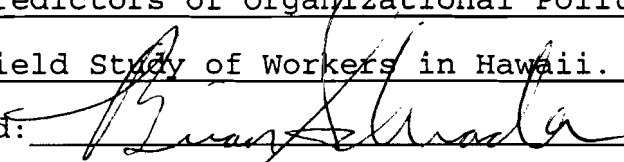


AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Sherman Aclaracion Lee for the Master of Science  
in Psychology presented on November 16, 1998

Title: Machiavellianism, Self-monitoring, and Negative  
Affectivity as Predictors of Organizational Politics  
Perceptions: A Field Study of Workers in Hawaii.

Abstract approved: 

Ferris, Russ, and Fandt's (1989) model of organizational politics perceptions presents predictors, outcomes, and moderators. Although most parts of this model have been tested and verified, there are parts that have yet to be substantiated. In this field study, three specific personality variables were tested: Machiavellianism, self-monitoring, and negative affectivity. Machiavellianism and self-monitoring are two traits that were originally proposed by the Ferris et al. (1989) model to predict perceptions of organizational politics; however, empirical research has yet to verify these relationships. Although negative affectivity was not proposed as a predictor in the Ferris et al. (1989) model, its characteristics warranted further investigation.

It was hypothesized that those individuals who are high in Machiavellianism and negative affectivity would perceive more organizational politics than those who are low in them. However, self-monitoring was

hypothesized to not show any differences between high versus low groups on perceptions of organizational politics. Participants were categorized into high and low groups based on a median split.

The data were collected in Honolulu, HI from five different organizations. Seventy-nine participants completed a demographic questionnaire, a perceptions of organizational politics scale, a Machiavellianism scale (MACH IV), a self-monitoring scale, and a subscale (i.e., negative affect schedule) of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scales. A t-test for independent samples was the statistical technique used to determine whether the high trait participants scored significantly higher than the low trait participants on perceptions of organizational politics. Machiavellianism (Machs) was the only trait found to predict organizational politics. Specifically, high Machs perceived significantly higher levels of organizational politics perceptions compared to low Machs. No significant differences were found between the high versus the low groups of self-monitoring and negative affectivity on perceptions of organizational politics.

MACHIAVELLIANISM, SELF-MONITORING, AND NEGATIVE  
AFFECTIVITY AS PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS  
PERCEPTIONS: A FIELD STUDY OF WORKERS IN HAWAII

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Division of Psychology and Special Education

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

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by

Sherman Aclaracion Lee

December 1998

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1998  
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Approved for the Division of  
Psychology and Special Education



Approved for the Graduate Council

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The topic of organizational politics had been virtually ignored by organizational behavior researchers until Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989) proposed their model of perceptions of organizational politics. Since then, there has been a vast and systematic inquiry into the factors that make up their model (e.g., Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, Zhou, & Gilmore, 1996; Ferris, Frink, Galang, Zhou, Kacmar, & Howard, 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Gilmore, Ferris, Dulebohn, & Harrell-Cook, 1996). Many of these studies have examined, and for the most part substantiated, the proposed determinants, outcomes, and moderators, which collectively compose the Ferris et al. (1989) model of organizational politics perceptions. However, parts of the model have yet to be supported by empirical findings. Specifically, two personality traits, self-monitoring and Machiavellianism, were proposed (Ferris et al., 1989) but never validated as actual predictors of the model. After almost a decade, no study validates their inclusion into the model (G.R. Ferris, personal communication, April 19, 1998). In addition, no research has investigated other personality traits as possible predictors of organizational politics perceptions. Therefore, the exploration of other personality traits like negative affectivity is warranted.

The introduction of this paper will first discuss perceptions of organizational politics. In this section,

definitions, conceptualizations, and background research on this construct are reviewed. Second, the entire model of perceptions of organizational politics proposed by Ferris et al. (1989) is reviewed. This review includes a discussion of the various parts that make up the predictors, outcomes, and moderators of the model. Even though the focus of this study is on three personality variables (i.e., Machiavellianism, self-monitoring, and negative affectivity), a review of the whole model puts this study into context. Finally, a detailed discussion on each of the three personality traits is provided.

#### Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Because organizations are run by human beings, they are inherently political. Just as individuals are unique, so too are the different forms of politics (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996). Organizational politics explain a lot about what happens in and to an organization (Ferris, Frink, & Galang, 1993). For example, work-related attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction) and behaviors (e.g., favorable treatment) are believed to be considerably affected by organizational politics (Zhou & Ferris, 1995). There is a consensus among organizational behavior researchers that the study of organizational politics is essential to understanding organizations in general (Drory, 1993; Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995). Although this construct has been extensively researched over the last decade, there have been many different ideas as to what

organizational politics actually consist of (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). For example, power and politics are closely related topics but are believed to be empirically and conceptually different (Wilson, 1995). Drory (1993) proposed that organizational politics pertain to particular characteristics of organizational events and processes that mostly relate to the decision-making domain, and that the perceptions of these events could be regarded as a facet of the perceived climate. Organizational politics is often seen as promoting the interests of certain groups and individuals regardless of moral considerations. In addition, these types of politics are not collective organizational goals (Drory, 1993). Parker et al. (1995) consider the perceptions of politics to be a central dimension that individuals use to rationalize organizational behavior.

Despite the many different conceptualizations, an occurring theme seems to suggest that organizational politics is made up of self-serving behavior that is not endorsed by the organization (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. 1996). For the purposes of this study, organizational politics will be defined in the same manner Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) has done in past research. Organizational politics is characterized as "behavior not formally sanctioned by the organization, which produces conflict and disharmony in the work environment by pitting individuals and/or groups against one another, or against

the organization" (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996, p. 233). Politics in organizations is thought to come from the behavior of co-workers, supervisors, and from organizational practices and policies (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). Political behavior is also said to emerge anytime there is a competition for resources (Kacmar & Ferris, 1993).

Organizational politics is also conceptualized as having a set of informal rules and language which privileged groups obtain and pass on. It is the selective transmission of this privileged information that explains how politics is learned. This selective dispersion of information creates a dichotomy in the organization between two groups: the "insiders" and the "outsiders" (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996). White males are typically the majority, and therefore tend to be the insiders (Ferris et al., 1993; Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996). Women and minorities, on the other hand, are usually considered to be the outsiders. However, research investigating women's perceptions of organizational politics have been mixed (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996). Drory and Beaty (1991) suggested that sex is an important variable affecting attitudes toward organizational politics. Thus, further research in this area is needed.

Ferris et al. (1993) suggested that because the outsiders are closed out of the political network, the insiders are able to maintain homogeneity, thus keeping it

a "White man's" game. Interestingly enough, in a study conducted by Parker et al. (1995), the only personal variable that predicted perceptions of politics was race. Specifically, the minorities in a sample of 1641 employees of a government organization perceived politics significantly more than the non-minorities (Parker et al., 1995), but the minorities were classified as any race other than White. Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al. (1996) found that understanding did not significantly moderate the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and outcomes such as job satisfaction and job anxiety with minorities. However, understanding moderated this relationship for White males. The term "understanding" in this context refers to the extent to which individuals understand the nature of politics played out in their particular organization. The implications of this study were that racial/ethnic minorities suffer from a deficiency in political skills, and therefore are at a significant disadvantage (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996).

The rather common but negative perspective of organizational politics is characterized by self-serving behavior and manipulation. The negative effects of politics include such outcomes as poor job performance, employee withdrawal, and negative attitude (Gilmore et al., 1996). Gilmore et al. (1996) found that low tenure employees who perceived their workplace as more political had lower attendance than those who perceived their

workplace as less political. Zhou and Ferris (1995) suggested that the employees in their study seemed to dislike other coworkers who received favorable treatment as a result of exhibiting political type behaviors. Consequently, politics is also identified as a potential source of stress for many employees (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Gilmore et al., 1996).

Because of the subjective nature of organizational politics, the perceptions of this phenomenon will be studied. This rationale is based on the fact that people behave based on their perceptions of reality, not reality per se (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). Various studies on organizational politics demonstrate that this perspective is the general approach (e.g., Drory, 1993; Drory & Beaty, 1991; Parker et al., 1995). For example, Gilmore et al. (1996) stated that because organizations do not sanction political behavior, the reasonable approach to measure this variable is through the perceptions of organizational members. Past studies on person perception indicate that individuals tend to infer a general trait from another person's behavior (Wayne, Liden, Graf, & Ferris, 1997) and then act based on that perception. In support of this view, Valle (1997) found that increases in perceptions of organizational politics were associated with increases in the frequency and type of subsequent political behaviors. Interest in the subjective experiences and cognitive evaluations of organizational politics has been



the guiding method in this area of research (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Thus, the present study adheres to these underlying assumptions.

#### Model of Organizational Politics Perceptions

Due to a lack of theory development in this area, Ferris et al. (1989) proposed a model of organizational politics perceptions. In fact, Ferris and associates have been the primary testers of this model (e.g., Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996; Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Gilmore et al., 1996). This model (see Figure 1) examines the predictors, outcomes, moderators, and mediation that compose this conceptualization. Predictors of organizational politics include personal influences, organizational influences, and job/work environmental influences. Moderators of organizational politics include understanding and control. Consequences of organizational politics include organizational withdrawal, job involvement, job anxiety, and job satisfaction.

There have been many efforts to test parts of this model (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). For example, Parker et al. (1995) examined the antecedents and consequences of perceived organizational politics and found some support for parts of the proposed model. Specifically, Parker et al. found support for such predictors as job/work environment influences and personal influences. However, they found no support for such

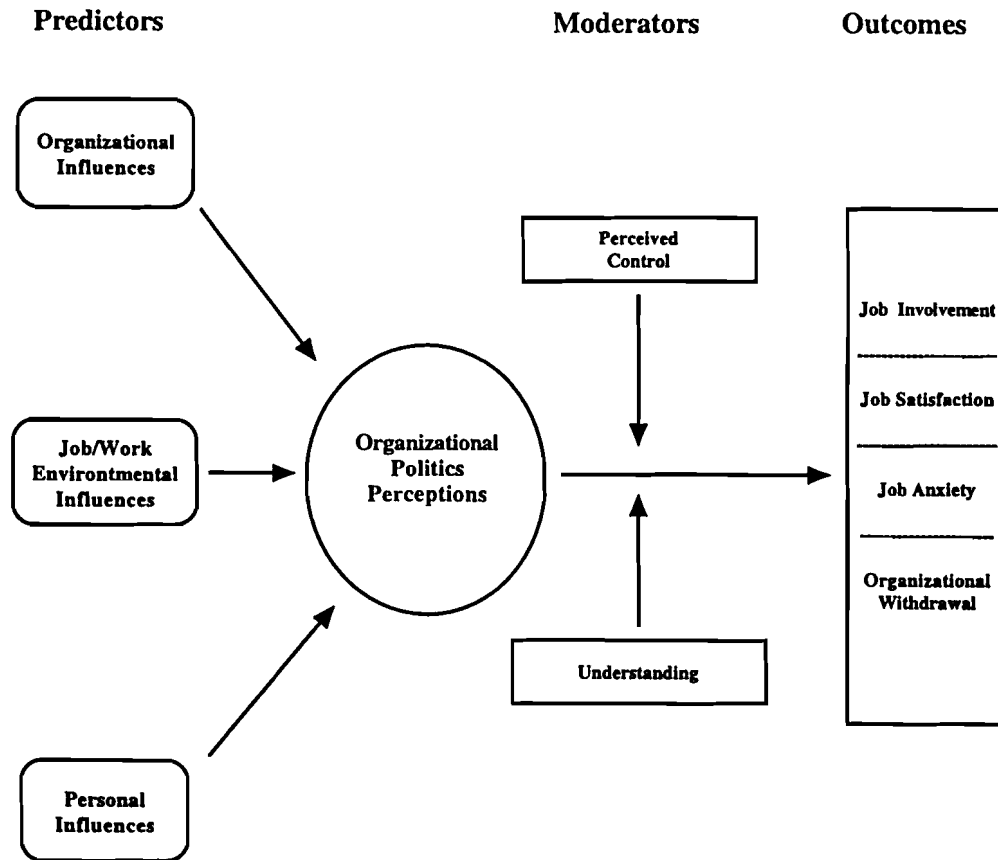


Figure 1. The Ferris et al. (1989) model of organizational politics perceptions

outcomes as overall job satisfaction. The Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) study provided strong evidence for control and understanding as actual moderators in the model of organizational politics perceptions. Although the Ferris et al. (1989) model implies causality in a directional manner, the organizational politics research supporting this conceptualization is correlational in nature, and therefore does not allow for causal inferences (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996).

### Predictors of Organizational Politics

Organizational influences. The first category of predictors are organizational influences. They consist of four variables: centralization, formalization, hierarchical level, and span of control (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

Centralization refers to the power distribution in organizations (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). According to Ferris and Kacmar (1992) a high degree of centralization means that power and control are concentrated at the top; consequently, there is less direct control in the lower levels. Ferris and Kacmar's proposal suggests that the lower levels have greater potential for the emergence of politics. Past research indicates that political behavior increases as centralization increases (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). One interpretation of this finding is that those in a position of authority have greater demands on their time and attention; hence, it is more

adaptive for lower-level employees to use political behavior in order to obtain some of that time and attention (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996).

