Good Partners or Good Politicians:
An Exploration of Politics in Supply Chain Management

A Dissertation Presented for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

LaDonna Michelle Thornton
August 2013

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving family: John Thornton, Nancy Jones, Angela Graham, Kendall Daniels and Tiffani Reed. I couldn't have done this without your love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express deep gratitude to Dr. Terry L. Esper. I truly appreciate the guidance and support that he has given me throughout my graduate school program.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the impact of politics on internal and external supply chain management initiatives. From an intra-firm perspective, the impact of organizational politics and political skill on supply chain dynamics and processes is investigated in two quantitative articles. Article 1 is a constituency-based view perspective using survey methodology that explores the impact of organizational politics and political skill on cross-functional integration and supply chain orientation. This article finds that there is a negative relationship between organizational politics and cross-functional integration and a positive relationship between organizational politics and supply chain orientation when political skill of the top supply chain executive is present. Comparatively Article 2 resource management theory perspective using survey methodology and secondary data to explore organizational politics impact on firm supply chain performance variables of cash to cash cycle and operating expense per sales dollar. This research finds that organizational politics has a positive relationship with firm supply chain performance. Alternatively, the inter-firm perspective explores supply chain politics using a grounded theory approach in article 3. The findings of article 3 suggest that there are different political strategies that are employed by supply chain employees when balancing inter-firm and intra-firm politics. Overall, this dissertation provides insight into how organizational politics impact processes and dynamics while challenging the notion that organizational politics may be detrimental for performance. Furthermore, this research introduces supply chain politics and explores the social dynamics that supply chain employees must navigate to be successful in their roles and further supply chain objectives.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
Introduction

Literature suggests that interorganizational exchange relationships operate within both economic and social systems (Arndt 1983). From the perspective of the Political Economy Paradigm (PEP), the economic system consists of a transactional relationship between interorganizational exchange partners and a process for facilitating resource exchange such as competitive pricing or bargaining (Stern and Reve, 1980). In contrast, social systems consist of the power-dependence relations and social norms that exist between interorganizational exchange partners (Arndt, 1983). Navigating through the complex economic and social systems that exist within interorganizational exchange relationships is a dynamic process, which may change based on sociopolitical interests, strategies and tactics (Stern and Reve, 1980). Although several research streams exist that explore sociopolitical issues within interorganizational exchange relationships (i.e. Dwyer et al. 1987, Frazier, 1983, Gundlach et al. 1995), there is still an opportunity to delve into the dynamism and complexity of interfirm social systems and the sociopolitical interests within them.

Pursuit of these sociopolitical interests may take a variety of forms, and be pursued in a number of ways. For example, in today's interconnected business environment many organizations are pursuing collaborative relationships to improve performance and establish relationships within the supply chain (Stank et al., 2001a; Stank et al., 2001b). Collaboration is considered the combined efforts of two parties to work towards mutually beneficial outcomes (Thomas, 1992) and is critical for logistics and supply chain management both inside and outside of the firm (Barratt 2004; Ellinger et al. 2000; Lambert et al., 2005).. However, literature contends that it is often difficult to achieve collaboration (Barratt, 2004; Holweg et al., 2005; Sabath and Fontanella, 2002). Externally, organizations struggle with determining who they

should establish a collaborative relationship with and how extensive the collaboration should be (Cooper et al., 1997; Zacharia et al., 2009). Likewise, internal collaboration and integration is sought but seldom realized (Esper et al., 2010). Piercy (2007) and Hardy et al. (2003) suggest that politics inhibits collaboration attempts. Similarly, Blossom (1995) found that it impeded collaborative efforts to improve logistics processes and called for further research into the impacts that politics may have on processes within the firm.

Extant literature has looked at politics in the business environment, but largely from an intra-organizational perspective and focused on an individual's personal interests (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 1996; Kiewitz et al., 2002; Lewis, 2002; Randall et al., 1999; Sussman et al., 2002; Witt, 1998). Furthermore, there has been recognition within the literature that politics may affect intra-firm performance, intra-firm relationships (Miller et al., 2008) as well as supply chain management and supply chain relationships (Hardy et al., 2003; Stank et al., 2001a). However, there has been limited additional exploration on how politics may affect the supply chain and logistics functions within an organization or it's interorganizational exchange relationships.

Therefore, ***the purpose of this dissertation is to explore and investigate firm supply chain performance implications of politics and understand how supply chain employees navigate politics in supply chain relationships and their own organization.*** This research will address the following research questions:

- How does politics impact the strategic focus of supply chain management within the firm?
- How does politics impact supply chain relationships?

Foundational Literature

Politics

Politics is a complex concept that may conjure a variety of meanings, responses and perceptions from different audiences (Drory and Romm, 1988; Guild and Palmer, 1968). For example, the effect of politics is often viewed ambiguously; because it is debatable whether politics is positive or negative for those involved (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). This debate has lead to two perspectives: politics is viewed negatively by those who feel victimized by it (Ferris et al., 1996), in contrast it is seen as positive by those who reap rewards from it (Burns, 1961). Moreover, questions arise that deal with the very nature of politics, which are seeking to understand if it is a behavior, a process, or a perception as well as explore its relationship to power? On the other hand, Farrell and Petersen (1982) suggested that behaviors, perceptions, and processes are all different facets of politics.

This multifaceted view further emphasizes the inherent complex nature of politics. Catlin (1930) referred to politics as the "study of the act of control, or as the act of human social control", where control was synonymous with power. The intricate relationship between power and politics is heavily suggested within the politics literature (Hoy, 1968). Conceptually, power is the ability of one individual or group to control or influence the behavior of another (El-Ansary and Stern, 1972), in contrast, politics is considered a social influence process where behaviors are calculated and strategically motivated to further specific interests (Madison et al., 1980). Moreover, many researchers have considered the goal of politics to be the attainment and amassing of power (Drory and Romm, 1990; Hoy, 1968). Metaphorically speaking, power is a reservoir of power bases and potential influence that could be considered similar to the concept of wealth (cash, bonds, stock, etc.), while politics is akin to the cash flow activities (investing, financing, operating) through which wealth is attained, accumulated and dispersed (Madison et

al., 1980). Therefore, management and political science researchers are proposing that power and politics are intricately linked but distinctly different concepts (Hoy, 1968; Madison et al., 1980). From this perspective, power is amassed so it can be used to resolve conflict in one's favor at the expense of others (Levine and Rossmoore, 1994).

However, this perspective may provide a limited view of politics (Drory and Romm, 1990). More specifically, while politics and power are related (Mayes and Allen, 1977), power may not be the only goal of politics (Drory and Romm, 1990; Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). For that reason, Durbin (1978) suggested three overlapping objectives of politics (1) gaining power, (2) impression management and (3) professional advancement. See Figure 1.1.

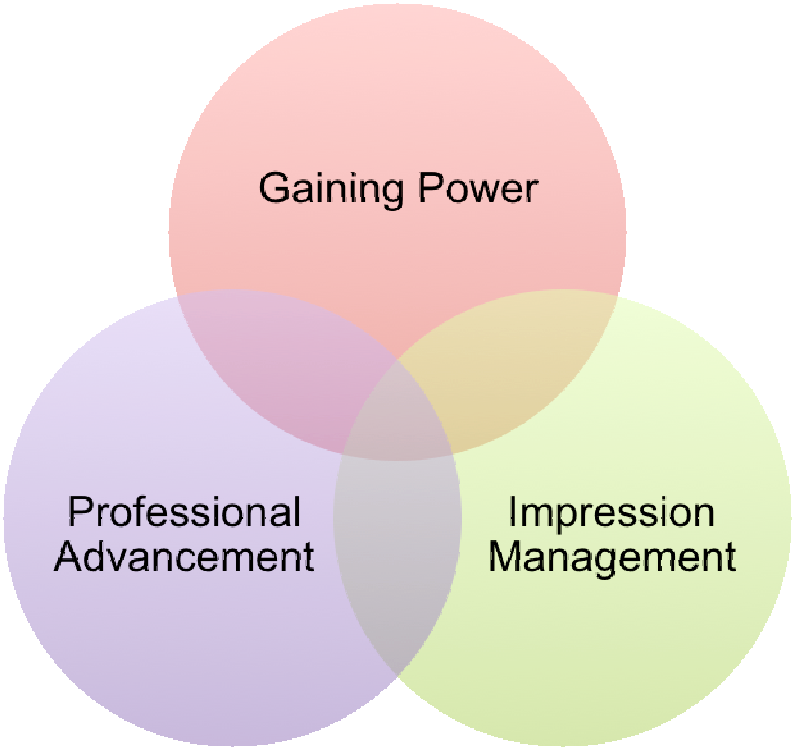


Figure 1.1 Objectives of Politics

The objectives in Figure 1.1 represent a more robust view of politics, proposing that different interrelated interests may motivate an individual to engage in political activity (Durbin, 1978). The interests of gaining power, professional advancement, and impression management may refer to outcomes such as, recognition and status, enhanced position and power, control, ego (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). From this perspective, politics becomes more strategic and relational (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). Consequently, politics begins to require different covert strategies and tactics (what potential behaviors or actions will further specific interests), means-end analysis (what will be gained from selected behaviors and actions), and feedback/control methods (how have actions been received) (Mayes and Allen, 1977).

However, there are risks associated with engaging in politics. Moreover, those who engage in politics may not reap the potential rewards (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). In other words, in an effort to achieve power, professional advancement, and impression management, participants accept that there may be consequences (Durbin, 1978). The consequences of politics may cause participants to suffer from strategic loss of power, credibility, visibility, position and raised suspicion about their motives and behaviors (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). Despite the potential consequences, individuals may accept the risk and potentially enjoy engaging in politics (Ferris et al., 1989).

Consequently, politics is suggested to thrive within all organizations in some form or fashion (Zahra, 1987). Literature suggests that because organizations are political entities, few important decisions are made without key parties protecting or enhancing their own interests (Longenecker et al., 1987). This is driven by the perspective that organizations are made up of politically active individuals and political coalitions (Cavanagh et al., 1981). The acknowledgement of politics existing in a business organizational environment, led to a more

comprehensive definition of politics (Drory and Romm, 1990). Therefore organizational politics is defined as "a social influence process, in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests" (Ferris et al., 1989).

Within the social influence process of organizational politics, motives are often concealed (Pfeffer, 1981), tactics are varied based on prior success (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois III, 1988) and strategies are geared towards achieving one's objectives (Ferris et al., 1989). These motives, strategies and tactics are geared towards exploiting resources to create a more "comfortable existence" (Burns, 1961), where a "comfortable existence" involves gaining power, creating a favorable impression, and professional advancement (Durbin, 1978). While these are positive reasons for engaging in organizational politics (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989; Zahra, 1987), research has primarily focused on the negative consequences of organizational politics (Miller et al., 2008).

Generally speaking, the impact of organizational politics has been focused on areas such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment, job stress, and job involvement (Miller et al., 2008). Research has found that organizational politics decreases job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement, while increasing turnover intention and job stress (Jing and Ferris, 1995; Miller et al., 2008) This research stream implies that organizational politics is detrimental to organizational effectiveness (Voyer, 1994) and work place attitudes (Bozeman et al., 2001). While these outcomes are important, they do not consider the impact of organizational politics on interorganizational exchange relationships or on specific management initiatives within the organization, such as supply chain management.

For example, organizations are commonly involved in partnerships with other firms that have a large impact on their success or failure (Dyer and Singh, 1998). These partnerships are managed by boundary spanning supply chain employees (Kent and Flint, 1997), that are increasingly becoming autonomous (Bowersox et al., 2000) and are often considered representatives of the firm and their respective functional areas within the firm (Aldrich and Herker, 1977). These boundary spanners may participate in organizational politics (Perry and Angle, 1979). Furthermore, Stank et al. (2001) proposed that boundary-spanning employees who deal with external organizations be politically empowered to increase the likelihood of collaboration, which is critical for the successful supply chain management. Politics may be a critical aspect of the social dynamics that exist with supply chains.

This research addresses the previously mentioned gap and focuses on supply chain politics. Drawing on the organizational politics definitions developed by Burns (1961) and Ferris et al. (1989), supply chain politics is defined as a *strategically designed social influence process focused on generating resources and mobilizing support for the enhancement or protection of supply chain related interests internal or external to the organization.* Within supply chain politics there may be underlying strategies, tactics, motives and benefits for engaging in supply chain politics inside and outside of the firm. Additionally, supply chain managers may engage in supply chain politics to achieve positive outcomes similar to what was suggested by Durbin (1978), (gaining power, impression management and career advancement) but focused on supply chain objectives. For example, within the firm, a supply chain manager may use their boundary spanning connections to mobilize support to allocate resources towards adopting process improvements for the supply chain and logistics function that may require sacrifices from other functional areas. Alternatively, a supply chain manager may engage in perceived

interorganizational citizenship behaviors to give a desirable impression, and gain entrance into an important interorganizational network by mimicking observed behavioral norms.

Furthermore, as previously suggested by research in organizational politics, there may be a risk when engaging in supply chain politics (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). If underlying motives, strategies and tactics are perceived as less than sincere, relationships may be vulnerable or damaged (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). Literature suggests that the bargaining processes between the two parties can facilitate the use of political motives, strategies and tactics (Mayes and Allen 1997). Therefore, it may be beneficial to turn to the behavioral theories of the firm to understand why supply chain politics may occur inside and outside of the firm.

Theoretical Justification

Behavioral Theory of the Firm

A theory of the firm helps to explain the pattern of goals and objectives within an organization (Anderson, 1982). The dominant theories of the firm within the marketing channels and logistics literature have been economic, such as the neoclassical, market value, and agency cost models. These models suggest that the goals and objectives of the organization are primarily focused on profit maximization (Anderson, 1982; Mentzer et al., 2004). The aforementioned theories propose that an organization's goals and objectives are solely economic.

Alternatively, the behavioral theories of the firm (Resource Dependence Theory, Political Economy Paradigm, Constituency-Based Theory, Resource Management Theory) contend that a firm's survival is not just economic, but more nuanced and complex than profit maximization and financial returns (Cyert and March, 1963). The behavioral theories of the firm are complementary to the economic view, and introduce the social aspect of cooperation and bargaining amongst organizations, functions and individuals within the environment to maintain firm survival (Mentzer et al., 2004). From the perspective of Resource Dependence Theory the

survival of an organization depends on its ability to bargain and negotiate resources and support from other organizations within the environment (Anderson, 1982). When these other organizations are willing to provide resources and support, they are legitimizing a firm's existence (Bansal and Clelland, 2004). Legitimacy is achieved when the firm is able to attain enough support and endorsement from other organizations to ensure its survival and effectiveness (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Once legitimacy is obtained, organizations may often be insulated from further scrutiny from internal and external constituencies (Bansal and Clelland, 2004).

However, organizations and their employees often have difficulty gaining and maintaining legitimacy (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992). Consequently, politics and political maneuvering may be used to gain, enhance and protect it (Boddewyn and Brewer, 1994). For that reason, social norms and behaviors may be adopted by an organization's employees to provide the appearance of conformity to other organizations in the environment (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992). This is further complicated by the ability to simulate "good" partnership behaviors over considerable lengths of time (Bolino, 1999). Additionally, organizations may shift attention away from controversial activities that violate social norms and put desired environmental support at risk (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992).

Both Resource Dependence Theory and Political Economy Paradigm highlight the importance of support from the external environment (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Stern and Reve, 1980). However, neither theoretical perspective addresses both intra-organizational and interorganizational issues or the importance of resource allocation decisions. More specifically, Resource Dependence Theory and Political Economy Paradigm focus on the resource exchanges and relationship dynamics that occur within the channel, but do not explore the impact on the

internal organization. In contrast, Constituency-Based Theory addresses both internal and external issues that may exist for individuals, functions and organizations. Additionally, Resource Management Theory provides insight into how politics may impact resource allocation decisions. These two theories may provide a more robust complex perspective of the politics phenomenon and provide insight into how politics impacts supply chain management.

Constituency-Based Theory

Constituency-Based Theory may provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the conceptual space of supply chain politics. This theoretical lens comes from the marketing tradition and draws on the behavioral theory of the firm relying on Resource Dependence Theory and adopts a coalition perspective for resource exchange (Anderson 1982; Day and Wensley, 1983). An organization has internal and external coalitions, and the goal of the organization is to survive by negotiating resource exchanges with external coalitions (Day and Wensley, 1983). To achieve this goal, internal coalitions are tasked with providing a continuous flow of resources from external coalitions (Anderson, 1982).

Over time, the internal coalitions become more effective and efficient when bargaining and negotiating with their external counterparts (Lusch and Laczniak, 1987). As the internal coalitions develop more expertise when dealing with external coalitions their perspective begins to change (Day and Wensley, 1983). They begin to view them as external constituencies that should be served and managed (Anderson, 1982). For example the supply chain and logistics function may form ongoing relationships with a supplier and become concerned with their performance, helping the supplier succeed, as well as maintaining the relationship through socialization and relational norms. To achieve this they may be motivated to engage in externally focused supply chain politics and implement strategies and tactics to maintain this ongoing

relationship. Internal coalitions become engrossed in maintaining and protecting the legitimacy received from external constituencies.

In addition to interacting with external coalitions, internal coalitions also bargain and negotiate with each other (Day and Wensley, 1983). Each internal coalition has a perspective on the long run survival of the organization, and will attempt to move the organization toward its preferred position (Mentzer et al., 2004). However, the internal coalitions that are responsible for the acquisition and management of critical resources eventually gain more influence within the organization (Day and Wensley, 1983). This sets the stage for political negotiations amongst management, who are attempting to further their internal coalition's perspective within the organization. (Anderson, 1982).

The aforementioned coalitions are comparable to functional areas within a firm (Chen et al., 2007). This suggests that internal functional areas are negotiating and bargaining with other internal and external functional areas. One such functional area is supply chain and logistics. The objective of supply chain and logistics is to provide customer value through time and place transformation (i.e. procurement, network design, customer service, order management) (Langley and Holcomb, 1992; Mentzer et al., 2008). This is accomplished through the internal and external pursuit and management of resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Supply chain and logistics managers may seek resources to further their supply chain related interests, which they may believe improve the organization's odds for long-term survival. Therefore, supply chain and logistics managers may negotiate and bargain with various internal and external functional areas to further supply chain related interests.

Extant literature has begun to address the bargaining processes between logistics and other functional areas (Chen et al., 2007; Ellinger, 2000; Keller, 2001; Keller et al., 2006).

Keller (2001) emphasizes the need to perform internal and external marketing to develop solid relationships within the firm to garner improved success within the supply chain. Proposing that internal groups are just as critical as external groups and should be treated as such (Keller et al., 2006). However, the integration and collaboration between internal functions involves perceptions, behavioral norms and social dynamics, which may be challenging and difficult to overcome (Ellinger et al., 2006; Esper et al., 2010; van Hoek et al., 2008). Although research provides ways to approach these challenges through employing the marketing mix, it does not address the social dynamics or political process that may occur between the functions. This gap may be addressed through the exploration and investigation of supply chain politics through the lens of constituency-based theory.

While constituency-based theory takes an individual and functional level approach to politics within the organization, it does not address the issues that may arise at the organizational level. Resource management theory provides an opportunity to explore the impact of politics at the organizational level through resource allocation and deployment decisions.

Resource Management Theory

Strategic resources represent the underlying strengths and weaknesses of a firm (Wernerfelt, 1984). Resource Based View (RBV) posits that high performing organizations are able to combine, access, develop and utilize strategic resources that are valuable, rare and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Resources may be tangible such as people, cash and equipment or intangible such as processes, information, organizational routines, values and culture (Boddewyn and Brewer, 1994). Through the effective management and development of these strategic resources, firms are able to create a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984).

RBV provides a basis for understanding how and when firms develop the aforementioned resources for competitive advantage (Barney 1991). Resource Management Theory builds on RBV by suggesting that owning valuable and rare strategic resources is not enough for competitive advantage. These resources must be managed efficiently and effectively in order for firms to experience superior performance (Sirmon et al. 2007). Unfortunately the deployment of resources can be idiosyncratic and highly contextualized depending on situational factors and managerial interpretations and perspectives (Sirmon et al. 2008). Therefore the effectiveness of resource management varies across organizations depending on the perspective that is adopted (Sirmon et al. 2008). The highly idiosyncratic nature of resource allocation and deployment decisions within an organization may create an environment where organizational politics can thrive.

Organizational politics tends to surround resource allocation decisions because individuals who are politically active focus on who gets what, when and where (Perry and Angle 1979). Furthermore the organizational politics exists in areas that lack formalization. As previously mentioned, resource allocation decisions are often based on interpretations and perceptions rather than a formalized process. This suggests that resource allocation and deployment activities are highly politicized within organizations and may result in resources being allocated in a manner that is not in the best interest of the organization as a whole.

Overview Of Research Approach

This research will be explored through three complementary articles, which require different methodological approaches. Each article will address different facets of the supply chain politics phenomenon. Article one investigates the impact of organizational politics on supply chain dynamics and processes within the firm. Article two examines the impact of organizational politics on firm supply chain performance. Last, article three explores how

supply chain employees balance internal and external politics when managing supply chain relationships. An overview of the methodological approach for each study is presented in the remainder of this section.

Article 1

A survey methodological approach will be used within this quantitative research study. This survey will focus on the research question: how does organizational politics impact firm supply chain management processes and dynamics? More specifically, the survey will examine the relationship between organizational politics and the constructs of supply chain orientation and cross-functional integration as well as the moderating impact of the top supply chain executive's political skill.

The population of interest for this study is retail industry employees. The retail industry deals directly with the end-consumer and must actively manage inventory, vendor relationships and delivery, so retail organizations actively manage supply chain and logistics processes (Waller et al., 1999). The sample for this population will be drawn from a paid online research panel for retail employees. On-line research panels have been shown to be valuable methods for accessing participants for survey research (Autry et al. 2010; Thornton et al. 2013).

Retail industry employees will be selected based on pre-determined characteristics, expertise and knowledge that are relevant to the study. More specifically, participants will be selected who interact with different functional areas within the organization and have knowledge of the top supply chain executive in the firm. The selection of participants, who have this type of experience, reflects the complex social interactions within the organization represented by constituency-based theory (Anderson, 1982) and captures the boundary spanning nature of supply chain employees within organizations (Kent and Flint, 1997). Furthermore, participants

who possess these characteristics may be more aware of attitudes within the firm towards different processes and initiatives because of frequent interaction with employees from different functional areas.

The measures for article one will use a combination of established and adapted scales. Organizational politics perceptions will be measured using the Hochwarter et al. 2003 6-item scale. Cross-functional integration will use the established scale from Ellinger et al. 2000. The The scales for supply chain orientation and political skill will be adapted from Min and Mentzer 2000 and Ferris et al. 2005 respectively. The supply chain orientation scale will be adjusted to focus on intraorganizational issues within the firm. The political skill scale will be adapted to become a relative measure where participants will answer questions regarding the supply chain executive in comparison to other executives within their organization.

The hypotheses will be tested using Partial Least Squares Regression (PLS). PLS is a second-generation path analysis technique, which uses a correlational, principal component-based approach to estimation (Majchrzak et al., 2005). PLS is preferred in areas where research is exploratory and established theory between constructs is still being developed. Furthermore, it is a rigorous analytical tool that accommodates complex models with large amounts of items and where normality may not be assumed (Peng and Lai 2012).

Article 2

This article will use a survey methodological approach combined with secondary data analysis to explore the relationship between organizational politics and firm supply chain performance. Furthermore, a moderating impact of supply chain orientation on the previously mentioned relationship will be examined. This will be accomplished by linking the survey responses of participants to secondary financial performance measures. While survey research

comes from the empirical paradigm, which studies the relationship between variables, combining it with secondary data provides interesting opportunities to explore objective measures in relation to the aforementioned constructs of interest (Houston 2004).

The sampling frame for the survey and secondary data is the retail industry. A single industry focus was chosen to reduce potential industry confounding of financial performance measures. Furthermore, the retail industry was selected because these organizations actively manage firm supply chain and logistics performance (Waller et al. 1999). The extensive tracking of firm supply chain performance provides a level of consistency across the industry allowing for organizational level comparison across firms. The survey will be conducted using an online paid retail research panel of retail industry employees and each participant will be asked to identify their organization. Those who are currently employed, and work for a publicly traded organization will be included in the sample. Based on these qualifications, the responses will be collapsed for each of the constructs to create a firm measure of organizational politics and supply chain orientation.

The measures for article two will be consistent with the measures used for article one for organizational politics perceptions and supply chain orientation. Cash to cash cycle and operating expense per sales dollar will measure firm supply chain performance. Cash to cash cycle provides a robust measure of the efficiency of supply chain activities within the organization (Farris and Hutchinson 2002). Alternatively operating expense per sales dollar provides an overview of efficient operations across the organization (Swink et al. 2010).

The hypotheses will be tested using Partial Least Squares Regression (PLS). PLS is correlational principal-based approach, which is focused on prediction (Majchrzak et al., 2005). PLS is preferred in areas where research is exploratory and small sample sizes are being

analyzed (Peng and Lai 2012). For this reason, PLS was selected as the appropriate data analysis method.

Article 3

Qualitative research is best used for theory building, rich description, and developing process models (Deshpande and Webster, 1989; Langley, 1999). It provides an opportunity to gain better understanding of the texture, activities, and processes that occur within the phenomenon (Belk et al., 1988). There are five categories of understanding within qualitative research: descriptive, generalization, interpretive, theory, and evaluation (Maxwell, 1996). This research will focus on the descriptive (what happened in terms of observable behavior and or events), interpretive (thoughts, feelings, and intentions), and theory (why things happen and how it can be explained) categories of understanding (Maxwell, 1996). A grounded theory study will be conducted to address the three respective categories of understanding.

The goal of grounded theory is to generate theory that explains a pattern of behavior, which is problematic and relevant for those involved (Glaser, 1978). This is accomplished through studying how people interact, react or take actions in response to social phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1998b). This method uses interviews, field notes and other documents as data to be systematically analyzed using constant comparison analysis (Strauss, 1987).

This grounded theory study will investigate the following phenomenon: how supply chain employees balance internal and external politics? The study will seek to understand the underlying strategies, tactics, and means-end analysis that may exist within supply chain relationships because of supply chain politics. To accurately investigate this phenomenon, depth interviews with supply chain and logistics managers will be performed. The interview will focus on targets of perceived political strategies, tactics, and behaviors within supply chain

relationships. Constant comparison analysis will begin immediately, which includes open coding, axial coding, selective coding, and theoretical memos until overall themes and categories have been identified from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998a). Interviews boundary spanning supply chain employees will be conducted until theoretical saturation is reached, delimiting the theory by identifying repetitive themes and categories that exist within the interviews (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Contributions Of This Research

This dissertation seeks to introduce and understand the implications of supply chain politics inside and outside of the organization. There are several potential contributions to the organizational politics and supply chain and logistics literature. First, organizational politics will be extended into the social dynamics of interorganizational exchange relationships, attempting to explain the sociopolitical interest that were first described by the Political Economy Paradigm; providing more depth of understanding to the internal social processes that exist within interorganizational exchange relationships. Furthermore, the impact of organizational politics will be expanded beyond individual variables such as job satisfaction, job stress and turnover intention, to specific management initiatives that may be bolstered or undermined because of the perceived political climate of the organization. Moreover, this research suggests there may be positive implications to organizational politics on firm supply chain performance and additional theoretical perspectives may be necessary to fully understand the complex impact that intra-firm politics may have on performance.

In addition to contributions in the organizational politics literature, there are several contributions to the supply chain and logistics literature. This research will explore the concept of supply chain politics through the lens of constituency-based theory and resource management

theory expanding their usage within in supply chain and logistics research. Next, through the introduction of supply chain politics, the underlying motives for supply chain behaviors will be explored. Investigating the underlying motives for the behaviors and actions taken within the supply chain may provide deeper understanding of the social dynamics and motives within supply chain relationships. Furthermore, if politically motivated behaviors can be disguised as good partnership behaviors (Bolino, 1999), relationship effectiveness and relationship magnitude within supply chain relationships may be overestimated when supply chain politics is not taken into account. There is a potential that the relationships developed within the supply chain are not as effective and stable as once thought (Blocker et al., 2012).

In addition, this research may have important implications for supply chain and logistics managers. First it provides insights on how to further supply chain management and supply chain related interests within the organization. The effective use of supply chain politics within the organization may help garner necessary resources and support from other functional areas. The ability to navigate the politics between functional areas to garner resources and support for supply chain management goals and objectives may be a necessary and critical skill for supply chain and logistics managers. Furthermore, this research will highlight the need for boundary spanning supply chain and logistics employees to be sensitive to the politics of the supply chain. The ability to recognize, interpret and use the social cues that exist within supply chain relationships may allow access to important interorganizational networks, amassing of power, or positive impressions with supply chain partners. This suggests that managers and organizations should seek to hire employees that can skillfully navigate the political landscape of intra and interorganizational relationships that supply chain and logistics managers operate in.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Following the introduction in chapter one, chapter two is an initial literature review to provide background on the phenomena of politics in the business environment. The literature review explores existing research on organizational politics, reactions to politics within organizations, as well as internal and external supply chain implications. Next, chapter three through five presents the findings for articles one, two and three respectively. Finally, chapter six is the overall conclusions for the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two provides a thorough review of the literature on organizational politics and its related concepts: perception of organizational politics and political skill. This literature review will provide the background on organizational politics and offer research gaps and opportunities in this area as it pertains to supply chain management. The research gaps and opportunities provide the research directions for articles one, two and three.

Organizational Politics

The definition of organizational politics has been the subject of considerable dialogue and debate within the Management literature (Baum, 1989; Cavanagh et al., 1981; Drory and Romm, 1990; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Kumar and Ghadially, 1989; Mayes and Allen, 1977; Voyer, 1994; Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984; Zahra, 1987). The debate regarding organizational politics has focused on achieving concealed interests, acquiring power, allocating resources resource and garnering support (Pettigrew, 1973). More specifically, how are individuals within the organization able to gain the necessary power to further their goals? Second, how are they able to gain the necessary resources and support for their cause? The organizational politics' debate explores the answers to these questions. As a result, several categories of organizational politics definitions have been created. The definitions can be categorized into five areas: "behavioral means", "acting against the organization", "power attainment", "conflict" and "concealed motive" (Drory and Romm, 1990). See Table 2.1

"Behavioral means" refers to formal (official) organization actions, informal (non-sanctioned, discretionary) organization actions, and illegal or prohibited actions (Vredenburgh

and Maurer, 1984). The definitions that fall within this category focus on actual behaviors and actions that are taken by individuals within the firm (Drory and Romm, 1990). For example

Table 2.1 Organizational Politics Definitions

Definition Category	Author, Year & Organizational Politics Definition			
Behavioral Means	**Mayes & Allen (1977):** The management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influence means.	**Farrell & Petersen (1982):** Activities that are not required as part of one's organizational role but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization		
Acting against the Organization	**Pettigrew (1973):** The play by play that occurs when one man or group of men want to advance themselves or their ideas regardless of whether or not those ideas would help the company.	**Allen et al., (1979):** A social influence process with potential functional or dysfunctional organizational consequences	**Perry & Angel (1979):** the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influence means.	
Power Attainment	**Tushman (1977):** Behavior of interest groups to use power to influence decision making	**Burns (1961):** The exploitation of resources, both physical and human, for the achievement of more control over others, and thus have safer, or more comfortable, or more satisfying terms of individual existence.	**Eisenhardt & Bourgeious III (1988)**: Politics - the observable, but often covert actions by which executives enhance their power to influence a decision.	**Madison et al. (1980):** The management of influence

Table 2.1 Continued

Definition Category	Author, Year & Organizational Politics Definition			
Conflict	**Helco and Wildavsky (1974):** Conflict over whose preferences are to prevail in the determination of policy.	**Frost & Hayes (1979):** Actions considered illegitimate and as such are likely to be resisted if recognized by its victims.	**Harvey & Mills (1970):** Actions that make a claim against the organization's resource sharing system, with the understanding that these claims will create conflict.	
Concealed Motive	**Longenecker et al. (1987):** The deliberate attempts by individuals to enhance or protect their self-interests when conflicting courses of action are possible.	**Pfeffer (1981):** Those activities taken within organizations to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes in a situation in which there is uncertainty or dissensus about choices.	**Vrendenburgh & Maurer (1982):** Involves sanctioning judgment of goals and means using either organizational design or informal, unofficial norms as criteria.	**Ferris et al., (1989):** Social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests (where self-interest maximization refers to the attainment of positive outcomes and the prevention of negative outcomes).

ingratiation or self-promotion may fall in this area. Literature views these types of behaviors as self-serving influence attempts that are focused toward superiors (Allen et al., 1979).

Critics of this viewpoint argue that it does not fully explore the motive behind the behavior and assumes the motive is political (Drory and Romm, 1990). Furthermore, "behavioral means" is too broad of a categorization of behaviors and may consider a behavior political when it is not (Mayes and Allen, 1977). More specifically, not everything is political. The determination of what is considered political should be established by intent (Farrell and Petersen, 1982). Without exploring the intent behind the behavior, it is problematic to suggest a behavior is politically motivated (Drory and Romm, 1990).

Alternatively, the definitions in the "acting against the organization" categorization refer to goals and objectives that are counter to organizational effectiveness (Cavanagh et al., 1981). This category takes the perspective that organizational politics is negative and may have a detrimental impact on the organization and its members (Drory and Romm, 1990). This assumes that politically motivated goals and objectives are primarily self-centered and to achieve them, others may be harmed (Cavanagh et al., 1981). However, literature suggests that this may be a narrow view (Drory and Romm, 1990).

The primary critique of this category is it assumes that organizational politics' outcomes are negative (Drory and Romm, 1990; Durbin, 1978; Hochwarter, 2012; Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). Researchers argue this is a myopic view that is creating a bias within this research (Hochwarter, 2012). Furthermore, literature has indicated there may be positive outcomes to organizational politics that should continue to be explored (Durbin, 1978; Mayes and Allen, 1977).

The third category of "power attainment" refers to the desire to attain and acquire more power within the organization (Zahra, 1987). The consensus among researchers has been that organizational politics involves influence (Drory and Romm, 1990; Eisenhardt and Bourgeois III, 1988; Ferris et al., 1989). The management of influence is used to achieve control over others (Martin and Sims, 1974) and impact decision-making (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois III, 1988). However, it has been suggested that defining organizational politics within the bound of power attainment assumes that power is the only goal (Hochwarter, 2012). Organizational politics has been attached to the motives of impression management, career advancement and network development(Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). Therefore defining organizational politics solely as power attainment may be too restrictive.

The categories of "conflict" and "concealed motive" share the assumption that if the opposing party knew the real intention of the political actor, they would not comply, so there is an underlying conflict which necessitates the concealment of the true goal (Drory and Romm, 1990). The "conflict" categorization focuses on the type of decisions where one-person benefits and another is harmed. These decisions are often considered political and drive conflict because of the parties' competing objectives where it is assumed that someone must win and someone else loses (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois III, 1988).

However, this perspective is similar to the "acting against the organization" category because it assumes that there are only negative consequences to organizational politics and that someone must lose (Drory and Romm, 1990). Research has suggested that organizational politics can be enacted to benefit others just as well as an individual (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). In addition, not all conflict is an indicator of organizational politics and not all organizational politics results in conflict (Parker et al., 1995). In other words, conflict is a very

broad term that is not limited to a struggle for resources, power and support, while conflict may exist it does not guarantee the presence of organizational politics (Mayes and Allen, 1977).

Alternatively, "concealed motive" is considered an essential characteristic of organizational politics (Pfeffer, 1981). Within organizational politics the motive is concealed because of the concern that one's actions, activities, or processes may be resisted if the true underlying motive was known (Allen et al., 1979; Drory and Romm, 1990). The true motive may be to gain power, impression management, career advancement, increase support and/or create a social network (Durbin, 1978; Hochwarter, 2012). Whether or not the concealed motive is perceived becomes a critical component of the literature within organizational politics (Durbin, 1978; Gandz and Murray, 1980). Furthermore, focusing on concealed motives allows for the exploration of organizational politics beyond negative effects, and into the underlying desires of the participants and targets involved (Parker et al., 1995).

As the definitional debate suggests the concept of organizational politics is extremely complex and dynamic (Madison et al., 1980), and requires a more comprehensive definition (Mayes and Allen, 1977). The definition should consist of a behavioral aspect, which acknowledges the ongoing *process* of calculating actions and behaviors that may be used to further personal and organizational objectives (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). In addition, a robust definition may need to acknowledge the *process of* concealing motives, which is critical to organizational politics and implies that there is an underlying conflict and strategy when pursuing personal and organizational objectives (Pfeffer, 1981). Furthermore, the definition should not limit itself to power attainment but include a wide range of outcomes that may be considered self-interest (Drory and Romm, 1990). Therefore, the accepted definition of organizational politics within the literature and for the purpose of this research is "*a social*

influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests (where self-interest maximization refers to the attainment of positive outcomes and the prevention of negative outcomes)" (Ferris et al., 1989: 147). This definition synthesizes the aforementioned categories into a comprehensive definition that addresses the dynamic facets of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1989).

Through the exploration of organizational politics researchers seek to understand the political nature of organizations and its impact on employees through looking at its relationship to constructs such as job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational commitment, turnover intention and workplace stress (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Marques, 2009; Witt et al., 2002a; Witt et al., 2002b). Overwhelmingly research has shown that organizational politics has a negative effect on job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational commitment, and a positive relationship with turnover intention and workplace stress (Miller et al., 2008). This suggests that organizational politics negatively affects the employee's view of the organization. The aforementioned research has solely focused on the negative issues that occur with organizational politics without considering the benefits (Hochwarter, 2012). There are reasons that employees choose to engage in organizational politics further suggesting that potential benefits that exist (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989).

Benefits and Consequences Of Organizational Politics

Although, research has focused on the negative implications of organizational politics and its perception, there are several positive reasons for engaging in this process (Fedor et al., 2008; Ferris et al., 2002). Employees often feel that engagement in organizational politics is necessary in many cases and serves a purpose personally and professionally (Drory and Vigoda-Gadot,

2010). The positive view of organizational politics is that of working behind the scenes to "negotiate your career" or provide benefits to others (Fedor et al., 2008). Furthermore, it is possible that those who have the desire to engage in organizational politics are willing to try and shape their environment to one that is more comfortable and amenable to them (Liu et al., 2010). In contrast, those who do not make an attempt often feel unsatisfied, victimized and powerless (Putnam, 1995). For that reason, Durbin (1978) suggested three overlapping objectives of politics (1) gaining power, (2) impression management and (3) professional advancement. This was further expanded by Hochwarter (2012) to include support for self and others. See Figure 2.1.

The objectives in Figure 2.1 represent a more robust and comprehensive view of organizational politics, proposing that different interrelated interests may motivate an individual to engage in organizational politics (Durbin, 1978; Hochwarter, 2012). An individual's desire to gain power, advance professionally, manage impressions and cultivate support may refer to the realization of personal and/or organizational goals of recognition, status, enhanced position,



Figure 2.1 Objectives of Organizational Politics

power and social capital (Fedor et al., 2008). From this perspective, organizational politics becomes more strategic and relational (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). It begins to require different covert strategies and tactics (what potential behaviors or actions will further specific interests), means-end analysis (what will be gained from selected behaviors and actions), and feedback/control methods (how have actions been received) (Mayes and Allen, 1977).

However, politics involves risk because those who engage in organizational politics may not reap the rewards (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). Despite the potential consequences, individuals may accept the risk and potentially enjoy engaging in politics (Ferris et al., 1989). In other words, in an effort to attain the benefits of organizational politics participants accept that there may be consequences (Durbin, 1978). Literature suggests that the consequences of organizational politics include diminished power, credibility, visibility, position and raised suspicion about their motives and behaviors (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). See Figure 2.2. These risks are realized when those targeted are able to perceive that organizational politics is in play (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). It is this perception that has led researchers to study the "perception of organizational politics" (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). It is not the actual presence of organizational politics that is important but the perception that it exists (Madison et al., 1980). Consequently, researchers have suggested that organizational politics is a subjective state (Gandz and Murray, 1980), which is built on the perceptions of an individual regardless of accuracy (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). As a result, perceptions of organizational politics emerged as the primary construct of interest when exploring this phenomenon.

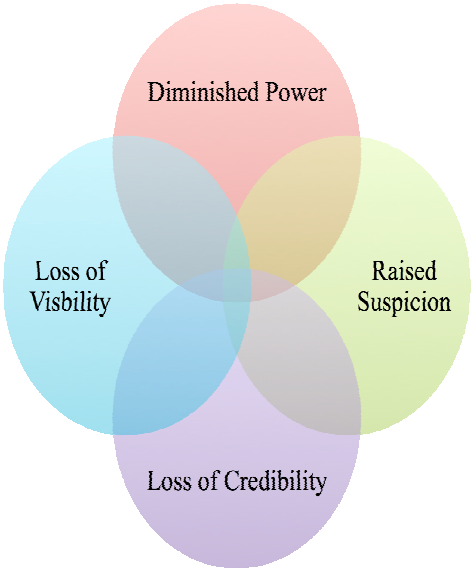


Figure 2.2 Risks of Organizational Politics

Perception Of Organizational Politics

Through the exploration of organizational politics, it becomes apparent that how actions are perceived is just as important as the process of organizational politics itself (Madison et al., 1980). Furthermore, many times people react based on what is perceived rather than reality (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Lewin, 1936; Zhou and Ferris, 1995). Moreover, extant literature proposes what is deemed organizational politics is driven by what individuals perceive as political (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). This suggests that perceptions of organizational politics are important to study even if they are misperceptions and are not consistent with reality (Ferris et al., 1989; Lewin, 1936). Accordingly, "perception of organizational politics" is defined as *employee perceptions of the extent to which others use social influence attempts within the work environment targeted at those who can provide rewards or will protect and/or promote their self-interests* (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997).

Antecedents Of Perception Of Organizational Politics

Organizational Influences

Perceptions of organizational politics tend to increase when there is a high degree of uncertainty and ambiguity within the environment (Fandt and Ferris, 1990). These elements within the environment are represented by the following antecedents to perceptions of organizational politics: "organizational influences", "job/work influences", and "personal factors" (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). "Organizational influences" consists of an organization's centralization and formalization, as well as employee hierarchical level (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). Centralization is the employee's ability to be involved in decision-making (Parker et al., 1995). In other words, does the employee have input on important decisions within the organization. Formalization is the presence of formal rules and procedures, as well as clarity of roles and responsibilities (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). Formalization seeks to capture if employees feel the organization provides clear direction and instruction in all aspects of organizational life (Kacmar et al., 1999). Lastly, hierarchical level addresses the employee's position within the organization (Parker et al., 1995). Literature suggests that the hierarchical level impacts how an employee perceives an organization (Kacmar et al., 1999). Employees at low-level position are more likely to perceive high levels of organizational politics whereas those at higher levels may not view it as an issue (Parker et al., 1995).

Job/Work Influences

The next antecedent of perception of organizational politics is "job/work influences". "Job/work influences" consists of job autonomy, opportunities for career development, fairness of rewards and recognition (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). Job autonomy revolves around the employee's span of control and ability to make decisions about their role and responsibilities

(Parker et al., 1995). When job autonomy is lacking, employees may begin to feel powerless (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). In addition, employees who feel they have few opportunities for career development and advancement may become frustrated with the organization (Parker et al., 1995). Moreover, if career development and/or opportunities are distributed in a manner that is viewed as less than fair, perceptions of organizational politics may increase (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992).

Personal Factors

Finally, the antecedent of "personal factors" refers to demographics (gender, race, age), previous exposure to political activity and Machiavellianism (Parker et al., 1995). Research indicates that demographics have an impact on perceptions of organizational politics because minorities, women and those who are older tend to perceive decisions or actions to be political (Atinc et al., 2010). This is driven by the perception that these groups tend to experience the negative ramifications of organizational politics (Atinc et al., 2010). Furthermore, if an individual has had previous exposure to political activity, they may be more likely to perceive organizational politics (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). Lastly, Machiavellianism refers to the extent to which ethical controls tempers a person's opportunistic behavior (Cobb, 1986; Ferris et al., 1989). "High Machs" believe the ends justify the means and proactively manage their goals (Ferris et al., 1989). They may behave manipulatively and opportunistically to achieve these goals (Cobb, 1986; Ferris et al., 1989). Those who are high on Machiavellianism may perceive many situations as political opportunities (Cobb, 1986; Ferris et al., 1989).

These combined elements may influence perceptions of organizational politics in the following way: an employee may have a lower level position and feel they have no say in decisions due to lack of clarity regarding organizational rules and their role responsibilities.

Furthermore, they have had prior exposure to political activity and have feelings of inferiority because the opportunities to move up are limited and believe that rewards are not distributed "fairly". This employee may have a high perception of organizational politics.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics Dimensions

Several dimensions are thought to reflect an employee's perception of a political environment within the organization: "general political behavior", "going along to get ahead" and "pay and promotion" (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997; Kacmar and Ferris, 1991). See Figure 2.3 (page 34). An organizational environment is considered political when there is competition for valued resources (e.g., space, budgets) (Farrell and Petersen, 1982). To some extent all organizational environments may be considered political at varying degrees (Ferris et al., 1989). The behavior that is introduced to "jockey" for these competitive resources within this environment is considered political (Kumar and Ghadially, 1989). Therefore, "general political behavior" refers to the individual behavior that is perceived as self-serving and benefit the actor by providing advantages or resources when they otherwise would not have been available (Gandz and Murray, 1980).

Alternatively, the dimension of "going along to get ahead" deals with the underlying issue of conflict in organizational politics (Drory and Romm, 1988). Organizational politics infers that conflict occurs because of conflicting objectives between parties (Drory and Romm, 1988). However, there may be cases when individuals may seek to avoid conflict by not resisting the political objectives of others (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997). In other words, an employee may

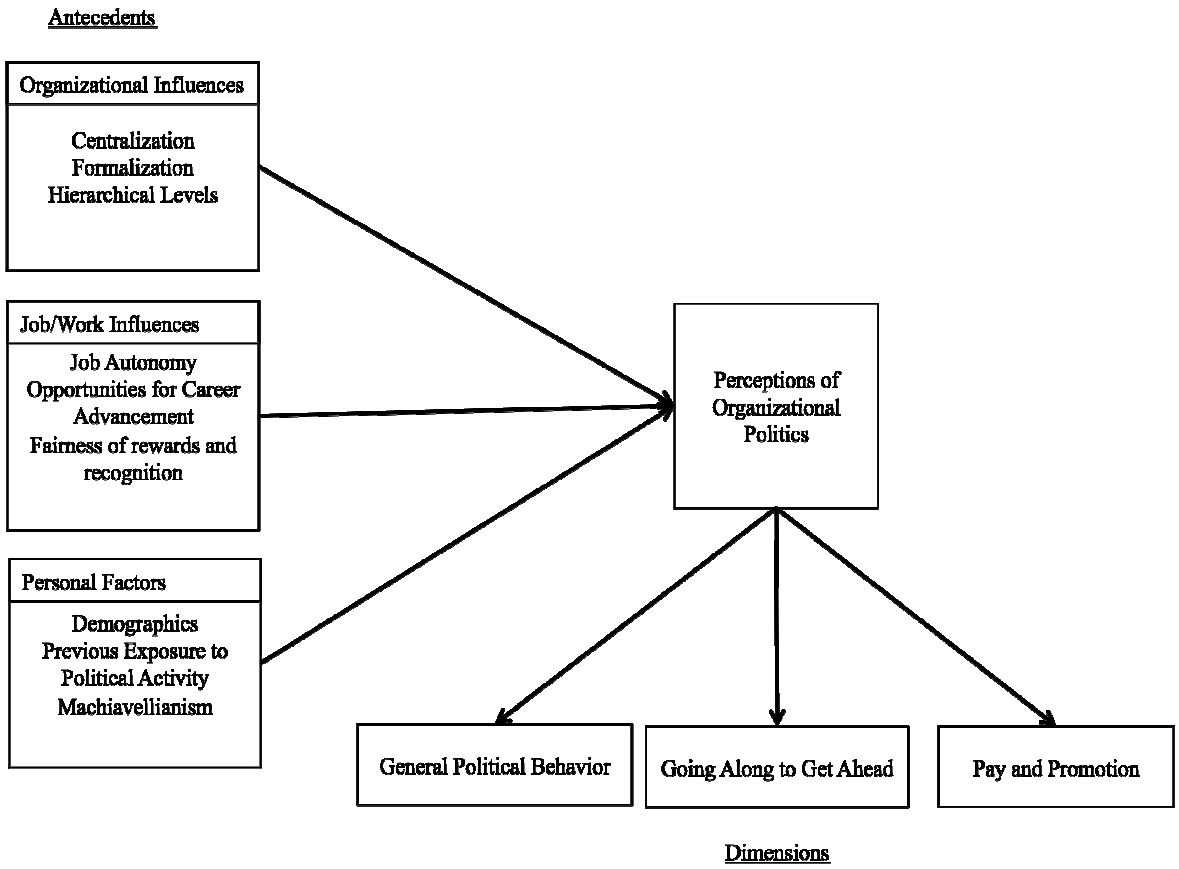


Figure 2.3 Antecedents and Dimensions of Perceptions of Organizational Politics

have their own political objectives, which oppose those of another party but to avoid conflict and suspicion they may accommodate the objectives of their opponent. This avoidance is perceived as "going along to get ahead". Individuals who are viewed as amiable and accommodating may not be perceived as a threat. The reduced suspicion may allow them to further their own interests and continue to maneuver politically (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997). Going along to get ahead may be a non-threatening way to further interests when in a political environment (Kacmar and Ferris, 1991).

The final dimension of "pay and promotion" refers to how rewards are distributed within the organization, and seeks to determine if there is a perception that organizational politics is encouraged through organizational policy (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). When systems are designed to reward individual oriented behavior and goals versus organizationally oriented behavior and goals, perceptions of organizational politics is perpetuated (Kacmar et al., 1999). Furthermore, rewarding those who engage in organizational politics may lead others to conclude that they must engage in organizational politics in the future (Ferris et al., 1989). Therefore the perception of how pay and promotion is distributed becomes an important dimension of perception of organizational politics.

Even though the perceptions of organizational politics may be different from objective reality, they have a positive relationship with several aspects of the work environment such as turnover intentions, organizational withdrawal, absenteeism and work-related stress (Cropanzano et al., 1997). The aforementioned constructs are considered the negative implications of perceptions of organizational politics. There has been limited research on the positive implications of organizational politics (Hochwarter, 2012). Furthermore, this may be driven by the notion that these perceptions are based on *others* and not one's own actions. People don't

like to view themselves as politicians or acting politically and tend to downplay personal involvement (Burns, 1961). In other words, the positive results of organizational politics may be downplayed for fear of being viewed as a politician. However employees will discuss the perceived political activity of *others* on a regular basis (Gandz and Murray, 1980). More, specifically, perceptions of organizational politics focuses on the belief that the actions and behaviors of *others* are self-serving and less than genuine (Kacmar et al., 1999).

Recent studies have shown that perceptions of organizational politics can be positive for organizational politics participants (Hochwarter, 2012). The political actors may gain from their actions through control of performance objectives as well as pursuit of management initiatives (Fedor et al., 2008). There is an opportunity to expand the literature to understand beneficial outcomes. These positive outcomes may be associated with the skill of the political actor. In other words, how adept is the political actor when maneuvering the perceptions of organizational politics within the organization.

Political Skill

The ability to navigate organizational politics and perceptions of organizational politics may be a specific skill that is possessed by individuals within the organization (Treadway et al., 2005). Literature has identified this ability as political skill. Political Skill is defined as "*the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhances one's personal and/or organizational objectives"* (Ferris et al., 2005: 127). Researchers have suggested that political skill is necessary to be successful in organizational politics (Pfeffer, 1981).

Individuals who possess political skill tend to use actions and behaviors that are more acceptable for a given social context, effectively generate "appropriate" situation-specific

behavior while interpreting the relevant social cues (Treadway et al., 2005). Furthermore, these individuals are able to interpret different social situations in the work environment and act in a manner that disguises ulterior motives or self-serving interests with the appearance of being sincere (Ferris et al., 2007a). The individuals who possess this skill tend to feel a greater sense of control over their surroundings, confidence, and a clear understanding of events and behaviors that occur within their organization (Ferris et al., 2005).

Political skill may be the difference between successful and unsuccessful engagement in organizational politics (Ferris et al., 2005). The navigation of organizational politics requires the ability to create connections, build networks and/or coalitions and develop alliances, while giving the appearance of sincerity (Bacharach and Lawler, 1998). Cultivating and developing these connections, allies, and networks is important for developing power, and understanding the social interactions within the work environment (Pfeffer, 1981). These actions combined with the ability to appear genuine, sincere and devoid of ulterior motives generates a since of confidence and trust in those who politically skilled individuals interact with (Ferris et al., 2005). As a result of the aforementioned attributes, political skill is comprised of the following four dimensions: "social astuteness", "interpersonal influence", "networking ability", and "apparent sincerity".

"Social Astuteness" refers to an individual's ability to "understand social interactions well and accurately interpret their behavior and behavior of others" (Ferris et al., 2007: 292). Those who are considered socially astute are seen as discerning, clever, self-aware and possess an accurate understanding of social settings and interpersonal interactions (Ferris et al., 2005). They are considered to have a high sensitivity to others surrounding them, which is needed when trying to further your own interests within a politically charged environment (Pfeffer, 1992).

"Interpersonal Influence" is a "subtle and convincing personal style that exerts a powerful influence on those around them" (Ferris et al., 2005: 5). This allows people to adapt and adjust their behavior to a variety of circumstances and obtain a desirable response from others (Ferris et al., 2007b). In addition, interpersonal influence refers to the flexibility that may be required when dealing with different people in different social settings when seeking to further one's interest (Ferris et al., 2007b).

"Networking ability" is the ability to identify and develop diverse contacts and networks of people (Ferris et al., 2005). These networks are comprised of people who tend to hold valuable resources, assets, or connections that may be beneficial in the future for the organization or the individual (Ferris et al., 2007c). This dimension allows politically skilled individuals to be well positioned, so they can take advantage of potential opportunities (Ferris et al., 2000).

The final dimension of "apparent sincerity" allows politically skilled individuals to give the appearance of being genuine, having integrity and sincerity (Ferris et al., 2000). Projecting apparent sincerity is crucial because it focuses on whether or not others can perceive underlying motives, which may determine if influence attempts are successful (Ferris et al., 2005). Literature suggests that perceived motives affect the interpretation of behavior, therefore politically skilled individuals want others to perceive them as being sincere instead of manipulative or untrustworthy (Ferris et al., 2007c).

Research proposes that individuals who are politically skilled benefit from this ability. Those who are politically skilled are more adept at impression management (Harris et al., 2007; Treadway et al., 2007), where impression management refers to an individuals attempt to influence the impression that others form of them (Bolino and Turnley, 1999). Furthermore, organizational citizenship behaviors are positively associated with political skill(Andrews et al.,

2009). This is because there are no rules, regulations or prescribed expectations guiding organizational citizenship behaviors, which provides the politically skillful a great deal of freedom to use them for their benefit (Andrews et al., 2009). Overall, individuals who possess political skill are able to conceal their motives when necessary and strategically use behaviors or actions to further either personal or organizational interests (Treadway et al., 2005). In addition, the politically skilled may be more likely to engage in organizational politics when they believe their actions will make a difference.

Research Gap And Opportunities

Generally speaking, the focus of organizational politics and *perception* of organizational politics research has been intraorganizational issues (Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 2007a; Ferris et al., 1989). Typically *perception* of organizational politics' impact has been in areas such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment, job stress, and job involvement (Miller et al., 2008). While these areas are important, there may be additional areas of exploration within the realm of organizational politics. Research has suggested that organizational politics may affect the implementation of internal and external supply chain management processes as well as firm supply chain performance (Blossom, 1995; Piercy et al., 2006; Stank et al., 2001a). This suggests an opportunity to explore the impact of organizational politics on supply chain relationships, firm supply chain performance and supply chain management initiatives within the organization.

For example, in today's business environment organizations have become interconnected and are commonly involved in partnerships with other firms that can create success or cause failure (Dyer and Singh, 1998). Autonomous, boundary spanning, supply chain and logistics employees are often charged with managing these interorganizational exchange relationships

(Bowersox et al., 2000; Kent and Flint, 1997). Furthermore, boundary-spanning employees are often active in organizational politics, and develop a certain level of skill to navigate the issues that are presented inside and outside the organization(Aldrich and Herker, 1977; Perry and Angle, 1979). In addition, supply chain employees who deal with external organizations should be politically empowered to increase the likelihood of collaboration (Stank et al., 2001a).

Suggesting that supply chain employees engage in political activity implies a desire and a motivation to get involved in politics with other organizations and proposes that supply chain and logistics employees are involved in organizational politics and need political skill to move their internal and external objectives forward. Consequently, there is an opportunity to expand the focus of organizational politics research to include interorganizational exchange relationships as well as look at the impact organizational politics has on firm initiatives and processes such as supply chain management. Furthermore, how supply chain employees engage in political behavior within supply chain relationships is an area that can be further explored.

To explore the impact of organizational politics in interorganizational exchange relationships, the concept of supply chain politics is introduced along with supporting constructs of perception of supply chain politics, supply chain political skill, supply chain political will and supply chain political efficacy. Drawing on the definitions presented by Ferris et al., (1989) and Burns (1961) (See Table 2.1), supply chain politics is defined as a s*trategically designed social influence process focused on generating resources and mobilizing support for the enhancement or protection of supply chain related interests internal or external to the organization.*

Theoretical Foundation

This research will draw on two theoretical perspectives of constituency-based theory and resource management theory to explore the impact of organizational politics on supply chain

management at the individual level and organizational levels. The two theoretical perspectives draw on the behavioral theory of the firm paradigm and provide a basis for exploring the aforementioned phenomenon, are constituency-based theory and resource management theory respectively. Constituency-based theory draws on the behavioral theory of the firm perspective and provides a lens to explore the processes and dynamics impact of supply chain management. Alternatively, resource management theory provides an organizational level perspective to explore firm supply chain performance. The next sections explain behavioral theory of the firm and constituency based theory and resource management theory perspectives.

Behavioral Theory Of The Firm

The pattern of goals and objectives within an organization may be explained by the theory of the firm (Anderson, 1982). The primary theories of the firm that have been used to explain phenomena within the marketing channels and logistics literature have been economic, such as the neoclassical, market value, and agency cost models. The primary focus of these models is firm profit maximization (Anderson, 1982; Mentzer et al., 2004), suggesting that an organization's goals and objectives may be solely economic.

Alternatively, the behavioral theories of the firm (e.g. Resource Dependence Theory, Political Economy Paradigm, Constituency-Based Theory, Resource Management Theory) contend that an organization's objectives are more nuanced and complex than pure economic goals (Cyert and March, 1963). The behavioral theories of the firm are complementary to the economic models, and attempt to synthesize the social and economic aspects of organizations, functions and individuals within the environment to maintain firm survival (Mentzer et al., 2004). From the perspective of Resource Dependence Theory organization survival depends on its ability to obtain resources and support from other organizations within the environment

through negotiating and bargaining (Anderson, 1982). When external organizations are willing to provide resources and support, they are legitimizing a firm's existence (Bansal and Clelland, 2004). Legitimacy is achieved when an organization attains enough support and endorsement from external organizations to maintain its survival and effectiveness (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Legitimacy insulates organizations from scrutiny from internal and external constituencies (Bansal and Clelland, 2004).

Nevertheless, organizations and their employees have difficulty gaining and maintaining legitimacy (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992), so organizational politics is often used to obtain, grow and protect it (Boddewyn and Brewer, 1994). For that reason an organization's employees may appear to conform to social norms and behaviors that are accepted within the environment (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992). This is further complicated by the ability to simulate "good" partnership behaviors over considerable lengths of time (Bolino, 1999). Additionally, organizations may shift attention away from controversial activities that violate social norms and put desired environmental support at risk (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992).

Alternatively, the Political Economy Paradigm proposes that interorganizational exchange relationships have an external and internal economy and a polity, which can be expanded from a dyadic view to multiple firms (Stern and Reve, 1980). For the purposes of this dissertation the focus is on the internal economy and internal polity. The internal economy within interorganizational exchange consists of the internal economic structure and processes, whereas the internal social system, or polity, is considered the internal sociopolitical structure and processes (Stern and Reve, 1980). The internal economic structure describes the transactional relationship between channel members otherwise known as the governance structure that contractually establishes the relationship between firms (Arndt, 1983). The

internal economic structure is in place to ward off opportunistic behavior (self-interest seeking with guile) between firms (Brown et al., 2000; Williamson, 1979). The companion to the internal economic structure is the internal economic process, which refers to the terms of resource allocation decisions, exchange processes that are made among channel members (Achrol et al., 1983). The overall task of the internal economic structure and processes is to create a desirable product or service for external exchange partners through the coordination of behavior and allocation of resources (Arndt, 1983).

Internal polity complements the internal economy of interorganizational exchange (Benson, 1975). The internal economy and internal polity work together to allocate scarce economic resources, power and authority (Stern and Reve, 1980). The internal polity refers to the behavioral factors and sociopolitical issues that occur among firms within interorganizational exchange interactions created by power and dependence relationships between organizations (Stern and Reve, 1980). This includes the internal sociopolitical processes and structure. The internal sociopolitical processes are the dominant sentiments and behaviors, which guide interactions between channel partners (Stern and Reve, 1980). In contrast, the internal sociopolitical structure describes the power-dependence relationships that exist between channel partners (Benson, 1975). The internal processes and structure interact and work together to form the social system that firms interact within in order further their own survival.

Both Resource Dependence Theory and Political Economy Paradigm highlight the importance of interacting with organizations within the external environment (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Stern and Reve, 1980). However, neither theoretical perspective addresses both intraorganizational and interorganizational issues. More specifically, Resource Dependence Theory and Political Economy Paradigm focus on the resource exchanges and relationship

dynamics that occur within the channel, but do not explore the impact of the internal organization. In contrast, Constituency-Based Theory addresses both internal and external issues that may exist for individuals, functions and organizations.

Constituency-Based Theory

The lens of constituency-based theory may provide a theoretical basis for understanding and exploring supply chain politics. Constituency-Based Theory comes from the marketing tradition and draws from the behavioral theory of the firm relying on Resource Dependence Theory (Day and Wensley, 1983). This theory was developed with the hopes of explaining marketing strategy formulation and planning initiatives within the organization by taking a coalition perspective to functional areas inside and outside of the firm (Chimhanzi and Morgan, 2005; Day and Wensley, 1983; Noble and Mokwa, 1999). Constituency-based theory adopts a coalition perspective when negotiating resource exchanges (Anderson, 1982), where organizations are political entities comprised of coalitions with competing demands and objectives inside and outside of the organization (Narayanan and Fahey, 1982).

A coalition is defined as an interacting group of individuals that is intentionally constructed, focused on similar issues, and mutual perceived membership amongst the coalition (Stevenson et al., 1985). A formal structure is not required for a coalition, however, formal departments and functional areas, suppliers, customers and stakeholders are frequently considered coalitions (Anderson, 1982; Chen et al., 2007; Day and Wensley, 1983; Stevenson et al., 1985). From this perspective, an organization has internal and external coalitions, and the goal of the organization is to survive by negotiating resource exchanges with external coalitions (Day and Wensley, 1983). To achieve this goal, internal coalitions are tasked with providing a continuous flow of resources from external coalitions (Anderson, 1982).

Over time, the internal coalitions become more effective and efficient when bargaining and negotiating with their external counterparts (Lusch and Laczniak, 1987). As the internal coalitions develop more expertise when dealing with external coalitions their perspective begins to change (Day and Wensley, 1983). They begin to view them as external constituencies that should be served and managed (Anderson, 1982). A constituency is defined as an influence group that is biased towards specific objectives in the organization based on the exchanges that they value (Zammuto, 1984). Furthermore, the internal coalitions may become focused on satisfying the preferences of these constituencies (Zammuto, 1984), and potentially use them as leverage and as a means to establish legitimacy within the organization (Narayanan and Fahey, 1982).

The maneuvering between internal coalitions becomes a political process between employees representing different coalitions (Anderson, 1982). For example, the supply chain and logistics function may form ongoing relationships with a supplier and become concerned with helping the supplier succeed, as well as maintaining the relationship through socialization and relational norms. To achieve this they may be motivated to engage in supply chain politics and implement strategies and tactics to maintain this ongoing relationship.

In addition to interacting with external coalitions, internal coalitions bargain and negotiate with each other (Day and Wensley, 1983). Internal coalitions often pursue conflicting goals within the organization, which may lead to the use of organizational politics to further their own objectives (Narayanan and Fahey, 1982; Zammuto, 1984). Each internal coalition has a perspective on the long run survival of the organization, and will attempt to move the organization toward its preferred position (Mentzer et al., 2004). These competing coalition objectives within the organization may create competition for resources, legitimacy and support

through intercoalition bargaining amongst competing coalitions and external constituencies (Cyert and March, 1963). However, the internal coalitions that are responsible for the acquisition and management of critical resources and customer relationships may gain more influence within the organization and persuade others to adopt an orientation (e.g. Market orientation, Supply Chain Orientation, etc.) (Day and Wensley, 1983). The orientation pursued within the firm helps to guide the goals, objectives and initiatives that are pursued within the organization (Anderson, 1982).

For example, seeking to further a supply chain orientation defined as "the recognition of the organization of the systemic, strategic implications of the tactical activities in managing various flows in a supply chain", suggests that an organization will focus on processes and initiatives that will improve and enhance supply chain management within the organization (Mentzer et al., 2001). However, as suggested by Anderson (1982) and Mello and Stank (2005), there may be competing coalitions and subsequently orientations within an organization. Therefore, the competition between coalitions may be resolved through coalition members' use of organizational politics and other skills to navigate the complex relationships between coalitions and constituencies (Narayanan and Fahey, 1982). This sets the stage for negotiations between coalition members, who are attempting to further their internal coalition's perspective within the organization (Anderson, 1982). Negotiations are defined as an interpersonal decision-making process where individuals or groups agree how to allocate resources (Kim et al., 2005).

A functional area that may have a distinct perspective is supply chain and logistics. The objective of supply chain and logistics is to provide customer value through time and place transformation (i.e. procurement, network design, customer service, order management) (Langley and Holcomb, 1992; Mentzer et al., 2008). This is accomplished through the internal

and external pursuit of resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Supply chain and logistics managers may seek resources to further their supply chain related interests, which they may believe improve the organization's odds for long-term survival.

Extant literature has begun to address the bargaining processes between logistics and other functional areas (Chen and Indartono, 2011; Ellinger, 2000; Keller, 2001; Keller et al., 2006). Keller (2001) emphasizes the need to perform internal and external marketing to develop solid relationships within the firm to garner improved success within the supply chain, proposing that internal groups are just as critical as external groups and should be treated as such. In addition, the negotiating and bargaining to reduce constraints may further the integration between the functional areas (Chen et al., 2007). However, the integration and collaboration between internal functions involves perceptions, behavioral norms and social dynamics, which may be challenging and difficult to overcome (Ellinger et al., 2006; Esper et al., 2010; van Hoek et al., 2008). Although research provides ways to approach these challenges through employing the marketing mix, it does not address the social dynamics or supply chain political process that may occur between the functions and interorganizational exchange relationships.

Constituency-based theory provides an understanding of how organizational politics may impact individuals and functions inside and outside of the organization. However, it does not provide guidance on the impact of resource allocation and deployment decisions at the organizational level. In other words, it does not address the performance implications that may exist in a highly political environment. Therefore a resource management theoretical lens is beneficial for exploring the impact of organizational politics impact on firm supply chain performance at an organizational level.

Resource Management Theory

Resource management theory draws on the tradition of the Resource Based View. The Resource Based View (RBV) posits that high performing organizations are able to combine, access, develop and utilize strategic resources that are valuable, rare and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Additionally, these same resources must be distributed and combined to realize superior organizational performance (Hansen et al. 2004). In other words, how resources are allocated and deployed are important for an organization's success (Sirmon et al. 2008). The effective and efficient application of resources to the right processes, procedures and capabilities is just as important as the resource themselves (Kor and Mahoney 2005; Sirmon et al. 2007).

While RBV provides a basis for understanding how and when firms develop strategic resources for competitive advantage (Baron et al. 2013). Resource Management Theory builds on RBV by suggesting that owning valuable and rare strategic resources is not enough for competitive advantage. These resources must be managed efficiently and effectively in order for firms to experience superior performance (Sirmon et al. 2007). Unfortunately the deployment of resources can be idiosyncratic and highly contextualized depending on situational factors and managerial interpretations and perspectives (Sirmon et al. 2008). Therefore the effectiveness of resource management varies across organizations depending on the perspective that is adopted (Sirmon et al. 2008).

The ability to skillfully allocate resources often relies on tacit knowledge and potential codification of organizational routines within the firm (Johnson 2002). However because much of tacit knowledge is highly personal and idiosyncratic it is difficult to codify and may cause a lack of formalized rules for resource allocation and deployment (Sirmon et al. 2008). This lack

of formalization may be a fertile ground for social maneuvering to occur. Social maneuvering or organizational politics thrives in situations where there are no established rules and routines (Kumar and Ghadially 1989). In other words, resources are likely deployed based on objectives that are not consistent with the overall goals of the firm but further the self-interested desires (i.e. power, support) of individuals or groups within the organization (Madison et al. 1980). Consequently the resource deployment and allocation process not only lacks formalization (Sirmon et al. 2007; 2008) it is also highly political (Zahra 1987). Because of this, few resource allocation decisions are made without key parties seeking to enhance or protect their own interests (Longenecker et al., 1987).

Chapter Two Summary

The prior literature review provides the theoretical and conceptual basis for this dissertation and supports the research questions proposed from Chapter 1. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore firm supply chain performance implications of politics, and investigate the how supply chain employees balance supply chain politics inside and outside of their organization. The following chapters will provide the conceptual and theoretical rationale as well as the research findings for three articles, which explore the impact of politics from a variety of perspectives. More specifically, article one takes a constituency-based approach to explore how organizational politics impacts internal supply chain management processes and dynamics. Article 2 uses a resource management theory lens to investigate the impact organizational politics has on firm supply chain performance. Finally, article 3 is a qualitative exploration of how supply chain employees balance internal and external politics. The focus and research questions that each article will address are displayed below in table 2.2

Table 2.2 Article Overview

Study:	Chapter Three Article 1	Chapter Four Article 2	Chapter Five Article 3
Research Question:	How does organizational politics impact firm supply chain management processes and dynamics?	How does organizational politics impact firm supply chain performance?	How do supply chain employees experience politics in supply chain relationships?
Context of Study:	Intraorganizational	Intraorganizational	Interorganizational
Research Design:	Survey	Survey and Secondary Data	Grounded Theory

CHAPTER THREE: ARTICLE 1
Introduction

Organizational researchers have long argued that firms are complex social systems (Burns 1961). Within these social systems people often compete for advancement, recognition, status, support and resources, etc. (Kumar and Ghadially 1989). The competition is conducted through complex social dynamics and social maneuvering throughout the organization and is not limited to only individuals but functional areas as well (Cyert and March 1982). The aforementioned maneuvering and dynamics is often referred to as "politics".

Extant literature proposes that "politics" permeates all aspects of organizations to varying degrees (i.e. Ferris et al. 2005; Guild and Palmer 1968; Treadway 2012). It is prevalent where there is competition for the allocation of scarce resources (Perry and Angle 1979; Salimaki and Jamsen 2010). The rationing of resources based on political objectives may lead to the misuse of resources (Madison et al. 1980) and impact organizational effectiveness as well as goals and objectives that are critical to organizational success (Ferris et al. 1989). Consequently, the successful navigation of politics may mean success or failure for individuals as well as functional areas (i.e. supply chain management) in the organization (Markham 2000; Treadway et al. 2005).

From a supply chain management perspective, "politics" has been mentioned tangentially. More specifically, researchers posit that "politics" may interfere with an organization's ability to implement process improvements (Blossom 1995) and cross-functionally integrate (Piercy 2007). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that political empowerment of supply chain employees would be beneficial for supply chain management (Stank et al. 2001). This suggests that there is an opportunity to explore the impact of "politics"

on supply chain management. Furthermore in a broader sense there is a need to investigate "politics" on functional areas (Blossom 1995).

In response, the purpose of this research is to explore how "politics" impacts firm supply chain management dynamics and processes. More specifically, this research focuses on how the perceptions of organizational politics and the ability to skillfully navigate the political landscape within the organization can detract from or benefit supply chain management initiatives such as cross-functional integration and supply chain orientation. To accomplish this, the following sections will provide a literature review on perceptions of organizational politics and political skill. Then, theoretical foundations, hypothesis development and the conceptual model will be discussed. Next, an overview of the survey methodology and partial least squares (PLS) analysis is then explained. Next, results of the study are explored and followed by suggested managerial implications and future research opportunities.

Literature Review

Organizational Politics and Political Skill

Extant management literature posits that organizational politics thrives within all organizations in some form or fashion to varying degrees (Zahra, 1987). This is driven by the perspective that organizations are made up of politically active individuals and political coalitions (Cavanagh et al., 1981). Furthermore, literature suggests that organizations are political entities and few important decisions are made without key parties protecting or enhancing their own interests (Longenecker et al., 1987). These politically active individuals and coalitions compete over scarce resources, energy, information and influence within the organization (Cavanagh et al. 1981). To accomplish this, they engage in organizational politics, where organizational politics is defined as "a social influence process, in which behavior is

strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests" (Ferris et al., 1989:).

Parties participate in organizational politics to create a more comfortable existence within their organization (Burns 1961). A comfortable existence consists of accessing the desired resources and support that an individual deems necessary to further their interests within the organization (Ferris et al. 1989). Consequently, organizational politics causes resources and support to have a political meaning because it focuses on who gets what, when and where (Perry and Angle 1979). As a result, resources and support may be allocated based on political goals and objectives that benefit a specific individual or department and become detrimental to organizational effectiveness and organizational performance (Salimaki and Jamsen 2010; Farrell and Petersen 1982; Gandz and Murray 1980). These areas are negatively impacted because the political interests that are guiding allocation decisions may not be aligned with the overall mission and goal of the organization (Levine and Rossman 1995).

Researchers have suggested that to further understand the impact of organizational politics, exploring how actions are perceived is just as critical as the process of organizational politics itself (Madison et al., 1980). Furthermore, researchers propose what is deemed organizational politics is driven by what individuals *perceive* as political (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). This stems from the view that people often react based on what they perceive rather than reality (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Lewin, 1936; Zhou and Ferris, 1995). Notably, the aforementioned perceptions are important to study even if they are misperceptions and inconsistent with reality (Ferris et al., 1989; Lewin, 1936). Accordingly, "perception of organizational politics" is defined as *employee perceptions of the extent to which others use social influence attempts*

within the work environment targeted at those who can provide rewards or will protect and/or promote their self-interests" (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997;).

Through the exploration of perceptions of organizational politics (POPS) researchers have sought to understand the political nature of organizations and its impact on employees through looking at its relationship to workplace attitudes, employee behavior and leadership (i.e. Harris et al. 2005; Kacmar et al. 2011; Marques, 2009; Treadway et al. 2005; Witt et al. 2002). Overwhelmingly research has shown that POPS has a negative relationship with job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational commitment, and a positive relationship with turnover intention and workplace stress (Miller et al., 2008). Although research shows that POPS detracts from organizational effectiveness and organizational performance, however, those who are able to skillfully navigate the "politics" within the organization may mitigate these negative impacts (Ferris et al. 2005).

