

Organizational Politics, Job Attitudes, and Work Outcomes: Exploration and Implications for the Public Sector

Eran Vigoda

*Department of Political Science, The University of Georgia, and Department of Political Science,
The University of Haifa, Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel*

The study aimed to promote understanding of employees' reactions to organizational politics. The relationship between perception of organizational politics, job attitudes, and several other work outcomes was examined among 303 public sector employees in Israel. Perception of organizational politics was found to have had a negative relationship with job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction and organizational commitment), a positive relationship with intention to leave the organization (exit), and a stronger positive relationship with negligent behavior (neglect). It is suggested that public personnel will tend to react to workplace politics with negligent behavior rather than by leaving. A weak negative relationship was found between perception of organizational politics and employees' performance as reported by supervisors. Perception of organizational politics also made a unique contribution to explaining variance among the work outcomes, beyond the variance explained by job attitudes and personal variables. Several implications and recommendations for further inquiry into perception of politics in organizations, particularly in the public sector, are noted. © 2000 Academic Press

Key Words: organizational politics; job satisfaction; organizational commitment; intentions of exit and neglect; job performance; public sector employees.

Studies have long argued that politics is an epidemic phenomenon in organizations and that it deserves more attention and empirical examination (e.g., Gandz & Murray, 1980; Mayes & Allen, 1977; Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992). The importance of organizational politics (OP) lies in its potential consequences and effect on work outcomes. Theoretical arguments suggest that politics often interferes with normal organizational processes (e.g., decision making, promotion, and rewards) and damages productivity and performance on individual and organizational levels. Empirical attempts to support this notion have proved equivocal. Some studies found a negative relationship of OP to job attitudes or stress-related responses (e.g., Drory, 1993; Ferris et al., 1996a, 1996b). More recent works suggested that politics enhances withdrawal behav-

The author thanks Aaron Cohen for his help and support in conducting the research and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to Eran Vigoda, Department of Political Science, University of Haifa, Haifa 31905, Israel. Fax: 972-4-8257785. E-mail: eranv@poli.haifa.ac.il.

iors and turnover intentions (e.g., Bozeman et al., 1996; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997), but others found no such relationship (e.g., Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995). All these studies overlooked the relationship between OP and other possible work outcomes, such as direct negligent behavior and actual job performance.

Few studies have examined issues related to OP in the public sector. At first glance several studies appear to have done so, but in fact they were conducted mainly at universities (e.g., Christiansen, Villanova, & Mikulay, 1997; Ferris et al., 1996a, 1996b; Welsh & Slusher, 1986), or they used mixed samples of private and semipublic agencies like hospitals and government-owned industries (e.g., Drory, 1993; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kumar & Ghadially, 1989). Also, most studies of OP refer to the North American private sector (e.g., Bozeman et al., 1996; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hochwarter, Witt, & Kacmar, 1997; Wayne, Liden, Graf, & Ferris, 1997). With the exception of that of Parker et al. (1995) no study has examined the effect of perceived organizational politics on work outcomes among public sector employees who serve citizens (e.g., governmental agencies or local municipalities). Patterns of employment, occupation, and service in public organizations substantially differ from those of private or semipublic systems. In most countries wages of public servants are lower than those of private sector employees, promotion is slower, and rewards are generally not related to work outcomes (Rainey, 1991). On the other hand, public organizations usually offer a stable work environment, higher job security, and some even a challenge of serving a large and heterogeneous population. Hence, the possible unique effect of internal politics on public agencies and public servants is still unclear and deserves more attention.

Employees' reactions to OP in the public sector were examined in two ways. Previous studies (e.g., Bozeman et al., 1996; Cropanzano et al., 1997) predicted that OP will be negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. We expected that both OP and job attitudes will be useful in explaining other work outcomes such as employees' intentions to leave (exit) and tendencies to neglect job duties (neglect). Evidence of such reactions to OP is scarce. We further proposed that employees performance may decline in response to high levels of perceived OP. Our research attempts to explore these reactions to OP and to elaborate on relevant implications for the public arena.

A DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS

Organizations are social entities that involve a struggle for resources, personal conflicts, and a variety of influence tactics executed by individuals and groups to obtain benefits and goals in different ways (Molm, 1997). Estimating the political climate of a work unit is a complex task but it is crucial for a better understanding of organizations. OP is usually defined as behavior strategically designed to maximize self-interests (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989) and therefore contradicts the collective organizational goals or the interests of other individuals. This perspective reflects a generally negative image of OP in the eyes of most

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات