled employees are more likely to monitor the exchange relationship and, as a result, are more likely to detect imbalances or violations.

The results of this study serve to increase understanding of the underlying mechanisms that link organizational politics to a variety of employee work behaviors. The data from this study indicate that the feedback environment and organizational politics are related to job performance, and withdrawal from the organization through two extended mediational chains which involve job-related stress and exchange perceptions. Future research should focus on extending this model by identifying additional variables which may be involved in the processes which link politics to employee outcomes. For example, there are several aspects of the situation (e.g., procedural justice and organizational support) and the person (e.g., affect, age, personality traits) which were not included in the present study, but that likely have an impact on the relationship between politics and employee reactions and behaviors. Identifying and examining these constructs would serve to further increase our understanding of the impact that organizational politics has on employees.
From a practical perspective, organizational leaders can use these results to develop interventions which focus on reducing politics perceptions in the work environment by creating feedback-oriented cultures (London, 2003) which provide clear and concise information regarding the behaviors that are acceptable and rewarded by the organization. In addition, organizations that have high levels of politics may be able to counter its negative effects by focusing on parts of the process. In particular, the organization may be able to curb the adverse impact of politics on employees by fostering open communications among individuals and work groups, developing climates which encourage the use of objective standards in the distribution of rewards and resources, focusing interventions on reducing employees’ stress levels by developing coping and social skills, and improving the balance of the employee-organization exchange relationship. Thus, future studies should examine constructs (e.g., psychological hardiness, organizational support, procedural justice) which organizations may be able to use as the target of interventions to reduce the negative impact of politics on employees.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

MEASURES

Supervisor Feedback Environment Scale (Steelman et al., 2004)

Supervisor Source Credibility
1. My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job.
2. My supervisor is fair when evaluating my job performance.
3. I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me.

Supervisor Feedback Quality
1. My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.
2. The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor is helpful.
3. I value the feedback I receive from my supervisor.

Supervisor Feedback Delivery
1. My supervisor is supportive when giving feedback about my job performance.
2. When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.
3. My supervisor is tactful when giving me performance feedback.

Supervisor Favorable Feedback
1. When I do a good job at work my supervisor praises my performance.
2. My supervisor generally lets me know when I do a good job at work.
3. I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor.

Supervisor Unfavorable Feedback
1. My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.
2. On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my supervisor lets me know.
3. On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor tells me.

Supervisor Feedback Availability
1. I interact with my supervisor on a daily basis.
2. My supervisor is too busy to give me feedback. (RS)
3. My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information.

Supervisor Promotes Feedback Seeking
1. My supervisor is often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback. (RS)
2. When I ask for performance feedback, my supervisor generally does not give me the information right away. (RS)
3. My supervisor encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.

Co-Worker Source Credibility
1. My co-workers are generally familiar with my performance on the job.
2. My co-workers are fair when evaluating my job performance.
3. I have confidence in the feedback my co-workers give me.

Co-Worker Feedback Quality
1. My co-workers give me useful feedback about my job performance.
2. The performance feedback I receive from my co-workers is helpful.
3. I value the feedback I receive from my co-workers.

Co-worker Feedback Delivery
1. My co-workers are supportive when giving feedback about my job performance.
2. When my co-workers give me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.
3. My co-workers are tactful when giving me performance feedback.

Co-worker Favorable Feedback
1. When I do a good job at work my co-workers praise my performance.
2. My co-workers generally let me know when I do a good job at work.
3. I frequently receive positive feedback from my co-workers.

Co-worker Unfavorable Feedback
1. My co-workers tell me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.
2. On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my co-workers let me know.
3. On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my co-workers tell me.

Co-worker Feedback Availability
1. I interact with my co-workers on a daily basis.
2. My co-workers are too busy to give me feedback. (RS)
3. My co-workers are usually available when I want performance information.

Co-workers Promote Feedback Seeking
1. My co-worker are often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback. (RS)
2. When I ask for performance feedback, my co-workers generally do not give me the information right away. (RS)
3. My co-workers encourage me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997)

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

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

Pay and Promotion
1. Once I have worked in this department, I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically. (RS)
2. I can not remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with published policies. (RS)
3. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.
4. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.
5. When it comes to pay raises and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant in this organization.
6. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.

Job-Related Stress (House & Rizzo, 1972)
1. My job tends to directly affect my health.
2. I work under a great deal of tension.
3. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job.
4. If I had a different job, my health would probably improve.
5. Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night.
6. I have felt nervous before attending meetings in my company.
7. I often “take my job home with me” in the sense that I think about it when doing other things.

Social Exchange Perceptions (Shore et al., in press)
1. My organization has made a significant investment in me.
2. The things I do on the job today will benefit my standing with my organization in the long run.
3. There is a lot of give and take in my relationship with my organization.
4. I worry that all my efforts on behalf of my organization will never be rewarded. (RS)
5. I don’t mind working hard today; I know I will eventually be rewarded by my organization.
6. My relationship with my organization is based on mutual trust.
7. I try to look out for the best interest of my organization because I can rely on my organization to take care of me.
8. Even though I may not always receive the recognition from my organization that I deserve, I know my efforts will be rewarded in the future.

Affective Organizational Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
3. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization. (RS)
4. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization. (RS)
5. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
6. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization. (RS)

Job Satisfaction (Cammann et al., 1979)
1. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
2. In general, I do not like my job. (RS)
3. In general, I like working here.