Political skill is defined as "*the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhances one's personal and/or organizational objectives*" (Ferris et al. 2005; 127). This ability allows the holder to protect their respective goals and objectives from the negative effect of POPS (Treadway et al. 2007). Often, political skill may be the difference between success and failure within the organization (Ferris et al. 2005) because individuals who possess this ability are able to interpret different social cues and use actions and behaviors that are acceptable within the firm (Treadway et al. 2005).

Politically skilled managers are often able to influence others in ways that contribute positively towards desired outcomes (Smith et al. 2009). These managers are able to effectively sway their targets' perceptions for their own benefit (Treadway et al. 2004). In addition, the manager's political skill may improve team performance by mitigating the concerns and

suspicions that are often associated with POPS (Ahearn et al. 2004). This may be accomplished through their ability to conceal motives and show sincerity while adjusting to varying social dynamics allowing politically skilled individuals to build trust and credibility within interpersonal relationships in the organization (Ferris et al. 2007). Furthermore, literature proposes that the trust and credibility generated by the politically skilled manager enables them to effectively maneuver through the political environment while insulating their objectives from the impact of POPS (Ahearn et al. 2004).

Traditionally, POPS and Political Skill have are explored from the perspective of workplace attitudes and individual level impact. However, there is an opportunity to explore how these constructs impact larger processes and orientations within the organization, specifically supply chain management initiatives. In the past, supply chain management research has tangentially suggested that "politics" may impact the implementation of internal supply chain management processes such as cross-functional integration (Blossom 1995; Piercy et al. 2006). Additionally, the political empowerment of supply chain employees may be beneficial for furthering supply chain initiatives (Stank et al. 2001).

Despite touching on the issue, there has been limited exploration of the impact of "politics" on supply chain management. Stern and Reve (1980) provided a framework of the Political Economy Paradigm (PEP) that suggests that "politics" may impact channel relationships. However, PEP is externally focused and does not provide guidance on "politics within the firm. In spite of this, "politics" warrants further exploration because POPS permeates throughout all organizations and functional areas (i.e. supply chain) to varying degrees (Guild and Palmer 1968). A highly political organization is considered more threatening and less likely to accomplish goals and objectives because of competing interests within the firm (Cropanzano et

al. 1997). These competing interests are often incompatible with what another functional area needs to be successful causing POPS to increase among functional areas (Zahra 1987). From the perspective of supply chain management, it's important to understand how POPS can detract from supply chain management initiatives within the organization, and if the impact of POPS can be mitigated. Therefore, there is an opportunity to conduct exploratory research to understand the impact of POPS and Political Skill on firm supply chain management initiatives.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Constituency-Based Theory

A theory of the firm helps to explain the pattern of goals and objectives within an organization (Anderson, 1982). The dominant theories of the firm within the marketing channels, operations and logistics literature have been economic, such as the neoclassical, market value, and agency cost models. These models suggest that the goals and objectives of the organization are primarily focused on profit maximization (Anderson, 1982; Mentzer et al., 2004), suggesting that an organization's goals and objectives are solely economic.

Alternatively, the behavioral theories of the firm (i.e. Resource Dependence Theory, Political Economy Paradigm, Constituency-Based Theory) contend that a firm's survival is not just economic, but more nuanced and complex than profit maximization and financial returns (Cyert and March, 1963). The behavioral theories of the firm are complementary to the economic view, and introduce the social aspect of cooperation and bargaining between organizations, functions and/or individuals within the environment to maintain firm survival (Mentzer et al., 2004). Survival is achieved when the aforementioned groups are able to obtain resources and support, which legitimize their existence (Anderson 1982; Bansal and Clelland 2004; Pfeffer and Salancik 1974). However, organizations, functional areas and/or their employees have difficulty

gaining and maintaining legitimacy (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992), so politics is often used to gain, enhance and protect their interests (Boddewyn and Brewer, 1994). A behavioral theory of the firm that seeks to address the complex social issues that occur within the organization is Constituency-Based Theory.

Constituency-based theory views organizations as a collective of coalitions who negotiate resource exchanges inside and outside of the organization (Anderson 1982). A coalition is defined as an interacting group of individuals that is intentionally constructed, focused on similar issues, and mutual perceived membership amongst the coalition (Stevenson 1985). A formal structure is not required for a coalition; however, formal departments and functional areas, suppliers, customers and stakeholders are frequently considered coalitions (Anderson 1982; Chen et al. 2007; Day 1983). From this perspective, the goal of the functional areas is to help the organization survive by negotiating resource exchanges with suppliers, customers etc. (Day and Wensley1983). To achieve this goal, functional areas are tasked with providing a continuous flow of resources from external partners (Anderson 1982).

In addition to interacting with external partners, functional areas bargain and negotiate with each other (Day and Wensley 1983), which often pursue conflicting goals within the organization, which may lead to the use of "politics" to further their own objectives (Narayanan and Fahey1982; Zammuto 1984). Each function has a perspective on the long run survival of the organization, and will attempt to move the organization toward its preferred position (Mentzer et al. 2004). These competing functional objectives within the organization may create competition for resources, legitimacy and support through inter-function bargaining amongst competing functional areas (Cyert and March1963). However, the functional areas that are responsible for the acquisition and management of critical resources and customer relationships may gain more

influence within the organization and persuade others to adopt an orientation (e.g. Market orientation, Supply Chain Orientation, etc.) (Day and Wensley1983). The orientation pursued within the firm helps to guide the goals, objectives and initiatives that are pursued within the organization (Anderson 1982).

Hypothesis Development

Perception of Organizational Politics and Cross-Functional Integration

Cross-functional integration is considered "the quality of the state of collaboration that exists among departments that are required to achieve unity of effort by the demand of the environment" (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967: 11). It consists of both formal (interaction) and informal components (collaboration) (Ellinger, 2000; Ellinger et al., 2000). The interaction activities are often considered formal and mandatory (Ellinger et al., 2000), whereas collaboration is often based on cooperation and willingness to work together towards a shared understanding of objectives (Esper et al., 2010). More specifically, the collaboration portion of cross-functional integration is a "voluntary process that cannot be mandated, programmed or formalized" and is driven by relationships and networks (Ellinger et al., 2000).

Cross-functional integration improves the communication between functions within the organization allowing for the interaction and collaboration toward a common goal (Kahn 1996). It is a key aspect of supply chain management and may result in improved customer service, logistics performance, and overall firm performance (Stank et al. 2001). However, cross-functional integration is difficult for organizations to achieve (Esper et al. 2010; Piercy 2007). This may be driven by the proposition that social issues may impede cross-functional integration (Hirunyawipada et al. 2010; Troy et al. 2008). One such issue that makes cross-functional integration problematic is "politics" (Piercy 2007). POPS thrives in areas that lack formalized

processes and rules (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992) such as cross-functional integration. Providing further support that cross-functional integration may be susceptible to POPS.

Drawing on constituency-based theory, functional areas and their members compete with each other for resources and support to further their perspective on how to achieve long-term firm performance (Anderson, 1982). The competition for control over valued resources within the organization may create a political environment (Farrell and Petersen, 1982). To navigate competition from other functional areas, employees engage in a political process (Anderson 1982). It could be proposed that if an organizational environment is perceived to be highly political, employees may resist the interactive and collaborative aspects of cross-functional integration. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Organizations that are perceived to be more political will experience less cross-functional integration.

The Effects of Perceptions of Organizational Politics on Supply Chain Orientation

Supply chain orientation (SCO) is defined as "the recognition by an organization of the systemic, strategic implications of the tactical activities in managing the various flows in a supply chain (Mentzer et al., 2001). Research proposes that SCO facilitates a trusting and committed relationship between organizations by emphasizing the importance of supply chain management within the firm (Hult et al. 2008; Mentzer et al. 2001). The strength of SCO within the firm helps to further a cohesive vision and goals that increase the firm's ability to engage in supply chain management (Min and Mentzer, 2004). This strength is driven by the number of employees who hold SCO as a value and the intensity of their beliefs (Mello and Stank, 2005).

Recent literature has suggested that SCO is represented by both strategic and structural elements inside of the firm (Esper and Defee 2010). In other words, the success of supply chain

management relies on both a strategic emphasis and structural support within an organization (Esper and Defee 2010). This conceptualization offers a more comprehensive view of SCO by acknowledging that intra-firm behaviors and capabilities are critical components to supply chain management. Firms with employees who possess SCO may approach supply chain management strategically while placing emphasis on the processes and capabilities that are necessary for supply chain management to be successful within the organization (Mello and Stank 2005). Furthermore, employees within supply chain oriented firms will desire that resources (e.g. people, systems, cash, capabilities) be managed in a manner that facilitates supply chain management (Esper and Defee 2010). However, the desire to have resources allocated towards supply chain management initiatives may draw perceptions of organizational politics. POPS exists in areas where there is a competition for and allocation of scarce resources (Burns 1961). The pursuit of resources may be perceived as political particularly when other orientations within the firm need the same resources.

As previously mentioned, constituency-based theory suggests there are competing functional areas that have their own perspective on what will make the organization successful over the long-term (Anderson 1982). Each functional area is actively working to further their perspective within the organization (Day and Wensley 1983), these perspectives may be viewed as orientations. These different orientations may compete within the organization to become the prevailing perspective (Mello and Stank 2005). In contrast, supply chain orientation seeks a cohesive vision and goal within the organization (Min and Mentzer, 2004). However, the political process among competing orientations proposed by constituency-based theory does not represent a cohesive vision and may create an environment that becomes increasingly political. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Organizations that are perceived to be more political will be less supply chain oriented.

Supply Chain Orientation and Cross-Functional Integration

Research has suggested that cross-functional integration is an artifact of SCO (Esper and Defee 2010). Furthermore, cross-functional integration improves supply chain management within the organization (Esper et al. 2010), which is the overall objective of SCO (Mentzer et al. 2001). Therefore, cross-functional integration may be an objective of those who possess SCO. Drawing on Constituency-Based Theory, as the perspective of SCO is furthered within the firm through the political process, the level of cross-functional integration may increase. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H3: Supply chain orientation has a positive relationship with a cross-functional integration within the firm.

Political Skill of Top Supply Chain Executive as a Moderator

Literature suggests that to be successful within organizations, which are political at varying degrees, political skill is a necessary attribute of top management (Ferris et al., 2007c). Political skill represents the navigation of political processes, which according to constituency-based theory exist due to the negotiation and bargaining for resources between functional areas (Anderson 1982). This ability allows them to mitigate the impact of POPS on their respective goals and objectives (Treadway et al., 2007). From a supply chain management perspective, a politically skilled top supply chain executive, who effectively navigates the social and political dynamics within the organization, may become an advocate for supply chain management. This executive would understand the social dynamics within the firm and know how to effectively

further the acceptance of supply chain orientation within the organization, which leads to the following hypotheses:

H4: The relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and supply chain orientation is positively moderated by political skill of the top supply chain executive,

Based on the above hypotheses the conceptual model is presented above in Figure 3.1 below.

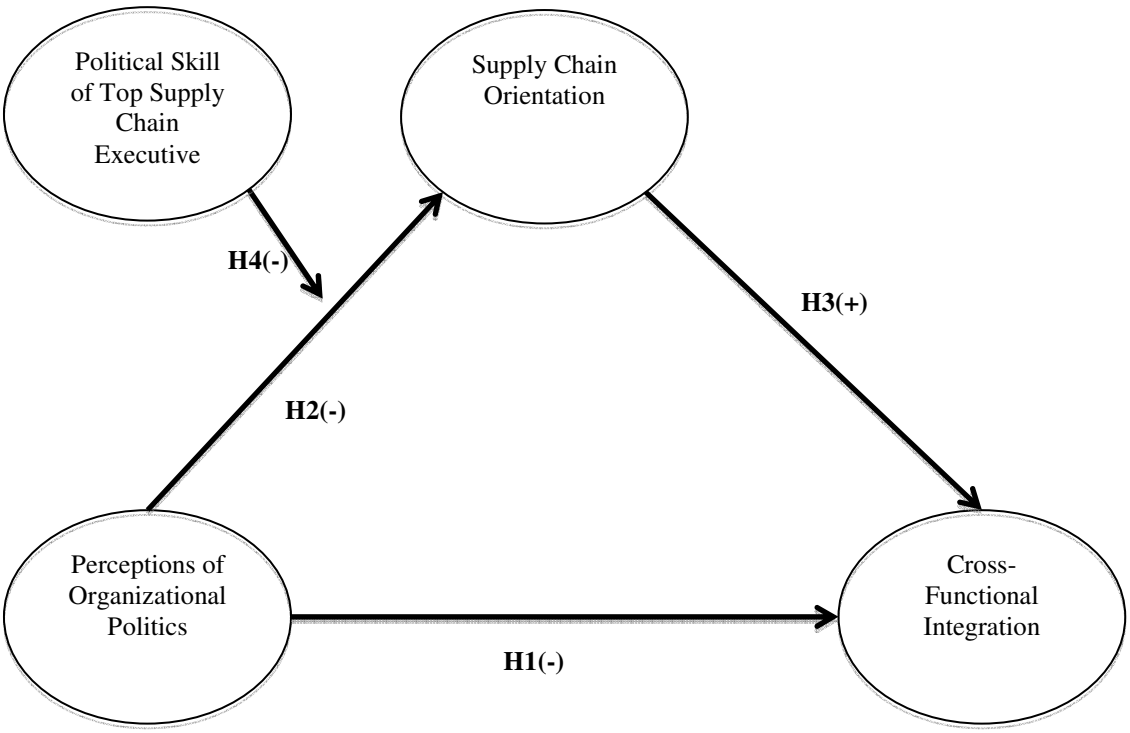


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model

Methodology

Frequently, causal models are examined using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CBSEM) within operations research. The use of CBSEM is befitting when the theory supporting the conceptual model is well established (Peng and Lai 2012). However, when research is exploring relationships between theoretical constructs where a nomological network is not clearly understood and/or when established theory is lacking, Partial Least Squares Regression (PLS) is an appropriate method (Peng and Lai 2012). Given the absence of established theory and the exploration of new relationships between constructs, PLS was determined to be the appropriate analytical method for this research.

The PLS analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 2.0.M3 (Ringle et al. 2005). SmartPLS is a graphical user interface, which allows the graphical depiction of a path model. The PLS path model provides results for both a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model is assessed through construct validity by checking convergent and discriminant validity. Alternatively, the structural model is examined through R^2, t-statistics of regression paths, goodness of fit, effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Chin 2010).

Survey Development

The survey was developed and designed following Dillman et al. 2008 guidelines for web-based surveys. A draft questionnaire was developed and presented to academics for face validity and readability. Next, a focus group of practitioners was asked to provide feedback about the survey instrument. The objective was to obtain feedback regarding the clarity, content and relevance of the survey items. Lastly, a pilot study of the survey instrument was conducted using compensated research subjects from an on-line research panel. The pilot test resulted in

129 survey participants. Based on preliminary analyses from the pilot study, reliability and validity was established for the survey instrument.

Measures

Perception of Organizational Politics

The perceptions of organizational politics scale assessed the degree to which participants perceive a political and self-serving nature within their work environment (Kacmar and Carlson 1997). This was measured using an established 6-item scale developed by Hochwarter et al. 2003. Scale items were measured using a 5-point Likert approach (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Representative items included "many people are trying to maneuver their way into the in group", and "people do what's best for them not what's best for the organization".

Cross-Functional Integration

The focus of cross-functional integration within this research is to assess the extent to which it is perceived functional areas work together within an organization. Cross-functional integration was measured by adapting the Kahn (1996) multi-dimensional scales that includes the level of information sharing, coordination and collaboration between departments. The scale will be adapted to evaluate the level of cross-functional integration that occurs within the organization. A 5-point Likert scale was used with "never" and "quite frequently" as anchors. An example question is: "During the past six months, how often have departments within the organization worked together as a team?"

Supply Chain Orientation

Supply chain orientation (SCO) measures assess the extent to which a firm recognizes the strategic importance of supply chain management. However, there has been a debate within the literature regarding how to conceptualize SCO (Esper and Defee, 2010). There have been two

perspectives regarding SCO, one has a strategic focus while the other a structural focus (Esper and Defee, 2010). The strategic SCO perspective suggests that firms compete based on superior supply chain capabilities (Defee and Stank, 2005). In contrast the structural SCO perspective focuses on organizational artifacts or behaviors that facilitate supply chain management within the firm (Mello and Stank 2005). Recent literature has suggested that SCO is represented by both strategic and structural elements inside of the firm (Esper and Defee, 2010). In other words, the success of supply chain management relies on both a strategic emphasis and structural support within an organization (Esper and Defee, 2010). This conceptualization offers a more comprehensive view of SCO by acknowledging that intra-firm behaviors and capabilities are critical components to supply chain management. While this conceptualization may be more comprehensive, the current Min and Mentzer (2004) scale and operationalization of SCO does not reflect this perspective.

The current SCO scales focus solely on structural elements and include measures that emphasize inter-firm elements (i.e. Organizational compatibility, credibility, benevolence). In an effort to achieve theoretical and operational correspondence, a new SCO scale was developed based on a review of the literature. The new adapted scale focused on the strategy and structure elements proposed by recent research on SCO (Esper and Defee 2010). The construct was measured by asking participants if there is strategic emphasis on supply chain management activities and processes within the organization. Representative items are as follows: in my organization we believe …" it is important to develop strategies based on understanding of supply chain management", and "constantly monitoring our commitment to supply chain management is part of our responsibilities". A 5-point Likert Scale was used with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree". Academics and practitioners were asked to review the

adapted developed scale for face validity and readability. Furthermore, a pre-test was conducted to assess the reliability and validity.

Political Skill of Top Supply Chain Executive

Political skill seeks to capture the ability of its possessor to effectively maneuver the social interactions that occur within organizational politics. The Ferris et al. (2005) scale was adapted to capture the political skill of the top supply chain executive relative to other executives within the organization. Executives are assumed to have a level of political skill due to their level of success and accomplishment within the organization, however, if an executive is compared to their executive level peers, these assumptions may be challenged. In other words, the political skill of the top supply chain executive may not be as robust when compared to other executives within the organization. A 5-point Likert scale was used where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree". Furthermore, before participants were asked to complete the aforementioned items, they were asked if they had knowledge of the top supply chain executive. An example of the political skill of top supply chain executive items is: "the top supply chain executive is good at building relationships with influential people at work when compared to others".

Statistical Controls

Literature suggests that the affective positions of individuals will strongly influence their perceptions of their environment and those within in it (George, 1992; Hochwarter et al., 1999; Treadway et al., 2004). Individuals with a negative affect view the world through a negative lens, whereas those with positive affect have a positive world view (Watson and Clark, 1984; Watson et al., 1988). Controlling for negative affect and positive affect seeks to limit the individual differences within research participants when investigating organizational politics (Treadway et

al., 2004). The established Watson et al (1988) PANAS scale will be used to measure positive and negative affect. A 5-point Likert approach was used with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree".

Similarly, literature proposes that certain demographic characteristics should be controlled when studying organizational politics (Treadway et al., 2004). The demographic variables of concern are tenure and work experience (Treadway et al., 2004). The tenure and experience impacts a participant's perception of organizational politics (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988).

Sampling

The sample frame for this study consisted of 683 retail industry employees who are members of a panel of compensated research subjects working within a wide variety of professional positions and industries. All responses were entered in and stored by the web site hosting the Web-based survey. The use of paid response panels has become more accepted in recent years provided that survey participants are pre-qualified and have the necessary experience to answer the questions of interest (Deutskens et al. 2004). Furthermore, the use of research panels has been used effectively in recent supply chain research (i.e., Autry et al. 2010; Thornton et al. 2013).

The participants for this study were required to be currently employed retail industry employees, who have knowledge of the top supply chain executive within their respective organizations. A total of N_u = 148 (23.8%) usable responses were received from panel members, who were vetted in advance for appropriate SIC/NAICS code of their business, employment, and business knowledge. A description of the sample is provided in Table 3.1. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was conducted to ensure that there was no difference between operational

level employees and manager level and higher for POPS, SCO, Political Skill of the Top Supply Chain Executive and Cross-Functional Integration.

Tests for Bias

Response bias was assessed using the method suggested by Lambert and Harrington (1990). The sample was divided into thirds based on survey completion by respondent. A two-tailed t-test of the mean difference between groups was conducted between the early and late respondents across all constructs. Based on this analyses there was no significant difference between the two groups across all constructs.

Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Position	**Participants**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Operational	66	46.8%
Manager	50	82.3%
Director	3	84.4%
Executive	6	88.7%
Owner	16	100%
Total	141	
Work Experience	**Participants**	**Cumulative Percentage**
0 – 5 years	12	8.1%
6 – 10 years	16	18.9%
11 – 15 years	8	24.3%
16 – 20 years	10	31.1%
21 – 25 years	24	47.3%
26 years or more	78	100%
Education	**Participants**	**Cumulative Percentage**
High School	26	17.7%
Some College	48	50.3%
Associates Degree	17	61.9%
Bachelor's Degree	45	92.5%
Graduate Degree	11	100%

Common method bias was assessed using the Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Harman's single factor test, evidence for common method bias exists if either a single factor emerges and accounts for the majority of the variance among the items (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The factor analysis showed that the most covariance explained by a single factor is 30.30 percent. In addition, the correlation matrix (see Table 4.2) reveals that the highest correlation is r = .47, whereas evidence of common method bias would have resulted in correlations greater than .90 (Pavlou, Liang, and Xue 2007). Based on the aforementioned analysis, common method bias is not believed to be an issue in this study.

Validity and Reliability of Measures

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to establish reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity for the measurement model. The CFA Model was analyzed in Smart PLS version 2.0.M3. Scale reliability was assessed through the calculation of composite reliability (Rho). Composite rho provides a more conservative test and considered a stronger assessment of reliability when compared to Cronbach's α (Garver and Mentzer 1999). Each construct has a composite rho greater than the Bagozzi and Yi (1998) .60 threshold as well as the Garver and Mentzer (1999) .70 threshold. Convergent validity for the proposed measurement model was evaluated using SmartPLS software. An assessment was conducted using item factor loadings, and their respective *t* values, for each construct (Anderson and Gerbing 1982). All measurement items loaded more heavily on their respective constructs at .60 or above and were significant at $p \leq .01$. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs is above the accepted level of .50 (Fornell and Larker 1981). The analysis indicates good convergent validity. See tables 3.2 and 3.3.

Table 3.2 Construct Correlations and Discriminant Validity

	Composite Reliability	*X1*	*X2*	*X3*	*X4*	*X5*	*X6*	*X7*	*X8*
Perceptions of Organizational Politics (X1)	*.917*	***.809***							
Political Skill of Top Supply Chain Executive (X2)	.960	-.372	***.807***						
Supply Chain Orientation (X3)	.945	-.021	.464	***.794***					
Cross-Functional Integration (X4)	.962	-.385	.472	.438	***.836***				
Positive Affectivity (X5)	.915	-.099	.227	.366	.215	***.828***			
Negative Affectivity (X6)	.894	.031	.121	.161	.120	.277	***.794***		
Work Experience (X7)	-[a]	0.004	.028	.078	.077	.161	.179	***-[a]***	
Position (X8)	-[a]	-.206	.120	.040	.146	.027	.146	.140	***-[a]***

Note. The square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) is on the diagonals

a. AVE and Composite Reliability not calculated for single item measures.