Formalization refers to the degree of rules, procedures, instructions, and communications that are written for an organization (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). When there is a high degree of uncertainty and ambiguity (i.e., low formalization), political behaviors are most likely to occur (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Kacmar and Ferris (1993) believe that organizations make it easier for employees to engage in political activity by providing limited rules and policies. In support of this hypothesis, Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) found an inverse relationship between formalization and perceptions of organizational politics. Parker et al. (1995), however, reported mixed results. They found that formal communications were unrelated to perceptions of politics. Further research is warranted to establish whether an inverse relationship does exist between perceptions of organizational politics and formalization.

Hierarchical level refers to where within an organization's chain of command an individual's position lies. The highest level consists of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the lowest level in the hierarchy are usually the line employees. The relationship between hierarchical level and perceptions of organizational politics have been mixed. Some research (see Ferris et

al., 1989) report that more political behavior is exhibited at the upper organizational levels, whereas other research (see Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992) report just the opposite. Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) found that employees at lower levels in an organization are more likely to view their working environments as more political than those employees in upper levels. There is also a possibility that a curvilinear relationship exists (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). A curvilinear relationship would suggest that the lowest and the highest level employees within an organization's hierarchy would perceive their workplace as less political than those employees who are in the middle of the hierarchy (i.e., mid-level managers). The characteristics of mid-level employees in comparison with low and high level employees need to be examined to explain why a curvilinear relationship may exist.

Span of control refers to the number of employees that report directly to a supervisor. Ferris and Kacmar (1992) predicted and found that as the span of control increases, the amount of individual attention a supervisor gives decreases. Consequently, lack of individual attention from the supervisor creates more ambiguity and uncertainty in the workplace environment, which breed higher perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

"Ambiguous circumstances allow individuals to define a situation to fit their own needs and desires" (Kacmar &

Ferris, 1993, p. 71). Thus, self-serving behaviors are often described as "political behaviors."

Job/work variables. Job/work environmental influences are the second category of predictors and consist of seven variables: job autonomy, job variety, feedback, advancement opportunities, interaction with others, amount of time since last promotion, and amount of time since last performance appraisal (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Because job autonomy, job variety, and feedback were researched in one study by Ferris and Kacmar (1992) they will be discussed together.

Similar to formalization, job variety, job autonomy, and feedback were predicted and found to be negatively related to perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Ferris and Kacmar (1992) suggested that these predictors function as a way to reduce uncertainty in the work environment.

Because advancement opportunity is considered a valuable but scarce source, perceptions of organizational politics should be high. Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) supported this prediction by finding that lower perceived advancement opportunity lead to higher levels of organizational politics perceptions. One explanation for this outcome is that when mobility paths are not perceived as consistent, individuals attribute successful mobility to politics (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996).

The factor, interaction with others, is concerned with how coworkers or supervisors (or both) opportunistically act toward employees. For example, if an employee reports that their coworkers frequently try to manipulate them in order to fulfill their own agendas then "interaction with others" would be high. Dimensions within this category consist of supervisor behavior and coworker behavior. Ferris and Kacmar (1992) proposed and found that interactions with others are positively related to perceptions of organizational politics.

Time since last promotion and time since last performance appraisal were proposed by Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) to be additional job/work environmental variables to add to the pre-existing model. Although Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. hypothesized that a positive relationship would exist between these variables and perceptions of organizational politics, these relationships were not found. Hence, further research is needed to determine whether these variables work within the framework of the proposed model.

Personal influences. The final category of predictors are personal influences. Personal influences consist of five variables: sex, age, organizational tenure, Machiavellianism, and self-monitoring (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

Past research with sex as a predictor has yielded mixed results (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). Two

positions are posited for the relation of sex and perception of organizational politics issue. The first view, proposed by Ferris et al. (1989), suggests that women are more likely to perceive their working environments as being more political than men because they usually are in a position of inferiority. Ferris et al. believe that because women have traditionally held lower positions within organizations they were more predisposed to experience decisions that were based on politics, and as a result they would be more sensitive to seeing such behavior than their counterparts (i.e., men) would. The second position suggests that men perceive organizational politics more than women because men tend to be more involved in the political process (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) found that men perceived more politics than women, which supports the second position. However, Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al. (1996) surveyed females and their perceptions of organizational politics and found mixed results. Because findings seem to be mixed, any conclusions on the issue of sex and perceptions of organizational politics remain speculative (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996).