Political Skill Inventory (Ferris et al., 2005)

Networking Ability
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 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.
5. I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others.
6. I am good at building relationships with influential people at work.

Apparent Sincerity
1. It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do.
2. When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.
3. I try to show a genuine interest in other people.

Social Astuteness
1. I always seem to instinctively know the right thing to say or do to influence others.
2. I have good intuition or "savvy" about how to present myself to others.
3. I am particularly good at sensing the motivation and hidden agendas of others.
4. I pay close attention to people's facial expressions.
5. I understand people very well.

Interpersonal Influence
1. It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.
2. I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.
3. I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.
4. I am good at getting people to like me.

Trust (Schoorman et al., 1996)
1. If I had my way, I would not let top management have any influence over issues that are important to me. (RS)
2. I would be willing to let top management have complete control over my future in this company.
3. I really wish I had a good way to keep an eye on top management. (RS)
4. I would be uncomfortable giving top management a task or problems which was critical to me, even if I could monitor their actions. (RS)

**Counterproductive Work Behaviors (Bennett & Robinson, 2000)**

*Interpersonal Deviance*
1. Made fun of someone at work.
2. Said something hurtful to someone at work.
3. Made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark at work.
4. Cursed at someone at work.
5. Played a mean prank on someone at work.
6. Acted rudely toward someone at work.
7. Publicly embarrassed someone at work.

*Organizational Deviance*
1. Taken property from work without permission.
2. Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming at work.
3. Falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses.
4. Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable to you at work.
5. Come in late to work without permission.
6. Littered your work environment.
7. Neglected to follow your boss's instructions.
8. Intentionally worked slower than you could have at work.
9. Discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person.
10. Used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job.
11. Put little effort into your work.
12. Dragged out work in order to get overtime.

**Turnover Intentions (Cammann et al., 1979)**
1. I often think about quitting my job with my present organization.
2. I will probably look for a new job in the next year.
3. I am considering leaving my job.

**Job Search Behaviors (Blau, 1994)**

*Passive Job Search*
1. Read the help wanted/classified ads in a newspaper.
2. Prepared/Revised your resume.
3. Read a book or article about getting a job or changing jobs.
4. Talked with friends or relatives about possible job leads.
5. Spoke with previous employers or business acquaintances about their knowledge or potential leads.
6. Used current within company resources (e.g., colleagues) to generate potential job leads.
Active Job Search
1. Listed yourself as a job applicant online, in a newspaper, journal, or professional association.
2. Sent out resumes to potential employers.
3. Filled out a job application.
4. Had a job interview with a perspective employer.
5. Contacted an employment agency, executive search firm, or state employment services.
6. Telephoned a perspective employer.

Absenteeism (Dalton & Mesch, 1991)
1. How many days were you off the job in the last six months because of your health (e.g., colds, flu, injuries, etc.)?
2. Excluding vacation time, excused time, and holiday time, how many total days were you off in the past six months?

Performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991)
Task Performance
1. Adequately completes assigned duties.
2. Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description.
3. Performs tasks that are expected of him/her.
4. Meets formal performance requirements of the job.
5. Engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation.
6. Neglects aspects of the job that he/she is obligated to perform. (RS)
7. Fails to perform essential duties. (RS)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior-Individual
1. Considers the impact of his/her actions on co-workers.
2. Helps others who have been absent.
3. Helps others who have heavy workloads.
4. Assists supervisor with his/her work (when not asked).
5. Takes time to listen to co-workers’ problems and worries.
6. Goes out of his/her way to help new employees.
7. Takes a personal interest in other employees.
8. Passes along information to co-workers.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior-Organization
1. His/her attendance at work is above the norm.
2. Gives advance notice when unable to come to work.
3. Takes undeserved work breaks. (RS)
4. Great deal of time spent with personal phone conversations. (RS)
5. Complains about insignificant things at work. (RS)
6. Conserves and protects organizational property.
7. Adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order.
APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORM

September 12, 2006

Christopher L. Rosen
Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
The University of Akron
Akron, Ohio 44325-4301

Mr. Rosen:

The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) completed a review of the protocol entitled “Politics, Stress and Social Exchange Perceptions”.

The IRB application number assigned to this project is 2005-031.

The protocol qualified for Expedited Review and was approved on September 9, 2005. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and meets the following federal category for expedited review:

- Research involving survey, interview, and history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation or quality assurance methodologies.

This approval is valid until September 9, 2006 or until modifications are proposed to the project protocol, whichever may occur first. In either instance, an Application for Continuing Review must be completed and submitted to the IRB.

Enclosed are the Informed Consent documents, which the IRB has approved for your use in this research. Copies of these documents are to be submitted with any application for continuation of this project.

In addition, you are required to provide documentation of informed consent for supervisory activities, as permitted under 45 CFR 46.117(c), if also approved.

Please note that within one month of the expiration date of this approval, the IRB will forward an annual review application to you by mail or email. Hereinbelow, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to remember the renewal date of your protocol’s review. Please submit your continuation application at least two weeks prior to the renewal date, to ensure the IRB has sufficient time to complete the review.

Please retain this letter for your files, if the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

Sharon McDougal
Associate Director

Department Chair
Phil Allen, IRB Chair