Table 3.3 Factor Loadings

	Indicator Label	Item Loadings	T-Stat
Supply Chain Orientation	our firm's survival depends on its adapting to supply chain management SCO1	0.754	15.498
	establishing long-term relationships with our supply chain partners is critical to the organization's survival. SCO2	0.786	17.979
	sharing valuable strategic/tactical information with our supply chain members is critical to the organization's success. SCO3	0.823	30.389
	sharing risk with supply chain partners is critical to the firm's success. SCO4	0.743	14.912
	sharing rewards with supply chain partners is critical to the firm's success. SCO5	0.767	14.675
In my organization we believe	constantly monitoring our commitment to supply chain management is part of our responsibilities. SCO6	0.775	16.791
	it is important to develop strategies based on understanding of supply chain management. SCO7	0.838	29.657
	working with key supply chain partners will help us be successful. SCO8	0.886	58.184
	our performance can be improved by working with key supply chain partners. SCO9	0.710	16.006
	understanding supply chain management prepares our firm for developments in our market. SCO10	0.844	32.987
Cross Functional Integration	Achieve Goals Collectively CF1	0.760115	15.280
	Develop a mutual understanding of responsibilities CF2	0.847508	17.050
	Informally work together. CF3	0.833199	23.353
	Share Resources CF4	0.850375	33.111
During the past six months, to what extent did departments within your organization do the following	Work together as a team. CF5	0.844934	27.215
	Conduct joint planning to resolve operational problems. CF6	0.86072	33.425
	Make joint decisions about ways to improve efficiency. CF7	0.85106	34.254
	Discuss issues impacting their departments CF8	0.824991	23.249
	Spend time discussing the needs of the customer CF9	0.811398	23.254
	Share operational and tactical information between departments CF10	0.819659	22.357
	Share information about department responsibilities CF11	0.888957	45.245
Organizational Politics	Many people are trying to maneuver their way into the in group OP1	0.673	6.999
	People do what's best for them not what's best for the organization OP2	0.773	14.995
Please answer the following questions about your organization	People spend too much time sucking up to those who can help them. OP3	0.827	18.845
	There is a lot of self-serving behavior going on within the organization. OP4	0.889	30.079
	People are working behind the scenes to ensure they get their piece of the pie. OP5	0.807	21.899
	People are stabbing each other in the back to look good in front of others. OP6	0.868	44.291

Table 3.3 Continued

	Indicator Label	Item Loadings	T-Stat
Political Skill of Top Supply Chain Executive	is good at building relationships with influential people at work when compared to others.PS1	0.831	22.127
	is well connected with important people at work when compared to others. PS2	0.759	14.983
	spends a lot of time developing connections with others at work when compared to others. PS3	0.789	18.232
	is good at using connections to make things happen at work when compared to others. PS4	0.759	21.974
	has developed a large network of work colleagues who can be called on for support when compared to others. PS5	0.742	16.456
This question seeks to understand how well the top supply chain management executive COMPARES to other executives in the organization. The top supply chain executive	is able to make people at work feel comfortable and at ease when compared to others. PS6	0.829	24.073
	easily develops good rapport with most people at work when compared to others. PS7	0.840	25.499
	understands people at work very well when compared to others. PS8	0.869	32.714
	shows a genuine interest in people at work when compared to others. PS9	0.829	23.900
	is particularly good at sensing the hidden agendas of others when compared to others. PS10	0.713	13.166
	seems to instinctively know the right thing to say or do to influence others when compared to others. PS11	0.849	27.912
	is able to communicate effectively with others at work when compared to others. PS12	0.849	32.959
	is good at getting people to like them when compared to others. PS13	0.817	18.847
Negative Affect	Afraid... Neg1	0.714	3.370
On average do you feel…	Nervous... Neg2	0.779	3.807
	Upset…Neg3	0.768	5.026
	Ashamed…Neg4	0.837	5.242
	Hostile…Neg5	0.866	3.881
Positive Affect	Determined... Pos1	0.859	37.306
On average do you feel…	Attentive... Pos2	0.831	25.861
	Alert... Pos3	0.887	36.522
	Inspired... Pos4	0.857	34.415
	Active... Pos5	0.690	11.666
Position	What is your role in your organization.Pos1	1	0
Work Experience	How many years of work experience do you have. WrkExp1	1	0

The AVE was also used to assess discriminant validity. As suggested by Chin (1998) and Fornell and Larker (1981), the square root of the AVE for each construct was compared to their corresponding inter-construct correlations. The square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than their respective squared inter-construct correlations. See Table 3.2. These results suggest that all constructs are independent of each other and are represented by distinct measures, indicating the constructs have discriminant validity.

Results

Data Analysis

When conducting PLS analysis, traditional fit indices (i.e. RMSEA, CFI, GFA, etc.) are not utilized. Instead an indication of fit can be provided through evaluation of the effect sizes (f^2), redundancy between constructs, and a goodness of fit calculation. The fit of the model is summarized by model-evaluation statistics in Table 3.4. Based on the analysis, POPS has a medium effect size and small effect size on cross-functional integration and supply chain orientation respectively (Cohen 1998). In contrast, political skill of the top supply chain executive has a medium effect size on supply chain orientation. Furthermore, the endogenous variables (cross-functional integration and supply chain orientation) have a moderate magnitude of explained variance following the guidelines of Chin (1998). More specifically, the R^2 for cross-functional integration and supply chain orientation is .35 and .33 respectively, meeting the threshold for a moderate magnitude.

When assessing the predictive quality of the structural model, the redundancy between constructs is examined. Redundancy is the quality of the structural model and predictive relevance taking into account the quality of the measurement model. Redundancy is represented by Stone-Geisser's (Q^2). In general a Q^2 greater than 0 indicates predictive relevance (Peng and

Table 3.4 - Model Evaluation Statistics

					f^2	
Constructs	**R^2**	**Communality (AVE)**	**Redundancy**	**Q^2**	**Supply Chain Orientation**	**Cross-Functional Integration**
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	-	.655	-	-	.038	.192
Political Skill	-	.652	-	-	.262	-
Cross-Functional Integration	.345	.699	.017	.231	-	-
Supply Chain Orientation	.326	.631	.004	.197	-	-
Negative Affectivity	-	.627	-	-	-	-
Positive Affectivity	-	.686	-	-	-	-
Work Experience	-	-	-	-	-	-
Position	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average	.3355	.6637				

Lai 2012). The Q^2 values for cross-functional integration and supply chain orientation have values of .23 and .20 respectively, indicating an acceptable level of predictive relevance (Peng and Lai 2012).

Amato et al. 2004 and Tennehaus et al. 2005 propose an overall measure of goodness of fit (GOF) for structural models using reflective measures. GOF is the geometric mean of the average communality index (average AVE) and the explained variance (R^2) (Henseler and Sarstedt 2013). "The intent is to account for the PLS model performance at both the measurement and structural model with a focus on overall prediction performance of the model" (Chin 2010; 680). Furthermore, the GOF is a descriptive index and should be used in conjunction with effect size and Stone-Geisser's Q^2 when making inferences about predictive

relevance (Esposito et al. 2010). Following the aforementioned guidelines, the GOF is calculated as:

$$GOF = \sqrt{\overline{Communality} \times \overline{R^2}} = \sqrt{.664 \times .336} = .472$$

Based on the criteria presented by Wetzels et al. (2009), the overall model has a large effect size, indicating that the structural model performs well.

Path Analysis

A PLS model does not make distributional assumptions and estimates the paths between latent constructs to establish a model's predictive ability and maximize the explained variance in the endogenous constructs. The R^2, path coefficients and t-statistics are used as an indication of support for the individual hypotheses. The t-statistic estimates are tested within PLS using a bootstrapping technique, where "multiple subsamples from within the same sample are taken to build a distribution for each parameter and derive a standard estimate"(Sawhney 2013; 104, Efron and Tibshirani 1993). The bootstrapping procedure was run with three different subsamples (300, 500, 1000) to ensure the robustness of the results. The results across each subsample were found to be stable. This research will report the analyses from the 300 subsamples. The conceptual model is graphically displayed in Figure 3.2 depicts the displays the path coefficients, significance levels and R^2.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Cross-Functional Integration

Hypothesis 1 explored the relationship between POPS and cross-functional integration. Results indicate that POPS has a significant negative relationship with cross-functional integration ($\beta = -.370$, $p \leq .01$) providing support for H1.

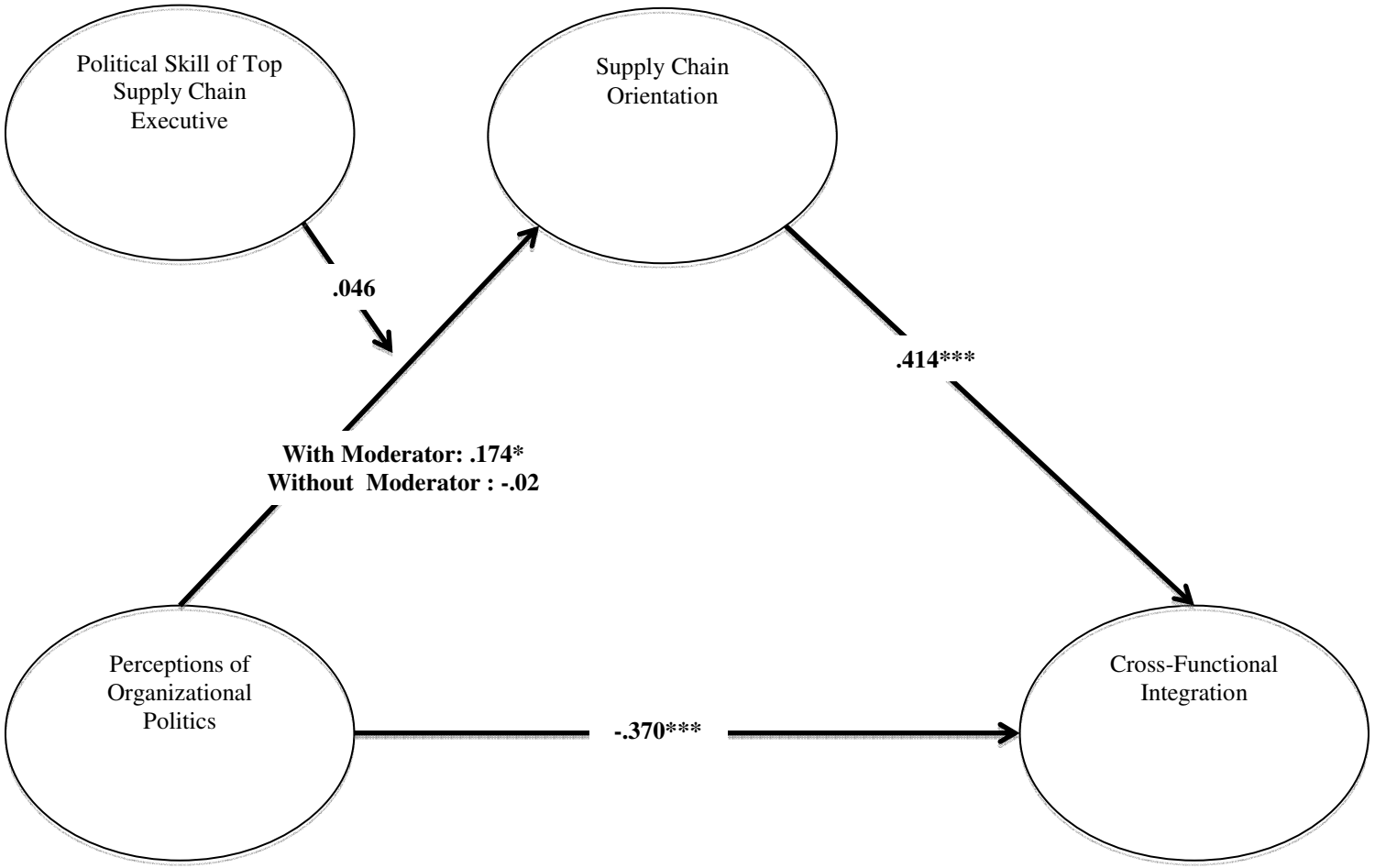


Figure 3.2 Testing Results

This suggests that when there is a high level of organizational politics within an organization, departments are less likely to work together through cross-functional integration.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Supply Chain Orientation

Hypothesis 2 addressed the influence of perceptions of organizational politics on supply chain orientation. The results indicate that there is no significant direct relationship between POPS and SCO ($\beta = -.02$, $p \geq .10$). Therefore H2 is not supported.

Supply Chain Orientation and Cross-Functional Integration

Hypothesis 3 examined the relationship between supply chain orientation and cross-functional integration. The results suggest that SCO has a significant positive relationship with cross-functional integration ($\beta = .414$, $p \leq .01$), which provides support for H3. Hence, the more supply chain oriented an organizational environment is, the more likely firms will work together through cross-functional integration.

Moderating Effect of Political Skill of Top Supply Chain Executive

Hypothesis 4 addresses the impact of the top supply chain executive's political skill on the relationship between POPS and supply chain orientation. While the interaction term is non-significant ($\beta = .046$, $p \geq .10$), the direct relationship between POPS and supply chain orientation changes when political skill of the top supply chain executive is present. The relationship between the two variables now becomes positive and significant. See Figure 3.2. Furthermore, a there is a significant positive direct relationship between the Political Skill of the Top Supply Chain Executive and Supply Chain Orientation. These results suggest that when a politically skilled supply chain executive is present, a firm is more likely to become supply chain oriented, which supports hypothesis 4.

Discussion

This research contributes to supply chain management literature by providing insights into how POPS can hinder cross-functional integration and a politically savvy top supply chain executive can further supply chain orientation within the firm. Careful observation and examination of the results yield several interesting theoretical contributions and managerial implications followed by limitations and future research directions.

Summary of Findings

The findings for H1 provide interesting insights for further investigation. First, there is a significantly negative relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and cross-functional integration. These results suggest that an organization that is perceived to have high levels of politics impedes its ability to achieve cross-functional integration. These results provide empirical support to the tangential suggestions that "politics may play a role in disrupting cross-functional integration (Piercy 2007). Research has indicated that cross-functional integration is seldom achieved (Esper et al. 2010) and that social aspects of the organization may be detrimental to its effectiveness (Hirunyawipada et al. 2010; Troy et al. 2008).

Additionally, the results of H2 and H4 provide important contributions for the importance of the political skill of the top supply chain executive. Once again drawing on constituency-based theory the more politically skilled the top supply chain executive is, the more support supply chain management and corresponding interests are likely to receive. Alternatively, without a politically skilled top supply chain executive, the needs of the supply chain management group may be overlooked because they do not have an advocate for supply chain

orientation. This is supported by the insignificant relationship between POPS and SCO, when the moderator of political skill of the top supply chain executive is not present.

In contrast, when there is a politically skilled head of supply chain, which can effectively navigate the political landscape of the organization, this will benefit supply chain organization. Essentially, the executive becomes a champion for supply chain orientation and supply chain management within the firm. This is further bolstered by the direct positive relationship political skill of the top supply chain executive and supply chain orientation. This finding suggest that an effective way to further the supply chain management agenda within the organization is to have a politically skilled executive in the top supply chain role.

Finally, H3 shows that supply chain orientation within an organization may increase the level of cross-functional integration. Extant literature suggests that cross-functional integration is an artifact of supply chain orientation (Esper and Defee 2010). This research further supports this perspective. Supply chain orientation represents a certain perspective within an organization, which desires to further supply chain management the firm. One such way to achieve improve supply chain management is increasing cross-functional integration. Based on the findings of the study grounded in constituency-based theory, actively furthering supply chain orientation within the firm will increase the level of cross-functional integration. Therefore, organizations that want to improve the levels of cross-functional integration across the firm should consider improving supply chain orientation.

The aforementioned findings make several contributions to the supply chain management literature and management literature. One of the key contributions of this research is the focus on the effects of political perceptions and executive political skill supply chain management initiatives. More specifically, the exploration of how political perceptions of an organization can

detract from cross-functional integration within the organization. In addition, the investigation of political skill of the top supply chain executive as an antecedent to supply chain orientation can create an organizational structure that is supply chain management focused. From a management literature perspective, this research connects POPS and political skill to critical organizational processes, illustrating the impact they have beyond employee attitudes and individual level issues.

Managerial Implications

As supply chain management becomes increasingly important for the overall success of organizations, the ability to manage and navigate the internal organizational politics is critical for supply chain executives and supply chain employees alike. It would be beneficial for firms who seek to improve their levels of cross-functional integration by exploring how supply chain oriented their firm is as well as the level of politics that exists within the organization. If employees perceive a high level of politics within the organization, cross-functional integration may be difficult to achieve. Further, unless the perception of politics is changed within the organization, there may be limited success when attempting cross-functional integration.

Despite the negative impact of perceptions of organizational politics on cross-functional integration, increasing the level of supply chain orientation may counteract this effect. The level of SCO can be increased when there is a politically skilled top supply chain executive who can champion supply chain management within the firm. Furthermore, this executive is able to skillfully navigate the firm's organizational politics and lower barriers of resistance to the needs of the supply chain management department. More specifically, an executive with the ability to recognize, interpret and use social cues that exist within the organization can make the perceptions of politics work in favor of the supply chain management department. Without a

savvy leader, the needs of supply chain management may be overlooked because they have no advocate to push their orientation within the firm.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study was conducted by exploring "politics" from the perspective of employees within a single industry. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to other industry settings. Consequently, future research should look at the impact of POPS and political skill of the top executive in a broader array of industries. Expanding to additional industry settings will increase the generalizability of the study as well as provide opportunities to compare and contrast the impact of politics between industrial settings.

Second, the political skill of the top supply chain executive was not self-report. The measure is based solely on the observation of participants, and they may be limited in their ability to fully capture the cognitive elements of political skill. In the future, it would be beneficial to measure the difference between how executives view themselves in comparison to what employees within the organization believe.

From a performance perspective, researchers can build on this study by exploring how POPS impacts firm supply chain performance. More specifically, connecting POPS to financial performance, preferably secondary financial data, would provide valuable insights into how POPS impacts overall performance. This exploration would delve into the management literature proposition that POPS detracts from organizational performance and effectiveness.

CHAPTER FOUR: ARTICLE 2

Introduction

Organizations may obtain a competitive advantage when they control valuable and rare strategic resources (Wernerfelt 1984). Ideally, these resources are idiosyncratic and expensive to substitute or imitate (Barney 1991). Additionally, these same resources must be distributed and combined to realize superior organizational performance (Hansen et al. 2004). In other words, how resources are allocated and deployed are important for an organization's success (Sirmon et al. 2008). The effective and efficient application of resources to the right processes, procedures and capabilities is just as important as the resource themselves (Kor and Mahoney 2005; Sirmon et al. 2007). The ability to skillfully allocate resources often relies on tacit knowledge and potential codification of organizational routines within the firm (Johnson 2002). However because much of tacit knowledge is highly personal and idiosyncratic it is difficult to codify and may cause a lack of formalized rules for resource allocation and deployment (Sirmon et al. 2008).

The lack of formalized rules in resource allocation and deployment may be a fertile ground for social maneuvering to occur. Social maneuvering and "politics" thrives in situations where there are no established rules and routines (Kumar and Ghadially 1989). Consequently, resource allocation decisions tend to be a beacon for "politics" (Perry and Angle 1979). In other words, resources are likely deployed based on objectives that are not consistent with the overall goals of the firm but further the self-interested desires (i.e. power, support) of individuals or groups within the organization (Madison et al. 1980). Consequently the resource deployment and allocation process not only lacks formalization (Sirmon et al. 2007; 2008) it is also highly political (Zahra 1987).

Perhaps an effective way to assess the allocation and deployment of firm resources is through supply chain management activities. Supply chain management is defined as *"the systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions within a particular company and across boundaries within the supply chain, for the purposes of improving the long-term performance of the individual companies and supply chain as a whole"* (Mentzer et al. 2001:18). Essentially, supply chain management encompasses a significant amount of the crucial functions and process within an organization (Gibson et al. 2005; Mentzer et al. 2008). This also implies that supply chain management requires a sizable portion of firm resources to be successful (Lambert et al. 1998). Therefore, the objective of firm supply chain performance is to efficiently allocate resources to service the customer

Supply chain management and firm supply chain performance requires a broad array of strategic resources (Cooper et al. 1997; Lambert et al. 1998). Strategic resources may be considered capital equipment within plants, the cash flow achieved through normal operations, or institutional knowledge that exists among employees in the organization (Barney 1991). In addition, from the relational view perspective, interorganizational exchange relationships are also considered strategic resources (Dyer and Singh 1998). These relationships may allow for a business to achieve super relational rents, which lead to a competitive advantage (Dyer and Singh 1998). Considering that supply chain management is responsible for interorganizational exchange relationships (Bowersox et al. 2000) it holds influence on both strategic internal and external resources.

Due to extensive resource commitment, many organizations are placing a strategic emphasis on supply chain management. This emphasis is known as supply chain orientation. Supply chain orientation (SCO) is defined as "the recognition by an organization of the systemic,

strategic implications of the tactical activities in managing the various flows in a supply chain" (Mentzer et al., 2001). An SCO perspective enables the commitment of resources towards processes and capabilities that improve firm supply chain performance (Esper and Defee 2010).

Unfortunately, resource allocation decisions are often politically motivated (Zahra 1987). However, a recognition of the importance of supply chain management and firm supply chain performance may counteract the "politics" involved in the resource deployment process. The purpose of this research is to explore how "politics", henceforth known as organizational politics, impacts firm supply chain performance. More specifically, this research focuses on how the political environment of an organization can detract from firm supply chain performance. Furthermore, the study explores whether supply chain orientation counteracts the impact of organizational politics on firm supply chain performance.

The paper will proceed with the following sections: a literature review on organizational politics and its relationship to supply chain management. Then, theoretical foundations, hypothesis development and the conceptual model will be discussed. Next, an overview of the survey methodology and partial least squares (PLS) analysis is explained. Then, results of the study are explored and followed by suggested managerial implications and future research opportunities.

Literature Review

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics is defined as "*a social influence process, in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests*" (Ferris et al., 1989). Literature has proposed that different levels of organizational politics exist in all organizations because of

competition for scare resources within the firm (Zahra, 1987). In essence, organizational politics focuses on who gets what, when and where (Perry and Angle 1979). Because of this, few resource allocation decisions are made without key parties seeking to enhance or protect their own interests (Longenecker et al., 1987).

More specifically, the ability to create a comfortable existence by accessing the necessary resources and support to further objectives in the organizations is considered the primary pursuit of organizational politics (Ferris et al. 1989). For that reason, resources and support have a political meaning where they are viewed as a way to further a political objective or as stock to be stored and used in the future (Burns 1961; Perry and Angle 1979). In other words, resources may be misused because they are not solely viewed for performance but also as a means to protect political interests within the organization (Burns 1961; Madison et al. 1980; Zahra 1987).

To understand the impact of organizational politics, it is important to explore how actions are perceived as well as the process of organizational politics itself (Madison et al., 1980). Furthermore, researchers propose what people *perceive* as political is what drives organizational politics (Vredenburgh and Maurer, 1984). This is based on the perspective that people often react based on what they perceive rather than reality (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Lewin, 1936; Zhou and Ferris, 1995). Hence, these perceptions are important to study even if they are misperceptions and inconsistent with reality (Ferris et al., 1989; Lewin, 1936). Accordingly, "perception of organizational politics" (POPS) is defined as *employee perceptions of the extent to which others use social influence attempts within the work environment targeted at those who can provide rewards or will protect and/or promote their self-interests"* (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997) .

Generally speaking the management literature has suggested that organizational politics and POPS has an impact organizational performance and job performance (Gandz and Murray 1980; Zahra 1987; Chang et al. 2009). In a majority of this research performance was based on the perceptions of employees, and were primarily behavioral based (i.e. job satisfaction, organizational commitment, citizenship behaviors) (Chang et al. 2009). While it has been suggested within this research that there is an overall impact on firm financial performance, there has been limited exploration in this area. Therefore, there is an opportunity to tie POPS to firm financial performance, and for the purposes of this study firm supply chain performance.

Politics and Supply Chain Management

Extant supply chain management research has mentioned that "politics" may impact the implementation and execution of firm supply chain management. "Politics" has been suggested as a detriment to integration and the implementation of process improvement initiatives (Blossom 1995; Piercy et al. 2007). Additionally, there have been more subtle overtures about organizational politics (e.g. social resistance and skepticism) in supply chain management when exploring supply chain orientation (Omar et al. 2012)

As previously mentioned, supply chain orientation is the recognition of the value of supply chain management (Mentzer et al. 2001; Omar et al. 2012. 2013). Firms with SCO tend to allocate strategic resources towards supply chain management activities, which improve and enhance firm supply chain performance (Esper and Defee 2010). In other words, an organization that has SCO may influence resource deployment and allocation decisions towards supply chain management. Because the execution and success of supply chain management is important for firm success, the political allocation of resources may detract from firm supply

chain performance. There is an opportunity to explore the relationship between POPS on firm supply chain performance and investigate the attenuating role SCO may play.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Resource Based View and Resource Management

Strategic resources represent the underlying strengths and weaknesses of a firm (Wernerfelt, 1984). Resource Based View (RBV) posits that high performing organizations are able to combine, access, develop and utilize strategic resources that are valuable, rare and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Resources may be tangible such as people, cash and equipment or intangible such as processes, information, organizational routines, values and culture (Boddewyn and Brewer, 1994). Through the effective management and development of these strategic resources, firms are able to create a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984).

While RBV provides a basis for understanding how and when firms develop the aforementioned resources for competitive advantage (Baron et al. 2013). Resource Management builds on RBV by suggesting that owning valuable and rare strategic resources is not enough for competitive advantage. These resources must be managed efficiently and effectively in order for firms to experience superior performance (Sirmon et al. 2007). Unfortunately the deployment of resources can be idiosyncratic and highly contextualized depending on situational factors and managerial interpretations and perspectives (Sirmon et al. 2008). Therefore the effectiveness of resource management varies across organizations depending on the perspective that is adopted (Sirmon et al. 2008).

Hypothesis Development

The Effects Of Perceptions Of Organizational Politics On Firm Supply Chain Performance

As POPS intensifies, there is a negative impact on firm performance (Zahra, 1987) and a reduction in organizational effectiveness (Gandz and Murray, 1980). Firm performance is impacted because the meaning of performance becomes confounded by political objectives (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). More specifically performance is influenced by the self-interested motives and political perceptions that exist in the organization (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992). Within highly political environments, the allocation of resources becomes volatile and unpredictable because it is based on political objectives of a few, which may not be in the best interest of the firm (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

From a supply chain management perspective, superior firm supply chain performance is considered a competitive advantage (Brewer and Speh 2000). According to RBV and resource management, this superior performance is achieved through the efficient deployment and allocation of resources (Sirmon et al. 2007; Wernerfelt 1984; Barney 1991). However, the volatility of an environment that is perceived to be highly political may have ineffective resource management activities. As a result, high levels of politics in organizations may have a negative association with resource allocation activities that benefit supply chain management may decrease and negatively impact firm supply chain performance. More specifically, as organization's become more political firm supply chain performance may suffer. Which leads to the following hypothesis:

> H1: *Firm supply chain performance will be diminished in organizations that are perceived to be highly political*

The Moderating Effect of Supply Chain Orientation

SCO promotes a cohesive vision and goals that increase the firm's ability to engage in supply chain management (Min and Mentzer, 2004). In other words, SCO may be viewed as a mindset or philosophy, which furthers supply chain management initiatives within the organization (Omar et al. 2012; Mello and Stank 2005). Firms that adopt SCO may approach supply chain management strategically while placing an emphasis on the structural processes and capabilities that facilitate supply chain management (Esper and Defee 2010). More specifically, resources (e.g. people, systems, cash, capabilities) may be managed and deployed in a manner that improves firm supply chain performance (Esper and Defee 2010).

However, POPS is likely prevalent during resource allocation decisions (Levine and Rossman 1995). While POPS allocates resources toward the objectives of a few, SCO has a cohesive vision and allocates for the benefit of the organization and firm supply chain performance. According to RBV and resource management, it could be suggested that POPS and SCO have divergent resource deployment and allocation strategies. SCO frames resources from an efficiency perspective to benefit firm supply chain performance, while POPS subscribes a political meaning to resources. SCO may counteract the impact of POPS on firm supply chain performance.

> *H2: The relationship between organizations that are perceived to be highly political and firm supply chain performance is negatively moderated by supply chain orientation.*

The conceptual model is illustrated in figure 4.1.

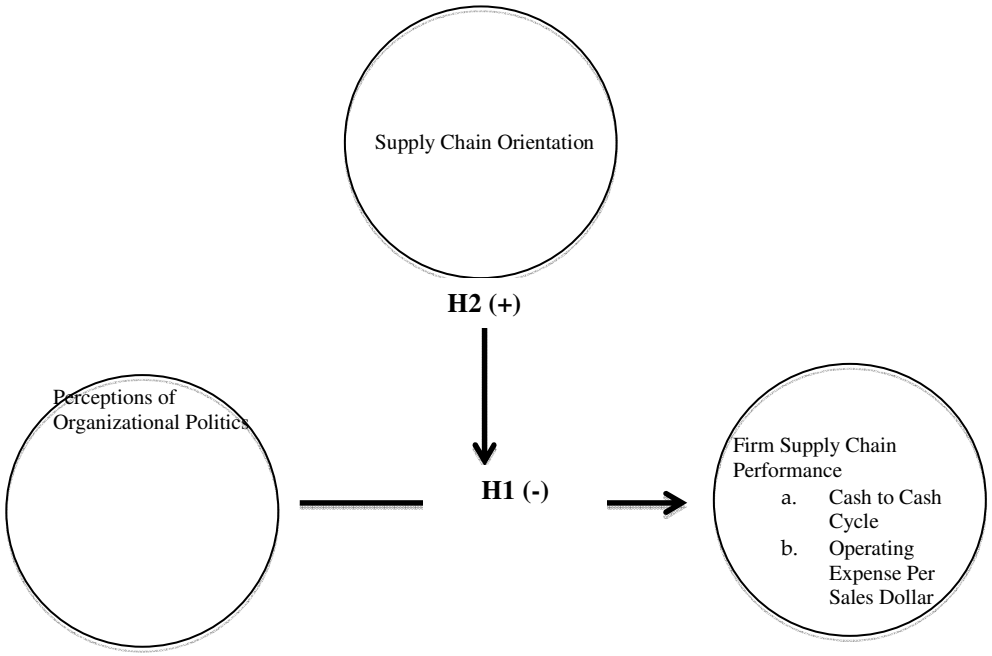


Figure 4.1 Conceptual Model

Methodology

Causal models are often examined using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CBSEM) within operations research. The use of CBSEM is befitting when the theory supporting the conceptual model is well established and the minimum threshold for sample size (e.g. 150) can be met (Peng and Lai 2012). However, there are situations when PLS should be used to evaluate a structural model. First, when research is exploring relationships between theoretical constructs where a nomological network is not clearly understood and/or when established theory is lacking, PLS is an appropriate method (Peng and Lai 2012). Next, if the scale consists of single indicators it may violate the CB-SEM estimation parameters, whereas PLS can adjust to ordinal, nominal and interval scale variables (Hair et al. 2010). Finally, if the researcher has too small sample size for CBSEM and can meet or exceed the sample size

requirement of (10 times the number of latent variables influencing the dependent variable), PLS is the appropriate method (Peng and Lai 2012). Given the absence of established theory, the exploration of new relationships between constructs, single indicator variables and small sample size partial least squares regression (PLS) was determined to be the appropriate analytical method for this research.

The PLS analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 2.0.M3 (Ringle et al. 2005). SmartPLS is a graphical user interface, which allows the graphical depiction of a path model. The PLS path model provides results for both a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model is assessed through construct validity by checking convergent and discriminant validity.

Survey Development

Survey design and development followed the guidelines for web-based surveys from Dillman et al. (2008). A questionnaire draft was created and presented to academics for face readability and validity. Next, a practitioner focus group was convened and provided feedback regarding the survey instrument. The focus group's objective was to give feedback about clarity, content and relevance of survey items. Finally, a pilot study of the survey instrument was conducted using compensated research subjects from an on-line research panel. The pilot test resulted in 129 survey participants. Preliminary analysis of the pilot study established reliability and validity for the survey instrument.

Measures

Perception of Organizational Politics

The POPS scale assessed the degree two which participants perceive a self-serving and political nature within their work environment (Kacmar and Carlson 1997). A 6-item scale

developed by Hochwarter et al. (2003) was used to measure POPS. Scale items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Representative items included “many people are trying to maneuver their way into the in group”, and “people do what's best for them not what's best for the organization”.

Supply Chain Orientation

The SCO scale assesses the extent to which a firm recognizes the strategic importance of supply chain management. Recent literature has proposed that SCO is represented by both strategic and structural elements inside of the firm (Esper and Defee, 2010). In other words, the success of supply chain management relies on both a strategic emphasis and structural support within an organization (Esper and Defee, 2010). This conceptualization offers a more comprehensive view of SCO by acknowledging that intra-firm behaviors and capabilities are critical components to supply chain management. While this conceptualization may be more comprehensive, the current Min and Mentzer (2004) scale and operationalization of SCO does not reflect this perspective. As a result, a new adapted scale was developed based on the new conceptualization. The adapted SCO scale asked participants if there is strategic emphasis on supply chain management activities and processes within the organization. Representative items are as follows: in my organization we believe …” it is important to develop strategies based on understanding of supply chain management”, and “constantly monitoring our commitment to supply chain management is part of our responsibilities”. A 5-point Likert Scale was used with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”. Academics and practitioners were asked to review the adapted developed scale for face validity and readability. Furthermore, reliability and validity was assessed during the aforementioned pilot study.

Firm Supply Chain Performance

Performance measures should be able to clearly communicate desired performance and be consistent with the goals and needs of an organization (Griffis et al. 2004). Therefore, it is important to select measures that produce desired performance as well as incent the right behavior (Griffis et al. 2007; Rose 1995). For the purpose of this study, the firm supply chain performance measures selected focus on the (1) efficiency from an operational perspective (2) efficiency from a strategic perspective. Based on the aforementioned focus, firm supply chain performance will be represented by cash to cash cycle (C2C) and operating expense per sales dollar (OPSD) respectively.

C2C is defined as "the elapsed time from when a company in the supply chain pays a supplier for a product or service to when the company is paid for the end product or service by its customer"(LaLonde 2004;11). C2C is an effective measure of firm supply chain performance because it is a dynamic measure of liquidity from firm operations (Hager 1976, Kamath 1989) and bridges across inbound and outbound inventory activities with suppliers, functional areas, and customers (Farris and Hutchison 2002). An organization is considered to have good firm supply chain performance when cash to cash is low (Farris and Hutchison 2002; Swink et al. 2010). A firm's C2C is dependent upon sales per day on an annualized basis, cost of goods sold per day on an annualized basis, accounts receivable days, inventory days and accounts payable days (Farris and Hutchison 2002). Overall C2C is an effective way to evaluate firm supply chain performance (Lanier et al. 2010). The calculations for C2C cycle is as follows:

1. $Cash\ to\ Cash\ Cycle = Receivable\ Days + Inventory\ Days + Payable\ Days$
   a. $Receivable\ Days = \frac{Receivables}{Sales\ Per\ Day}$
   b. $Inventory\ Days = \frac{Inventory}{Sales\ Per\ Day}$

c. $$Payable\ Days = \frac{Accounts\ Payable}{Cost\ of\ goods\ Sold\ Per Day}$$

d. $$Sales\ Per\ Day = \frac{Sales}{365}$$

e. $$Cost\ of\ Goods\ Sold\ Per\ Day = \frac{Cost\ of\ Goods\ Sold}{365}$$

The second measure of firm supply chain performance is operating expense per sales dollar. Extant research has indicated that companies who are leaders in supply chain management have lower operating expense per sales dollar (Swink et al. 2010). A lower operating expense per sales dollar suggests that organizations have a more efficient cost structure. This suggests that firms have developed superior efficiencies in operational areas related to supply chain management (Swink et al. 2010). The calculation for operating expense per sales dollar is as follows:

2. $$Operating\ Expense\ Per\ Sales\ Dollar = \frac{Operating\ Expenses}{Sales}$$

Secondary 2012 and financial data was used to calculate C2C and OPSD. The financial data was compiled using Mergent Online, which is an online database that provides access to balance sheets, income statements, and SEC Filings for up to 15 years.

Sampling

The overall unit of analysis for this study is firms. More specifically this research focuses on publicly traded retail firms. Therefore, the sampling frame for this study consisted of 683 retail industry employees. These employees were members of a panel of compensated research subjects working within a wide variety of professional positions and industries. All responses were entered, captured and stored by the web site hosting the web-based survey. The use of paid response panels has become more accepted in recent years provided that survey participants are

pre-qualified and have the necessary experience to answer the questions of interest (Deutskens et al. 2004). Furthermore, the use of research panels has been used effectively in recent supply chain research (i.e., Autry et al. 2010; Thornton et al. 2013).

The participants for this study were required to be currently employed retail industry employees. All participants were asked to disclose the name of their current employer; usable responses were those that reported working for a publicly traded retail company. A total of N_u = 109 (15.9.%) usable responses were received from panel members. See Table 4.1.

The 108 survey participants provided a total of 33 publicly traded retail companies. Although this is a small sample, it represents the top tier companies in the retail sector. When comparing the sample to the Fortune 500 list for publicly traded companies it includes 7 out of 10 general merchandisers, 10 out of 27 specialty retailers (apparel and other) and 5 out of 10 food and drug stores. A description of the company sample is provided in Table 4.2.

Validity and Reliability of Measures

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using Smart PLS version 2.0.M3. CFA was done to establish the measurement models reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Composite Rho provides a more conservative test and considered a stronger assessment of reliability when compared to Cronbach's α (Garver and Mentzer 1999). Each construct has a composite rho greater than the .70 threshold suggested by Garver and Mentzer (1999) and .60 proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (1988).

Convergent validity was evaluated using item factor loadings, and their respective *t* values (Anderson and Gerbing 1982). All measurement items loaded more heavily on their respective constructs at .60 or above and were significant at $p \leq .01$. Furthermore, the average

Table 4.1 Sample Description

Identified Company with Publicly Available Information		**N = 108**	
Position	**Number of Responses**	**Percentage**	**Cumulative Percent**
Operations	61	57%	57%
Analyst	17	16%	73%
Manager	27	25%	98%
Director	2	2%	100%
	107	100%	
Education Level	**Number of Responses**	**Percentage**	**Cumulative Percent**
High School	19	18%	18%
Some College	35	32%	50%
Associates Degree	23	21%	71%
Bachelor's Degree	26	24%	95%
Graduate Degree	5	5%	100%
	108	100%	
Work Experience	**Number of Responses**	**Percentage**	**Cumulative Percent**
0 - 5 years	0	0%	0%
6 - 10 years	19	18%	18%
11 - 15 years	35	32%	50%
16 - 20 years	23	21%	71%
21 - 25 years	26	24%	95%
26 years or more	5	5%	100%
	108	100%	

Table 4.2 Sample Company Information

General Merchandisers		Specialty Retailers		Food and Drug Stores	
Company	*Respondents*	*Company*	*Respondents*	*Company*	*Respondents*
Dollar General[a]	2	Barnes and Noble[a]	4	Ahold	1
J.C. Penney[a]	4	American Greetings	1	CVS[a]	5
Kohl's[a]	2	As Seen on TV	1	Dean Foods	3
Macy's[a]	10	Auto Zone[a]	1	Kroger[a]	4
Sears[a]	5	Best Buy[a]	1	Publix[a]	1
Target[a]	6	Cabelas	1	Supervalu[a]	5
Wal-Mart[a]	20	Charming Shoppes	2	The Fresh Market	1
		Crocs	1	Walgreen[a]	1
		DSW	1		
		Famous Footwear	1		
		Gap Inc.[a]	1		
		Haverty Furniture Company	1		
		O'Reilly Auto Parts[a]	1		
		Office Depot[a]	1		
		Staples[a]	2		
		Home Depot[a]	9		
		Lowe's[a]	6		
		Dollar Tree Stores[a]	1		
		Big Lots[a]	1		

a. Denotes companies that appear on the Fortune 500 list for 2012

variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs is above the accepted level of .50 (Fornell and Larker 1981). See Tables 4.3 and 4.4. The analysis indicates good convergent validity.

The AVE was also used to assess discriminant validity. As suggested by Chin (1988) and Fornell and Larker (1981), the square root of the AVE for each construct was compared to their corresponding inter-construct correlations. The square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than their respective squared inter-construct correlations. See Table 4.5. These results suggest that all constructs are independent of each other and are represented by distinct measures, indicating the constructs have discriminant validity.

Tests for Bias

Response bias was assessed using the method suggested by Lambert and Harrington (1990). The sample was divided into thirds based on survey completion by respondent. A two-tailed t-test of the mean difference between groups was conducted between the first and third groups across all constructs. Based on this analyses there was no significant difference between the two groups across all constructs.

Common method bias was assessed using the Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Harman's single factor test, evidence for common method bias exists if either a single factor emerges and accounts for the majority of the variance among the items (Pavlou, Liang, and Xue 2007; Podsakoff et al. 2003). The factor analysis showed that the most covariance explained by a single factor is 37.45 percent. In addition, the correlation matrix (see Table 4.4) reveals that the highest correlation is r = .636, whereas evidence of common method bias would have resulted in correlations greater than .90 (Pavlou, Liang, and Xue 2007). Based on the aforementioned analysis, common method bias is not believed to be an issue in this study

Table 4.3 Factor Loadings

	Indicator Label	Item Loadings	T-Statistic
Supply Chain Orientation	our firm's survival depends on its adapting to supply chain management SCO1	0.754	15.498
In my organization we believe	establishing long-term relationships with our supply chain partners is critical to the organization's survival. SCO2	0.786	17.979
	sharing valuable strategic/tactical information with our supply chain members is critical to the organization's success. SCO3	0.823	30.389
	sharing risk with supply chain partners is critical to the firm's success. SCO4	0.743	14.912
	sharing rewards with supply chain partners is critical to the firm's success. SCO5	0.767	14.675
	constantly monitoring our commitment to supply chain management is part of our responsibilities. SCO6	0.775	16.791
	it is important to develop strategies based on understanding of supply chain management. SCO7	0.838	29.657
	working with key supply chain partners will help us be successful. SCO8	0.886	58.184
	our performance can be improved by working with key supply chain partners. SCO9	0.710	16.006
	understanding supply chain management prepares our firm for developments in our market. SCO10	0.844	32.987
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	Many people are trying to maneuver their way into the in group OP1	0.673	6.999
Please answer the following questions about your organization	People do what's best for them not what's best for the organization OP2	0.773	14.995
	People spend too much time sucking up to those who can help them. OP3	0.827	18.845
	There is a lot of self-serving behavior going on within the organization. OP4	0.889	30.080
	People are working behind the scenes to ensure they get their piece of the pie. OP5	0.807	21.899
	People are stabbing each other in the back to look good in front of others. OP6	0.868	44.291

Table 4.4 Initial Construct Squared Correlations and Discriminant Validity

	Composite Reliability	AVE	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6
Perceptions of Organizational Politics (X1)	0.918	0.652	***0.807***					
Supply Chain Orientation (X2)	0.953	0.671	-0.314	***0.819***				
Cash to Cash Cycle (X4)	1	1	-0.618	0.261	0.337	-[a]		
Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar (X5)	1	1	-0.389	0.319	0.24	0.67	-[a]	
Total Assets (X6)	1	1	0.218	-0.119	-0.085	-0.284	-0.279	-0.114

a. *– AVE not calculated for single-item constructs*

Organizational Level Indices

As previously mentioned, the unit of analysis for this study is firm level. Therefore, each construct was aggregated and converted into an organizational level index using SPSS Version 20. The index was developed by first creating a weighted variable using maximum likelihood factor analysis and the Bartlett method for factor score coefficients. Once the weighted variable was created for each of the 108 participants, the score was then averaged for each respective company. The descriptive statistics for the organizational level indices appear in Table 4.5. Additionally, the correlation matrix is in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Level Index

				Skewness		***Kurtosis***	
	N	***Mean***	***Std. Dev.***	***Statistics***	***SE***	***Statistics***	***SE***
Perceptions of Organizational Politics	34	3.628	1.093	-.508	.403	.128	.788
Supply Chain Orientation	33	3.592	.620	.355	.409	-.833	.798
Cash to Cash Cycle	34	50.898	38.412	.581	.403	.463	.788
Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar	34	.265	.082	1.124	.403	1.164	.788
Total Assets[a]	34	22.471	1.843	-1.201	.403	3.172	.788

a. Total Assets information represents the natural log to correct for non-normal distribution

Table 4.6 Correlation Matrix for Organizational Level Measures

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
Perceptions of Organizational Politics (X1)	1				
Supply Chain Orientation (X2)	-0.299	1			
Cash to Cash Cycle (X3)	-0.638	0.247	1		
Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar (X4)	-0.397	0.314	0.669	1	
Total Assets (X5)	0.187	-0.121	-0.253	-0.269	1

Results

Data Analysis

PLS path analysis was used to explore each hypothesis. Therefore the R^2, path coefficients and t-statistics are used as an indication of support for the individual hypotheses. The t-statistic estimates are tested within PLS using a bootstrapping technique, where "multiple subsamples from within the same sample are taken to build a distribution for each parameter and derive a standard estimate"(Sawhney 2013; 104, Efron and Tibshirani 1993). The bootstrapping procedure was run with three different subsamples (300, 500, 1000) to ensure the robustness of the results. The results across each subsample were found to be stable. This research will report the analyses from the 300 subsamples. See Table 4.7.

Path Analysis

Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Cash to Cash Cycle

Hypothesis 1A examined the association between POPS and firm's cash to cash cycle as proxy for firm supply chain performance. Based on the findings, POPS has a significant negative

relationship with C2C (β= -.612, p <=.001). See Table 4.11. Therefore, H1A is not supported. These findings indicate that as POPS increases C2C decreases suggesting a positive association. See Figure 4.2.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar

Hypothesis 1B examined the relationship between POPS and firm's OPSD as proxy for firm supply chain performance. The analysis show POPS has a significant negative association with OPSD (β = -.359, p <=.01). Consequently, H1B is not supported. This suggests that POPS has a positive relationship with the OPSD, meaning when POPS increases OPSD decreases. See Figure 4.3

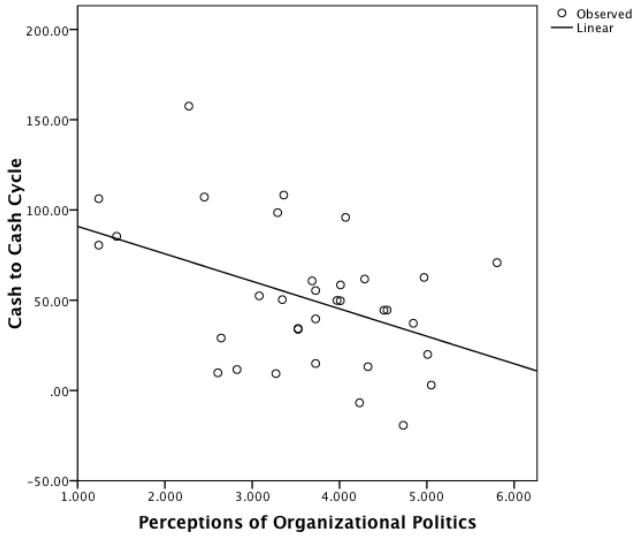


Figure 4.2 Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Cash to Cash Cycle

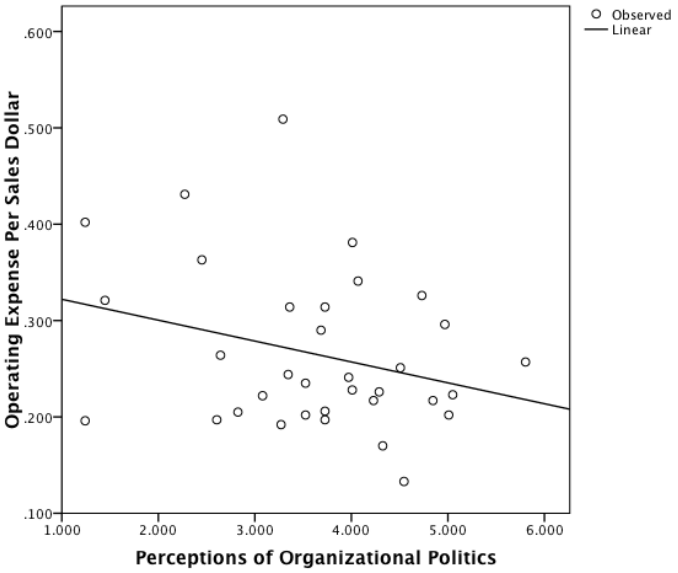


Figure 4.3 Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar

Supply Chain Orientation moderating POPS relationship to Cash to Cash Cycle

Hypothesis 2A examined how SCO impacted the relationship between POPS and firm's cash to cash cycle as proxy for firm supply chain performance. Based on the findings, SCO there is no moderating effect on the relationship between POPS and C2C. Therefore, H2A is not supported.

Supply Chain Orientation moderating POPS relationship to Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar

Hypothesis 2B examined the impact of SCO on POPS relationship with OPSD as proxy for firm supply chain performance. The analysis shows that, SCO has a significant positive direct relationship with OPSD ($\beta = .286$, $p <= .01$), however there is no significant interaction between POPS and SCO that impacts the relationship with OPSD. Therefore the H2B is not supported even though there is a significant direct relationship with OPSD.

Table 4.7 Results

Independent Variables	Cash to Cash Cycle β	Operating Expense Per Sales Dollar β
Statistical Controls		
• Positive Affect	-	-
• Negative Affect	-	-
	-.254****	-.269***
• Size	.064	.072
• ΔR^2		
Hypothesis 1A		
• *Politics Perceptions*	-.612****	-.359***
• ΔR^2	.362	.125
Hypothesis 1B		
• *Supply Chain Orientation*	.052	.201**
• ΔR^2	.003	.037
Hypothesis 2		
• *POPS*SCO*	-.153	.053
• ΔR^2	.017	.001

*p ≤ .10
**p ≤ .05
***p ≤ .01
****p ≤ .001

Discussion

This research contributes to supply chain management literature by providing insights into the relationship between POPS, SCO and firm supply chain performance. Furthermore, it investigates whether SCO can attenuate the relationship between POPS and firm supply chain performance. The results provide interesting theoretical insights and managerial implications.

Summary of Findings

The findings for H1A and 1B provide interesting insights for further investigation. First, there is a significantly negative relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and cash to cash cycle as well as operating expense per sales dollar. These results suggest that an

organization that is perceived to have high levels of politics is associated with lower cash to cash cycle and operating expenses per sales dollar. In other words, highly political organizations experience better firm supply chain performance. While these findings are counter to a majority of current research, there is an emerging debate suggesting there are potentially positive implications of POPS (Fedor et al. 2008; Hochwarter et al. 2013; Kumar and Ghadially 1989). Researchers are suggesting exploration using a different theoretical perspective that provides a curvilinear approach to the impact of POPS in order to explore positive outcomes (Hochwarter et al. 2010). In other words, there may be circumstances where high level of POPS is beneficial and low levels may be detrimental to the organization (Hochwarter et al. 2010).

Alternatively SCO was shown not to be a significant moderator for the relationship between POPS and firm supply chain performance (i.e. cash to cash cycle and operating expense per sales dollar). However, the findings did show that SCO has a positive direct relationship with operating expense per sales dollar. This suggests that an organization that has a higher level of SCO may have diminished firm supply chain performance. While these findings are counter to prior studies in supply chain management literature, it suggests that the relationship between SCO and firm supply chain performance is more complex and nuanced than previously thought. The firm supply chain performance measures utilized in this research were focused on efficiency; perhaps a measure of effectiveness will provide different insights about organizations with high levels of SCO. Moreover, there may be an efficiency cost associated with an organization increasing its SCO, where other areas become more inefficient or sub-optimize due to increased levels of SCO. However, the overall effectiveness and accomplishment of goals and objectives within the organization may improve in firms with high levels of SCO.

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

The findings of this study present interesting opportunities for future research agenda within the management and supply chain management literature. Despite theory and a majority of management literature suggesting otherwise, the findings of this study indicate there may be positive outcomes for perceptions of organizational politics. Furthermore, supply chain orientation was shown to have a positive association with operating expense per sales dollar, which is contrary to extant supply chain management research. These findings warrant further exploration into the impact of POPS and SCO on firm supply chain performance.

The Need for Exploration of Non-Linear Relationships

There is a prevailing assumption that organizational phenomena have linear relationships; however, this assumption may be faulty (Ferris et al. 2006). There have been several studies in recent years that have begun to explore potential curvilinear relationships. Recently, management researchers have noted that the relationship between POPS and organizational phenomena is more complex than a linear relationship (Hochwarter et al. 2010). These researchers have suggested that exploring POPS through a linear viewpoint may be too limiting and not allow a comprehensive understanding of the positive and negative impact of POPS (Hochwarter et al. 2010; Hochwarter et al. 2012). The emerging debate has focused on an activation theory perspective. Activation theory proposes an inverted-U relationship between POPS and organizational phenomena.

According to activation theory, a high level of POPS may motivate members of the organization to be more efficient and effective because they are keenly aware of the political competition that exists with the firm (Hochwarter et al. 2010). More specifically, at low levels of POPS there is no motivation to improve performance, however when POPS increases

motivation increases due to the growing political pressure in the firm (Hochwarter et al. 2010). When reviewing the findings of this research from an activation theory lens, the level of POPS within the organization may have motivated improved firm supply chain performance. This may be driven by the desire to avoid the volatility that perceptions of organizational politics may create. In other words, high performance may insulate the negative aspects of POPS in the organization. Perhaps there is an opportunity for further exploration of POPS impact on firm supply chain phenomena through an activation theoretical lens.

From a supply chain perspective, the "received view" is a linear relationship between SCO and firm supply chain performance. As previously mentioned, an assumption of linearity may not be accurate because organizational phenomena are more complex and nuanced than a simple linear relationship (Ferris et al. 2006). Perhaps SCO's relationship with firm supply chain performance is more complex and nuanced as well. More specifically, is there an optimal point of SCO for an organization to achieve and beyond that would be diminishing returns.

The Need for Longitudinal Research

This research attempts to show a relationship between POPS and firm supply chain performance through assessing a single point in time. Future research should explore the lasting impact of POPS on firm supply chain performance. By taking a longitudinal approach on POPS research, perhaps positive outcomes may become apparent. Current research takes a decidedly negative tone when considering the impact of POPS; longitudinal research would provide an opportunity to fully understand the long-term effects of POPS from a performance standpoint. Furthermore longitudinal investigation would allow for an evaluation of changes in performance measures and potentially provide researchers with a direct effect from POPS.

The Need for Performance Measure Comparison

This research explores firm supply chain performance using secondary data measures. However, many studies use perceptual measures of performance in both supply chain management and management literature. The findings of this research are contrary to prior studies, however a majority of previous work used perceptual measures of performance. When using perceptual measures of performance participants are asked to provide their opinion on how the organization is performing. While there perceptions may provide interesting insights, they may not be an accurate representation of firm performance. Future research should evaluate the agreement between perceptual measures of performance versus objective financial measures. This would provide a more robust understanding of how performance is impacted by organizational phenomena. Where perceptual measures may represent performance attitudes and objective financial measures represent operational and strategic results.

The Need for Exploration in Different Contexts

First, this study was conducted within the retail industry. As a result, the results may not be generalizable to other industries. The study sample consists of only 33 publicly traded companies. While the sample is a good representation of the Fortune 500 list of publicly traded retail companies, a larger sample including different industries maybe able to provide additional insights and exploration. In the future, researchers should explore these phenomena across different industrial contexts. More specifically, does SCO or POPS have a different impact depending on the industrial context? Are there some industries that POPS would have more or less impact? Alternatively, would SCO make more of a strategic impact on POPS in different industrial contexts?

Managerial Implications

As supply chain management becomes increasingly important for the overall success of organizations, the ability to effectively manage resource allocation and deployment will be critical for firm supply chain performance. Supply chain managers must be aware of the organizational politics that are surrounding resource allocation decisions and its relationship with firm supply chain performance. Furthermore, they must also understand that demands and expectations that organizational politics brings may actually be a benefit for firm supply chain performance. More specifically, while organizational politics may create difficulty in areas such as cross-functional integration and process implementation (Blossom 1995, Piercy 2007), it can create positive outcomes overall within the organization. Therefore the ability to navigate and understand organizational politics becomes critical for supply chain managers.

Additionally, supply chain managers should understand what the performance implications are for adopting a supply chain orientation. There may be inefficiencies and sub-optimization that occurs within other departments when levels of SCO increase within the organization. This will give the impression that SCO is not beneficial for the organization. However, understanding that SCO may impact overall effectiveness of the firm, will allow supply chain managers to address potential resistance to SCO in the organization. Consequently, politically savvy supply chain managers need to understand the political landscape and the true impact of SCO on other functional areas within the firm.

CHAPTER FIVE: ARTICLE 3

Introduction

Organizational politics is *"a social influence process, in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests" (Ferris et al., 1989).* Employees may be inclined to participate in organizational politics because it can serve a purpose personally and professionally (Drory and Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). In other words, employees often use organizational politics to create a more comfortable existence (e.g. access to resources and support) (Burns 1961; Ferris et al. 1989). Perhaps those who have the desire to engage in organizational politics are willing to try and shape their environment to one that is more comfortable and amenable to them (Fedor et al. 2008; Liu et al., 2010).

Generally speaking, organizational politics research has taken a negative tone when investigating the impact on intra-firm phenomena such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment, job stress, and job involvement (Chang et al. 2009; Miller et al., 2008). Overall, research has focused on the negative relationship that organizational politics has with the aforementioned constructs (Hochwarter et al. 2012). While these areas are important, there may be additional areas of exploration within the organizational politics' space. There has been limited exploration on the impact of organizational politics on firm processes or interorganizational exchange relationships. More specifically, research has proposed that organizational "politics" may affect the implementation of internal supply chain management processes (Blossom, 1995; Piercy et al., 2006). Furthermore, supply chain literature has suggested that supply chain employees be politically empowered to further collaboration within exchange relationships (Stank et al. 2001).

As supply chain employees hold critical autonomous boundary spanning roles within the organization (Bowersox et al. 2000), perhaps they are politically active inside and outside of the firm. Potentially, they must balance the political environments inside and outside of their organization. However, neither supply chain management or organizational politics literature has yet to explore how boundary spanners balance these distinct political environments. Furthermore, when this gap is viewed from a supply chain management perspective, it is likely there may be supply chain politics that occur across firm boundaries and are focused on supply chain management objectives.

Building on the definitions of organizational politics discussed above, supply chain politics in this research is defined as a s*trategically designed social influence process focused on generating resources and mobilizing support for the enhancement or protection of supply chain related interests internal or external to the organization.* The primary driver of this research is the reality that supply chain employees are entrusted with critical relationships and information inside and outside of the organization. These same employees are autonomous (Bowersox et al. 2000) and politically active (Aldrich and Herker 1977). Moreover, this research builds on current organizational politics research by expanding it beyond the focal organization. While organizational politics has an intra-firm focus, supply chain politics is across organizational boundaries and complements the organizational politics construct.

Although the conceptual definition for supply chain politics was ascertained from the existing organizational politics literature, the strategies and mental models and objectives were harder to convey. For example the current organizational politics literature focuses on self-interested intraorganizational motives (i.e. career advancement and power), whereas supply chain politics focus is on furthering supply chain management objectives. Furthermore, when

intraorganizational constructs have been expanded to be interorganizational in nature, new elements and dimensions have often been discovered (e.g. Autry and Griffis 2008; Defee et al. 2009; Thornton et al. forthcoming). Accordingly, we used a grounded theory approach to investigate the phenomenon of supply chain politics. This method is used to explore the poorly understood complex social problems (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Next, a literature review is presented to establish the relevance of this grounded theory study. Then the methodology section is presented, followed by an overview of research findings including a model overview. Lastly, a discussion of the theoretical and managerial implications is provided.

Literature Review

Through the exploration of organizational politics researchers seek to understand the political nature of organizations and its impact on employees through looking at its relationship to constructs such as job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational commitment, turnover intention and workplace stress (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Marques 2009; Witt et al. 2002a; 2002b). Overwhelmingly research has shown that organizational politics has a negative effect on job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational commitment, and a positive relationship with turnover intention and workplace stress (Chang et al. 2009; Miller et al. 2008). This suggests that organizational politics negatively impacts the employee's view of the organization.

Although research has focused on the negative implications of organizational politics, there are several positive reasons for engaging in this social influence process (Fedor et al. 2008; Ferris et al. 2002 The positive view of organizational politics is that of working behind the scenes to "negotiate your career" or provide benefits to others (Fedor et al. 2008). Furthermore, it is possible that those who have the desire to engage in organizational politics are willing to try

and shape their environment to one that is more comfortable and amenable to them (Liu et al. 2010). In contrast, those who do not make an attempt often feel unsatisfied, victimized and powerless (Putnam 1995). For that reason, Durbin (1978) suggested three overlapping objectives of politics (1) gaining power, (2) impression management and (3) professional advancement. This was further expanded by Hochwarter (2012) to include support for self and others. These objectives represent a more robust and comprehensive view of organizational politics, proposing that different interrelated interests may motivate an individual to engage in organizational politics (Durbin 1978; Hochwarter et al. 2012).

An individual's desire to gain power, advance professionally, manage impressions and cultivate support may refer to the realization of personal and/or organizational goals of recognition, status, enhanced position, power and social capital (Fedor et al. 2008). From this perspective, organizational politics becomes more strategic and relational (Vredenburgh and Maurer 1984). It begins to require different covert strategies and tactics (what potential behaviors or actions will further specific interests), means-end analysis (what will be gained from selected behaviors and actions), and feedback/control methods (how have actions been received) (Mayes and Allen 1977).

However, the strategic use of organizational politics within interorganizational exchange relationships has not been fully explored. Although prior channel researchers Stern and Reve (1980) proposed that exchange partnerships exist within sociopolitical environments that are navigated by organizations in the Political Economy Paradigm, "politics" has only been mentioned tangentially within supply chain management research. This research seeks to address this gap in the literature through the qualitative exploration of supply chain politics.

Methodology

The goal of grounded theory is to generate theory that explains a pattern of behavior, which is problematic and relevant for those involved (Glaser, 1978). This is accomplished through studying how people interact, react or take actions in response to social phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1998b). This method uses interviews, field notes and other documents as data to be systematically analyzed using constant comparison analysis (Strauss, 1987).

Sampling Frame And Data Collection

Sampling Frame

Consistent with the grounded theory method, purposeful theoretical sampling was used to identify supply chain employees within the retail industry who interact with exchange partners in an ongoing supply chain relationship. See Table 5.1. Each participant interacted with supply chain partners and other departments on a daily basis. In addition, participants were asked a series of questions to explore their experiences with balancing organizational politics inside and outside the organization. Following the tradition of theoretical sampling, once categories and properties begin to emerge additional participants were recruited. Theoretical sampling is the underlying strength of grounded theory because it requires the researcher to focus on participants based on theoretical relevance not on empirical characteristics (Charmaz, 2006).

Table 5.1 Participant Descriptions

Participant	Position	Company	Name	Years Experience
A	Senior Customer Manager	CPG - A	Bryan	6
C	Director of Supply Chain	CPG - B	Jonathan	20 +
D	Director of Supply Chain	CPG - C	James	20 +
E	Buyer/Category Manager	CPG - D	Renee	7
F	Director of Distribution	CPG - E	Karen	20 +
G	Senior Customer Manager	CPG - E	Susan	6
H	Operations Team Lead	CPG - B	Karl	10
I	Senior Technology Manager	Tech - A	Thomas	10

Data Collection

Intensive depth interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experiences and their perspective on the phenomenon (Morrison *et al.* 2002, Thomas and Esper 2010). Interviews are raw data which provide a narrative of the participant's perspective on their experiences (Polkinghorne, 1988). This allows for the researcher to understand the participant's perspective and gain an understanding of their world by providing thick, rich descriptions of the phenomenon in the participant own words (Geertz, 1973).

Grounded theory depth interviews are direct, open-ended and are driven by the theoretical categories that emerge from the data collection process (Charmaz, 2006). Interviews were facilitated by a preliminary interview guide (Kvale, 1983; Morrison et al., 2002). See Appendix A. The interview guide served as an initial point to begin the interviews, but evolved and changed based on theoretical categories that emerged (Charmaz, 2006; Morrison et al., 2002). Furthermore, due to the dynamic nature of the interview process and the grounded theory method, questions on the interview guide changed throughout the study (Charmaz, 2006). Each of the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for data analysis.

Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Theoretical saturation is reached when new data does not provide additional insights into identified theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). More specifically, theoretical saturation is not the presence of an continuously repeated pattern within the data but rather when no additional properties emerge for the pattern (Charmaz, 2006). There is no clear-cut off for theoretical saturation, and researchers have presented different guidelines. For example, McCracken (1998) suggests eight interviews, whereas Charmaz (2006) suggests that less than 25 interviews may create skepticism. Despite the contradiction within the literature, theoretical

logic is more important than sample size meaning that sampling should continue until nothing new may be learned about the categories discovered (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1992, 2001).

Grounded Theory Coding

The grounded theory method requires the ongoing, systematic analyzing, or constant comparison, of qualitative field data to create a theoretical framework that is "grounded" in the data collected (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This is achieved through coding, which provides the link between the data collected and the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1992, 2001). Codes are created from what emerges from the data and may lead to unexpected findings, research questions and interview directions (Charmaz, 2006). Codes are defined and later refined based on interaction with participants and additional data (Charmaz, 2006).

Coding within grounded theory occurs in two phases "1) an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data followed by 2) a focused selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006; 46). During this process constant comparison is conducted where interviews, statements, observations and codes are compared to each other to find differences and similarities within the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The initial phase refers to the process of open coding. Open coding refers to coding the data in every way possible in as many categories as possible (Glaser, 1978). This followed by focused coding where the most significant and frequent codes that have appeared in the initial open coding phase are evaluated (Charmaz, 2006). Focused coding is a non-linear iterative process that helps makes sense out of the open codes that have been developed and determine which ones should be categorized (Charmaz, 2006). During the focused coding process, axial coding may occur. Axial coding reassembles the fractured data and identifies the properties and

dimensions of categories (Charmaz, 2006). Through axial coding then creates subcategories along the lines of a category's dimensions and properties (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The last step within the process is theoretical coding. This process builds on the open codes, and axial codes that have been developed throughout the data analysis process. In this phase, theoretical codes provide integrative scope and perspective to the data that has collected (Glaser, 1978). Furthermore, theoretical codes provides guidance on the relationships that may exist between codes so that they may be viewed similar to hypotheses that are integrated into a theory (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical codes provide "integrative scope, broad pictures and new perspectives" Glaser, 1978; 72).

Throughout the coding process theoretical memos will be created regarding codes and their relationships to each other. The goal of theoretical memos is to develop ideas (codes) with complete freedom in to a highly sortable memo fund (Glaser, 1978). The memo fund holds the ideas, which may guide future interviews and research questions. (Glaser, 1978). The collection of theoretical memos within the memo fund help researchers to bolster categories by providing a process to think about the data and compare the data as research continues (Charmaz, 2006).

Research Trustworthiness

Research trustworthiness refers to a process, which determines that qualitative research was conducted in a manner where results may be believed to be true. Research trustworthiness was assessed by establishing credibility, transferability, and dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Credibility is the extent to which the results appear to be acceptable (Lincoln and Guba 1990). Transferability is the extent to which findings in one study may be transferred to another (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Dependability results are consistent and reliable

despite change that may be introduced (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Confirmability is the ability trace the process that was followed within the research process (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Following the model from Thomas and Esper (2010), Flint et al. (2002) and Mollenkopf et al. (2011), steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative research conducted. A panel of independent auditors was consulted throughout the data collection and interpretation process to establish credibility. When additional and/or more comprehensive insights and interpretations were presented they were acknowledged and used to refine the analysis. Transferability was sought by theoretical sampling diverse positions and experiences. Ensuring participants reflected on recent and past experiences in various positions and or companies provided dependability. Lastly, the confirmability process consisted of presenting a summary of preliminary findings to a panel of independent auditors.

Research Findings

Participants in the study shared several experiences that they felt were political in nature and furthered supply chain objectives; hence, supply chain politics was experienced by research participants. There were several stories and insights that illustrated of thought process and strategies however there were clear themes that began to emerge over time once theoretical saturation was achieved (Glaser and Strauss 1967). These themes centered on the idea that a supply chain employee must be politically aware when interacting within their organization and a supply chain partner. This "political awareness" is the foundation for supply chain politics. Furthermore, it was clear from the data that supply chain politics was used to benefit the supply chain relationship through the use of political strategies that were enacted inside and outside of the organization. This notion is challenges a majority of the existing intraorganizational organizational politics literature, where the focus is on negative implications of organizational

politics. Hence, the grand theme that emerged from this investigation was that *organizational politics in an interorganizational context is enacted by politically aware supply chain employees who are focused on improving the supply chain relationship through the use of political strategies inside and outside of their organization.*

Though a process model was evident in the data, which consisted of "appraising the political environment", "supply chain political strategizing" and "supply chain political campaigning", the enacting of this process is heavily influenced by a supply chain employee's "political awareness". As illustrated in Figure 4.6, the model that emerged from the qualitative data indicates that the process model occurs through the filter of "political awareness" . "Political awareness and the components of the process model will be discussed further.

Political Awareness

"Political awareness" is an attribute of supply chain employees that allows them to be sensitive to the underlying social dynamics and covert motives that exist inside and outside of the organization when managing a supply chain relationship. Each of the participants displayed varying levels of an innate sensitivity to the political landscape that existed within their environment. One of the participants indicated a high level of political awareness when she explained *"it's little things like she doesn't push very hard on anything, but I know when she does I should listen because there is something going on, because they don't always give you the data points you need, so she is asking something specifically about a certain date and she is pushing*

Political Environment
-Interorganizational
Intraorganizational

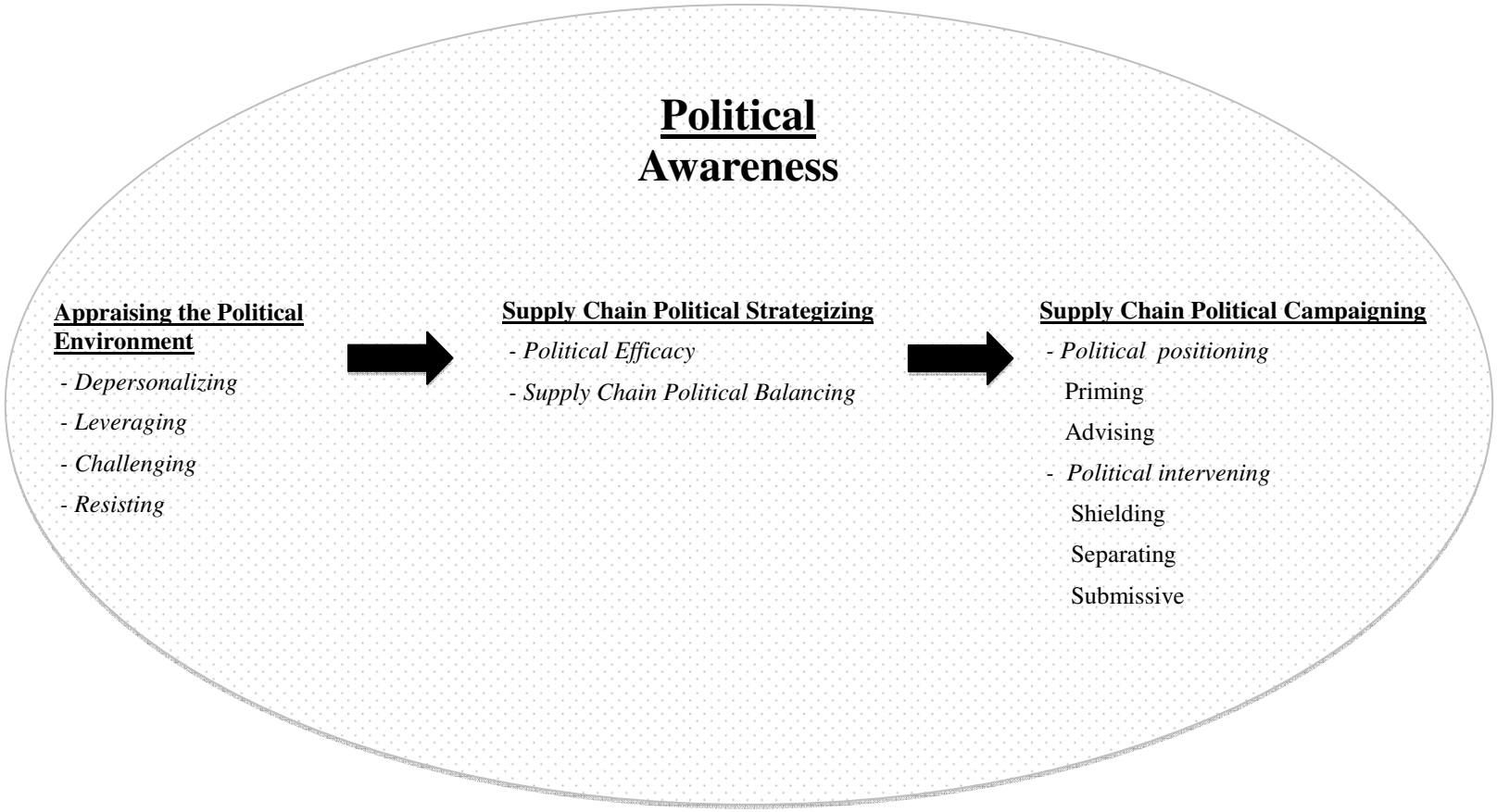


Figure 5.1 Supply Chain Politics

really hard, I am like, there's something more to that." Another supply chain manager explained that you have to understand that they are *"posturing a little bit, beat you up a little bit. But you know it's not like you walk into the room and say 'Oh my gosh what happened?' I mean we were all at lunch before at a meeting, you know what it's going to be. But that's fine, its part of it. Its just part of the gig"*.

All of the participants expressed similar experiences and explained that you must understand your political environment. Furthermore, one supply chain manager explained, *"If I am not willing to, I mean lets just be transparent, step into a subservient place when I need to, that could cost us business. I better know my role and I better know how to do it because I am not going to cost us the business"*. This innate political awareness guides a supply chain manager's ability to assess the political landscape of the supply chain partner and their own organization. A supply chain manager shared *"if you are not in tune enough with dynamically understanding what is happening then you have no way to adapt, which is probably not good and maybe even a failure"*.

Political awareness impacts the entire supply chain politics process. This innate attribute allows supply chain employees to engage in supply chain politics because they are able to discern and interpret the underlying social dynamics that exists with their own organization as well as their supply chain partner. The ability to engage in supply chain politics allowed for the politically aware to further their supply chain objectives.

Appraising the Political Environment

"Appraising the Political Environment" refers to a supply chain employee assessing the political landscape that exists within their social environment through viewing interactions with a level of political awareness. The political awareness attribute

provides a lens for supply chain employees to appraise the environment. As one participant shared, *"You have to be able to assess. Probably early in my career I wasn't as equipped maybe as I am now to assess the political landscape.*" There are four elements of "appraising" that emerged from the data: "depersonalizing", "leveraging", "challenging" and "resisting". Each of these elements represent how the supply chain employee perceives their supply chain partner will behave and what they will have to accommodate.

The combination of depersonalizing, leveraging, challenging and resisting in the appraising process creates a complex social dynamic that supply chain employees must interpret and understand in order to take action. In other words, these behaviors are essentially boundary conditions for the relationship and will dictate how the supply chain employee can manipulate the relationship in their favor.

Depersonalizing

"Depersonalizing" refers to the extent to which a supply chain partner confines the buyer-supplier relationship to formal business interactions and eliminates all informal or personal elements of the buyer-supplier relationship. Depersonalizing was a concern for all participants, where they felt it created a different dynamic within the supply chain relationship. One supply chain manager explains, *"the hard part is that for this exchange partner you can't go to lunch, you can't really hang out outside of work because they have really strong policies in place, so you can't buy them lunch, I can't give them anything! You know, I can't give them a cup of coffee and so it makes it even harder to build that relationship when it is just based on the business"*. This suggests that there are unique challenges that existed from the depersonalizing of the relationship. A different

manager explained *"They are not allowed to take guests, even meals if they come over to your office for a meeting and you give them a water they will give you a dollar, you know because they are not supposed to be influenced by you buying something for them…"*

The depersonalizing of the relationships does not allow the supplier to form informal relational bonds causing the supply chain employee to become uneasy about the status of the relationship. A supply chain manager explained the relationship has *"been good but challenging because of the lack of personal contact outside of the work place"*. This manager was unable to make a personal connection and form relational bonds that would allow rapport building with the supply chain partner. Without building relational bonds or a rapport, the ability to politically influence a supply chain partner through social means becomes limited. In other words it becomes harder to use information obtained socially to gain an advantage in the supply chain relationship. Therefore a supply chain employee must appraise whether a relationship will be depersonalized, because they may have to find other means of gaining favor with a supply chain partner.

Leveraging

In combination with the depersonalizing, there is an evaluation of whether a supply chain partner will actively attempt to access what they perceive is an exchange partner's strategic resources. This behavior is considered leveraging. Leveraging refers to the level that a supply chain partner actively uses an exchange partner's internal strategic resources for their own benefit. A supply chain manager explains a supply chain partner's approach as "*actually relying upon vendor partners to do some of the work that other retailers are doing in house… those other retailers that are doing that in house may not be able to get to every category with the depth that we can get to and*

information that we an provide back to the retailer". Many of the participants shared this experience, explaining that while they are provided with a large amount of data, they are expected to provide a great amount of resources to support their exchange partner. The leveraging of resources was challenging for all participants where one supply chain manager explained *"it is hard for any business to consider, you know, dedicating forty people to just one partner…it takes a lot for them because they have a lot of different departments that you have to interact with and you can't really get by on sharing resources with other partner"*.

An example of leveraging which was prevalent among the study participants is the use of category captains. A category represents a specific group of products (i.e. snack foods, spices); each category has a captain, which actively manages the product group. The category captain role is assigned by an exchange partner and *"based on who the number one brand is within that category and sometimes category captains are selected to be more neutral so its somebody that is actually not at all involved in that particular category and doesn't sell anything into it with the thought that they can provide a unbiased recommendation*".

The leveraging aspect of this role occurs because to be category captain there are expectations surrounding behavior inside of your own company. As one supply chain manager explained *"there are some ethical guidelines so if you look at our category team they are physically in a different area of our office because the category team is not supposed to be talking with the national account managers and having that influence go back and forth, so they are physically in a different area and the meetings that they have are all separated. If you see an instance, where your category team is inappropriately*

sharing data within your organization and it gets identified by the exchange partner, that's like an ethical violation…" When asked if this meant the category captain worked for the exchange partner, all participants indicated this was the case and explained "*category management works the whole aisle instead of just us. Category management or captain is paid by Company A, but you know, the buyer trusts you to look at the category as a whole and not just as Company A"*. This suggests that the supply chain partner is actively leveraging the human capital as well as the analytic capabilities of the suppliers, while restricting communication within the organization. In essence, the exchange partner is leveraging the strategic resources of a supply chain partner by coopting the resources they perceive as critical to their business.

Leveraging of strategic resources presents a unique challenge to supply chain employees. Appraising the level of leveraging that takes place within the political environment, essentially informs the supply chain employee of the level of resources necessary to maintain the account. As more strategic internal resources are leveraged, the potential negative consequences of engaging in supply chain politics increases because a supply chain partner is intertwined with internal processes formally and informally. Therefore, the supply chain employee has to continually reconsider the cascading repercussions that may occur within their own organization if their political actions fail.

Challenging

The appraising of the political environment includes an evaluation of the level of "challenging" they will receive from a supply chain partner. "Challenging" refers to the level of pressure a supply chain partner will receive to continuously improve and

innovate when compared to exchange partner expectations and competitor performance. The challenging portion of appraising places a significant amount of pressure on the supplier because as one manager explained *"they are challenging us in ways of 'how are you looking at it (the problem); whether its optimizing truck loads, or reducing your packaging footprint'"*. Furthermore a participant's perception is that a supply chain partner's "*job in their mind is to stretch the limits, push the limits, drive profitability, driver their sales…so, that's the game*". Therefore, they are constantly evaluating everything based on their desire to push the limits, so when reviewing proposals the supply chain partner makes their opinion very clear. One supply chain manager explained, "*You know who your competitors are. So you generally know your competition they (exchange partner) will come right out and say hey, Company A is better at this than you are or Company B is better at this than your Company"*.

Many of the participants acknowledge that it is difficult to serve a supply chain partner that behaves this way and indicate that *"they definitely have high expectations but if you are aligned on meeting those, there are a lot of rewards. I mean they are very large, so it means a large revenue stream"*. These expectations cause *"a heightened sense of urgency around making sure that we have all or our i-'s dotted and our t's crossed and we always have our a-game"*. This heightened sense of urgency comes from the realization that all of the other competitors have access to the same information and expectations as they do.

From a political perspective, challenging creates a heightened sense of awareness to continuously gather information to be prepared for the next challenge. More specifically, they must anticipate supply chain partner and competitor actions. Hence,

they begin to probe for additional information, as one supply chain manager explained, *"it is all about knowledge and data and using that in a way that is influential. That is where they understand it and where they kind of value your perspective and they trust it. So it's a cat and mouse game…"*

Resisting

Lastly, resisting is the supply chain employee's appraisal of the level of opposition they will receive within their own organization. Understanding the level of potential opposition within the organization is important for supply chain employees because they may need significant resources to support their supply chain objectives. A manager provided an example of when his team met opposition within the organization, *"they thought we were crazy and everybody else that wasn't on the team said 'we just don't know. We just don't do it.' And my team responded, 'Yeah, you can say that, but okay when you are finished saying that, this is what we need to do"*. Resisting within the organization may become so challenging that one participant shared that *"I always feel safer and more comfortable when I walk through the exchange partner's doors than I do the doors at my own company…my company tends to be a passive aggressive organization"*.

The level of opposition creates a unique challenge to supply chain employees because they must determine how to politically maneuver around the opposition of their supply chain objectives. Therefore, they may need to use unorthodox political strategies to further supply chain objectives within the organization. Hence for a supply chain employee that experiences a high level of resisting within their own firm, they must find different political tactics to further their objectives.

The appraising of the level of depersonalizing, leveraging, challenging and resistance within the political environment works together to inform the supply chain employee of the social dynamics they must contend with to perform their role. More specifically, the interpretation that appraising the political environment provides gives the social boundary conditions that they supply chain employee must navigate. Furthermore, the appraising process informs the supply chain political strategizing undertaken by the employee.

Supply Chain Political Strategizing

"Supply chain political strategizing" is the supply chain employee's process of determining that an opportunity exists to enact a political strategy to further supply chain objectives inside or outside of the organization. In other words, it represents a mental model of a supply chain employee's thought process on whether they can maneuver through the political landscape to achieve a specific supply chain objective. A mental model is the explanation of the cognitive process an individual has when navigating the world (Johnson-Laird 1989). Individuals can have a variety of mental models for different circumstances (Johnson-Laird). The supply chain political strategizing mental model that emerged from the data, is focused on navigating the political environment and the social dynamics within an exchange partner as well as their own organization. Furthermore, the level of political awareness that a supply chain employee possesses heavily influences supply chain political strategizing. The more politically aware a supply chain employee is, the more engaged in supply chain political strategizing they may become.

Strategizing is critical because as one participant expressed *"the reality is if you can't tie it back to what each individual values in their rewards or penalties in their day to day, it's difficult to really move the needle"*. Examples of strategizing were apparent in all of the participants' stories and responses. For example, one manager shared his philosophy was *"I will give you my recipe for the greater good in that I know in order for me to consistently get those 'ingredients' from the supply chain partner and to be able to bring the value back to my organization I've got to get everybody valuing those 'ingredients'"*. Another expressed *"I need to be able to translate the value to merchants so they fully understand each day while I'm in there scraping and fighting and clawing for every piece of food that I can that in a world where we are seen as another commodity that there is some little glimmer that we are much more than commodity"*.

"Supply chain political strategizing" is comprised of two elements: "political efficacy and supply chain political balancing". These two elements are critical for the supply chain employee to determine if they should engage in supply chain politics. Furthermore, they allow the employee to weigh the impact on a supply chain partner and their own organization if they behave politically.

Supply Chain Political Balancing

"Supply chain political balancing" is a supply chain employee strategically balancing the needs of a supply chain partner and their own organization within a highly political environment. This process is something that all participants were aware of, and admitted at times it was difficult to find the right balance between an exchange partner and their own firm. For example a supply chain manager shared *"the supply chain partner's senior merchant executive vice president that was sitting at a table, much like*

we are here today and he looked at me and said, 'Brian, I hope, I hope that you have my best interest in mind when you are going back into your company to discuss this issue.' And my immediate response to him was…and it's bazaar that this was the first words that came out of my mouth and it's like…. 'James, there are many days when I go home that I am concerned in not knowing whether I am cheating on the wife or the girlfriend!' Another participant shared that with his supply chain partner he needed to *"make sure that I haven't given too much information, but given enough to make them feel comfortable with the decision I am making"*.

The ability to balance needs was necessary even when dealing with a very influential supply chain partner. One supply chain manager shared that with a specific supply chain partner you don't feel you can tell them no, but *"they might ask for a service and you can't tell them you are going to do that service without having to consider how much it is going to cost or how it will impact other parts of the company"*.

Despite the challenges, a supply chain manager shared *"the more I clearly understand the direction and what my company values and the more that I can understand the direction the supply chain partner values, many times it will enable me to find those core values or those core things or core initiatives that on the surface, I am not certain that they would be able to ferret out on their own and that I can now start to translate and tell the story here or there that enables them to come together"*. This suggests that while you may be placed in a difficult position, striking a balance between exchange partners within a supply chain relationship is necessary for supply chain employees. From a political perspective, supply chain political balancing allows a supply chain employee to take into account the political ramifications of their actions. The

supply chain employee's attribute of political awareness guides their understanding of the political consequences of their actions.

Political Efficacy

"Political efficacy" is the supply chain employee's belief they can further supply chain objectives by acting politically. In other words, they have the ability to politically influence what is occurring within their company or inside a supply chain partner. One manager expressed that *"once you know what they are interested in, you try to drive toward those things"*. Alternatively another shared that *"I know how to play my part and I know when to advocate for something different but I also know when to just play my part, know what I mean, and take my place.*" These participants emphasized that they must be strategic when engaging in social dynamics and appreciate when a situation can be influenced.

Political efficacy allows for supply chain manager to determine if they should get involved in supply chain politics. In other words, as one participant explained *"sometimes it is just one of those things you have to know what battles to pick"*. Understanding what "battles to pick" allows supply chain managers to determine whether political action is necessary. . This understanding is heavily influenced by the innate level of political awareness that a supply chain employee has. Political efficacy and supply chain political balancing work together to support the process of supply chain political strategizing. The overall goal of supply chain political strategizing is to determine a supply chain campaigning strategy to engage in supply chain politics.

Supply Chain Political Campaigning

Supply chain political strategizing results in the supply chain employee enacting a political campaign to further supply chain objectives. This is referred to "supply chain political campaigning". "*Supply chain political campaigning" is supply chain employee's plan to use political maneuvering to socially influence their supply chain agenda inside or outside of their organization.* The data suggested that depending on what the objective is, the supply chain manager would actively campaign to further their supply chain objectives internally or externally. The strategy themes that emerged from the data indicate that supply chain managers may enact a political positioning and or political intervening strategy. Each of these behaviors may be enacted internally or externally, depending on the social dynamics and circumstances facing the supply chain employee.

Political positioning

Political positioning is *using information and influential relationships to strategically position resources and support to further supply chain related objectives.* All of the participants were aware politically aware of the political value of their relationships, performance, and resources, which they used to their advantage. For example, a manager shared that when he has a meeting he tries to consider if there is *"anything that I can do leading up to that conversation to demonstrate and validate for you within this situation or in previous situations, how I have behaved, how have I protected you, demonstrated that I had your bet interest in mind*".

Political positioning was a valuable yet subtle strategy that permeated throughout all supply chain manager interviews. The ability to recognize your worth to the

organization as well as to a supply chain partner was essential in all of their roles. An external approach to political positioning that emerged from the data is "priming". "Priming" is a supply chain employee furthering supply chain objectives by using a supply chain partner to further the supply chain employee's agenda within the supply chain partner's own organization. One participant shared that *priming* is about "*giving them information to make them look like the hero on their side of things so they can articulate, they can help you, and they can sell to their internal folks"*. This perspective was shared by other participants where one expressed she would often take the approach of *"I know you asked for this, but let me help you understand what percent of the time you are beating the market…these are the things that you need to be concerned about"*.

Alternatively, the internal a different approach was used. The approach that was used when politically positioning internally was "advising". "Advising" is a supply chain employee furthering their agenda by guiding an exchange partner's interaction with the supply chain employee's organization by sharing internal information with the exchange partner. A supply chain manager explained that she would use her relationship with the exchange partner to further her objectives by enlisting them to help reduce the resisting behavior *"I'll say 'hey, this is something you might want to ask about during our upcoming meeting. This is a great example of something those people can take action on that they probably need to hear from you"*. When asked to explain this approach she expressed *"not only am I selling to my exchange partner, I am selling internally too and sometimes I use my exchange partner to help me sell internally"*.

A political positioning strategy allowed for supply chain managers to be proactive when dealing with their counterparts within the organization and supply chain partner. It

provides the opportunity to utilize critical information and knowledge that they have gained through their interactions inside and outside of the company to further their supply chain objectives. Comparatively a political intervening strategy provides a different but complementary approach to dealing engaging in supply chain politics.

Political intervening

Political intervening strategy *protects the supply chain relationship from issues or people who may cause harm or disrupt access to a supply chain partner's resources.* Supply chain employees who utilize a political intervening strategy understand there are circumstances or individuals inside and outside of their organization who may cause harm to the supply chain relationship. One participant explained, *"You have to defuse the emotion. Even if you know you're there could be some things that are unpleasant for you, but you have to be able to take that"*. Therefore the supply chain employee actively tries to protect the supply chain relationship between their organization and their supply chain partner by defusing issues as soon as possible to avoid complications within the relationship.

From an interorganizational protection perspective, a "shielding" strategy emerged from the data. "Shielding" is when the supply chain employee intentionally obstructs access to a supply chain partner to protect supply chain objectives. A supply chain manager shared that when managing the interorganizational exchange relationship they believed employees in their own organization *"have to come through us because we cannot allow, we cannot afford for anyone outside that does not know protocol basically,*

unspoken protocol, I mean you just can't let anybody come in and start talking to those key people and representing your company because it could mess up the relationship".

Additionally, a "separating" approach became apparent when supply chain employees engaged a supply chain partner. "Separating" is the supply chain employees attempt to distinguish themselves from the performance failures of their own organization to salvage the supply chain relationship. A supply chain manager shared that there are times when he must separate himself from his organization and protect his working relationship with an exchange partner because of poor performance. Therefore, he makes sure the supply chain partner *"has a strong understanding of what I can impact and so I would say as our relationship evolved, even though he would get upset he understood that I didn't own those things and so…he really does understand what decisions I can make and knows what is beyond my control".*

Alternatively, several participants recognized the need to intervene in the supply chain relationship to protect their own company. Participants would take a "submissive" approach so they could guide their internal operation by obtaining and sharing insights they have gained through difficult interactions. For example a supply chain manager shared that during difficult encounters with a supply chain partner, *"Well I was really just trying to gather more information on what you are really trying to get at, so that when its time to respond we will be ready. So by the time she calls my boss and vents to him, he will have three or four things to say, and tell her to 'wait'. He'll have some things to say to kind of throw her off balance".* This political intervening strategy is to prepare the internal organization for interactions with a supply chain partner, so they do not create larger issues down the road.

Discussion

The findings of this study make several contributions to the supply chain management and organizational politics literature. First, the concept of supply chain politics is introduced and expands organizational politics into the social dynamics and interactions of interorganizational exchange relationships. More specifically, this study provides thick description of how supply chain objectives are pursued by navigating the sociopolitical environment within interorganizational exchange relationships, which was proposed by the Political Economy Paradigm (PEP).

According to PEP, firms are both economic and social systems, which operate in a political economy that must be navigated (Stern and Reve 1980). The political economy consists of social structures and processes, which are the patterns of power-dependence relationships as well as the primary sentiments and behaviors that exist among interactions between channel members respectively (Stern and Reve 1980). While PEP describes and proposes a social system, it does not explain navigation or impact on intraorganizational relationships.

This research makes the connection from the political economy to intra-firm dynamics by exploring the supply chain political strategizing and political campaigning strategies employees undertake when engaging in supply chain politics. Furthermore, this research shows that exchange partners as well as supporting functional areas may be considered constituencies that are to be served and managed through a political process inside and outside of the organization. This finding is consistent with constituency-based theory, which proposes that a political process occurs within organizations, which includes maximizing resource exchange, constituency management and firm performance

(Anderson 1982). Supply chain politics provides a connection between both of these theoretical perspectives, where PEP provides the landscape, which the firm exists within and constituency-theory explains the navigation of the political economy.

Next, prior supply chain management research has suggested that supply chain employees should be politically empowered (Stank et al. 2001). This study provides a rich description on how political empowerment may be dependent upon a supply chain employee's level of political awareness. Political awareness indicates a level of understanding of the social dynamics and political economy that is critical for successful supply chain employees. Furthermore, it informs and guides the supply chain politics process. A politically aware employee is able to engage in supply chain political strategizing and political campaigning. The more politically astute the supply chain employee is, the more they are able to enact strategies that control the perspectives of supply chain partners and intraorganizational co-workers. These strategies may be considered impression management strategies. Impression management is the attempt to influence the impressions and or perceptions and of other people (Bolino 1999). By influencing the impressions of others, individuals are able to present a desirable message to the target of impression management. The impression management literature has primarily been focused inside of the firm; this research provides a contribution by indicating that impression management extends beyond organizational boundaries.

Last, this research was able to display positive motivations and outcomes of political actions. The research participants were politically active at varying degrees and multiple parties benefitted from this behavior. A majority of the management literature is explored from the perspective of those who are negatively impacted by organizational

politics, however this research shows that politically savvy individuals acknowledge they are engaged in organizational politics and use it to help others as well as themselves. Furthermore, from the perspective of many participants it was more of a risk not to be politically inactive. In other words, your performance and supply chain relationship may be diminished if you were not politically active and savvy. Therefore, you must be politically competent to successfully manage supply chain relationships and participate in firm supply chain management. This is contrary to prior findings within management literature that suggests being politically active is perceived to be negative but necessary. In the interorganizational context, engaging in supply chain politics was not seen as negative at all, rather it was seen as a must for those who wanted to be successful in their roles.

Management Implications

There are several management implications to this research. Organizations should ensure that those responsible for critical supply chain relationships are politically savvy. These employees must interpret how to navigate the political environment and understand the potential political impact of their actions. Furthermore organizations may want to develop training or mentoring process to nurture political awareness within their supply chain employees. Many of the participants indicated that they learned through experience and actively share their knowledge with friends and co-workers. Therefore there is an opportunity for firms to explore training options for supply chain employees.

Finally, firms should understand the motives of politically active supply chain employees. These politically savvy individuals have a great deal of informal power and may use it for opportunistic objectives. In other words, organizations need to ensure that

politically active supply chain employees are using their political actions for the benefit of the organization and the supply chain relationship rather than their own personal agenda. If the savvy supply chain manager is opportunistic, the organization may not reap the benefit of supply chain political campaigning strategies that are put in place by the employee.

Limitations and Future Research

It is important to note that this research focuses on the retail industry. Therefore it may not be generalizable to different industrial settings. Future research should explore supply chain politics in different industrial contexts if there are industry differences. Moreover, there may be additional elements of appraising the political environment and supply chain political campaigning strategies within other interorganizational exchange contexts.

While this research relied heavily on interviews to understand supply chain politics, there is an opportunity to further explore the supply chain political strategizing mental model of supply chain employees. The investigation of supply chain employee thought processes when dealing with complex social situations in exchange relationships would be beneficial by providing insight into how supply chain employees perform their job responsibilities. Last, participants expressed that they worked and lived within a vendor community. The vendor community consists of the supply chain employees of a variety of consumer products companies an their families. Some of these employees work for competitors as well as suppliers. There is an opportunity to explore the meaning of a vendor community and it influences supply chain employees.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Contributions and Future Research

This dissertation makes several contributions and provides opportunities for future research within the organizational politics and supply chain management literature. The findings of the three articles illustrate the complex impact of organizational politics on firm supply chain performance, processes and relationships. First, the findings suggest the impact of organizational politics is far more intricate and nuanced than initially thought. More specifically, in article one while organizational politics is shown to have a negative relationship with cross-functional integration, additional findings in article two indicate there may be levels of organizational politics that are beneficial for firm supply chain performance overall and potentially motivate improved performance. Perhaps the prior perspective that the impact of organizational politics on firm activities and performance is primarily negative is too limiting. In other words, while organizational politics may reduce cross-functional integration between departments, the improved firm supply chain performance benefits may outweigh the lack of integration at certain levels of organizational politics. Firms may tolerate a lack of cross-functional integration to realize benefits in firm supply chain performance.

Another contribution of this work is the article one finding that political skill is an important characteristic for top supply chain executives. Top supply chain executives who are politically skilled are able to effectively navigate the politics and social dynamics that exist within the organization. This ability may allow them to mitigate the negative impact of organizational politics on firm supply chain management dynamics and processes. Furthermore, these findings also suggest that if cross-functional

integration within the organization is suffering, the introduction of a politically skilled top supply chain executive may bolster cross-functional integration through an increase in the level of supply chain orientation within the organization. The executive may act as an advocate for supply chain management within the organization and increase the acceptance of supply chain orientation within other departments, allowing for the benefits of supply chain orientation (i.e. cross-functional integration, resource allocation) to be achieved.

The next contribution is the article three finding that supply chain employees are politically aware and actively engage in supply chain politics to further a supply chain agenda. Political awareness allows for supply chain employees to understand social dynamics that exist inside and outside of the organization. The knowledge gained from being politically aware allows for supply chain employees to protect or enhance supply chain objectives inside and outside of the firm by acting politically. Furthermore, these political actions are often very complex and multifaceted where supply chain employees are exhibiting premeditated behaviors targeted towards supply chain partners and/or internal coworkers. The findings of this research suggest that these political actions are critical to the success of supply chain employees. Participants shared "*that if you were not politically aware, you may not be able to succeed in your role."*

The final contribution of this work is the indication that supply chain orientation's impact on firm supply chain performance is more nuanced and complex than previously suggested. Article two is the first study to link supply chain orientation to financial firm supply chain performance measures. The findings of this study suggest supply chain orientation may have a negative impact on financial firm supply chain performance.

Prior research has used perceptual measures to explore the performance implications of supply chain orientation and found a positive relationship. This research suggests there may be a difference between perceived and financial firm supply chain performance when taking supply chain orientation into account. In addition, the financial measures utilized were efficiency focused performance metrics; perhaps supply chain orientation primarily influences effectiveness-focused metrics that are more readily captured by perceptual measures.

In addition to further exploration of the impact of supply chain orientation, there are other future research opportunities presented by this work. First, researchers have suggested that exploring organizational politics through a linear viewpoint may be too limiting and not provide a comprehensive understanding of the positive and negative impact (Hochwarter et al. 2010; Hochwarter et al. 2012). This perspective is generating additional studies exploring potential curvilinear relationships between organizational politics and constructs of interest. The emerging debate has focused on an activation theory perspective. Activation theory proposes an inverted-U relationship between organizational politics and organizational phenomena. The findings of article two suggest that a u-shaped curve exists between organizational politics and firm supply chain performance. Future research should further explore a potential non-linear relationship between organizational politics and financial firm supply chain performance metrics.

Additionally, this research attempts to show a relationship between organizational politics and firm supply chain performance at a single point in time. Future research should explore the longitudinal impact of organizational politics on firm supply chain

performance. Generally speaking, research has a negative perspective when investigating the impact of organizational politics; longitudinal research would provide an opportunity to fully understand the long-term effects of organizational politics from a performance standpoint potentially allowing for positive implications to become apparent. Furthermore longitudinal investigation would allow for an evaluation of changes in performance measures and potentially provide researchers with a direct effect from organizational politics.

Next, this research was primarily focused in the consumer products goods retail industry. However, different industrial settings may have varying levels of politics as well as require distinct political strategies when maneuvering social dynamics. Additional research should be conducted to determine if organizational politics and supply chain politics has the same impact within other industrial settings. Exploring other industrial settings will allow for a comparison of political levels and social maneuvering tactics between industries.

Another research opportunity is to further investigate supply chain political strategizing and supply chain political campaigning through understanding the cognitive processes of those employees who engage in supply chain political activity. More specifically, understanding varying levels of political will and political efficacy and the impact on the political strategies and tactics used by supply chain employees. Exploring the cognitive processes will provide further insight into the attributes of supply chain employees who are able to effectively navigate the social dynamics inside and outside of the firm. Understanding how to increase the political effectiveness of supply chain employees may allow firms to have more success furthering supply chain objectives.

Exploring the political effectiveness of supply chain employees may also include further investigation of top supply chain executive political skill. The measure used within this research is based solely on the observation of participants, and they may be limited in their ability to fully capture the cognitive elements of political skill. Furthermore, the top supply chain executive was not asked to perform a self-report of political skill. In the future, it would be beneficial to measure the difference between how executives view themselves in comparison to what employees within the organization believe.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions

- How important are social dynamics in supply chain relationships?
- How important are social dynamics inside of your own organization?
- From what you have seen in the industry, how does the supply chain partner's motivations impact a supply chain relationship?
- How do you navigate the social dynamics within your own organization?
- How do you navigate the social dynamics when dealing with supply chain partners?

Probes

- Why is that important?
- What was the response or reaction to that?
- How was the relationship impacted?
- Please go on.
- What did that mean to the parties involved?
- Can you tell me a little more about that?

Probes

Remember to constantly probe for details using non-verbal active listening cues as well as words like "tell me more about that," "what did that mean to you?" and "please go on."

VITA

LaDonna Thornton is originally from Ohio and attended The Ohio State University. She obtained a bachelors of science in Operations Management, Transportation and Logistics and Purchasing. Following graduation, LaDonna worked for several years in distribution and transportation for a medical supply company. After many years in industry, LaDonna pursued a MBA from Vanderbilt University and ultimately a PhD from the University of Tennessee Knoxville.