The inconsistent findings of past research (see Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996) has also been experienced with age as a predictor of organizational politics perceptions. However, with respect to tenure as a predictor of organizational politics, Ferris, Frink,



Galang, et al. (1996) found that organizational tenure status reached significance in an inverse direction. For example, an employee working for 20 years would have less perceptions of organizational politics than a coworker who worked for only ten years. Because age is positively correlated with tenure (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996), and only tenure was found to be related with perceptions of organizational politics, future research is needed to clarify these relations.

Machiavellianism and self-monitoring are personality characteristics that are proposed to be predictors of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Self-monitoring is a psychological trait that is characterized by the extent to which individuals regulate their self-presentation by deliberately altering their behaviors to fit with their immediate situations (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). Like actors, high self-monitors like to emphasize their public selves (Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997). High self-monitoring individuals are not only sensitive to social cues, they also have the ability to control their actions to display a desired identity (Ferris et al., 1989). Because those individuals who are high in self-monitoring tend to be better environmental scanners than those individuals who are low in self-monitoring, it was proposed that they will perceive more politics because they are sensitive to the various behaviors in the environment. Although self-monitoring was proposed to be a

predictor of organizational politics perceptions, Ferris and Kacmar (1992) did not find significant support for this aspect of their model.

The "do anything to succeed" personality characteristic (i.e., Machiavellianism) is likely to increase the chances one will engage in political behavior (Kacmar & Ferris, 1993). Ferris and Kacmar (1992) theorized that those who both score high in Machiavellianism and high in self-monitoring should score high in perceptions of organizational politics. Although the name Machavellianism has acquired a negative connotation, Rawwas, Patzer, and Klassen (1995) believe that equating this label with dishonesty and deceitfulness is inappropriate. More appropriately they stated that "Machiavellian persons possess a kind of cool detachment that makes them less emotionally involved with others or with saving face in potentially embarrassing situations" (Rawwas et al., 1995, p. 67). This view of Machiavellianism is not shared by all researchers (e.g., Shepperd & Socherman, 1997).

#### Consequences of Organizational Politics

Ferris and Kacmar (1992) suggested that several potential outcomes may occur when individuals perceive organizational politics. These outcomes include: organizational withdrawal, job involvement, job anxiety, and job satisfaction (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

One potential response to organizational politics is withdrawal (i.e., absenteeism or turnover) (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Consistent with behavior theory, stimuli that elicit negative emotional responses in people will in turn tend to elicit avoidance behaviors in them (Staats, 1996). In other words, individuals who perceive politics as negative and/or having a negative impact on them will resort to certain behaviors (e.g., absenteeism or leaving the job) to avoid those aversive situations. In some instances, physical avoidance of the political environment is not an option. Hence, individuals may resort to alternative behaviors.

Although leaving the organization may be the best option for one to avoid political games, some employees experience practical constraints (e.g., child support and/or medical bills to pay) and/or other features within the organization that prohibit them from leaving (e.g., insurance coverage) (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). For those employees who elect to remain, two outcomes may result.

First, the individual might choose to become politically involved. If this behavior occurs, both job satisfaction and job anxiety may be influenced. In support of these proposed outcomes, Ferris and Kacmar (1992) found that job involvement and job satisfaction were influenced by perceptions of organizational politics. When an individual is engaged in political activity increase job anxiety may result due to one's perceptions of a political

environment (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) characterized organizational politics as a source of work-related stress, and consequently, job anxiety becomes one of its outcomes. A positive relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and job anxiety supported this prediction. In addition, past research has found an inverse relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and job satisfaction (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996).

Second, as an alternative to joining the political game, individuals may simply choose to ignore the perceived political environment by immersing themselves into their work (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). This type of behavior can be seen as another form of avoidance in that preoccupation with one's work load may serve to block out environmental stimuli.

Although negative reactions seem to relate to organizational politics, some individuals may not see it that way. In fact, some people may simply enjoy organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1989) and thus are not affected in these ways.

#### Moderators

Although the connections between the perceptions of organizational politics and their outcomes have been established (see Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Gilmore et al., 1996), the relations are moderated by other variables. Within the model of

organizational politics perceptions, Ferris et al. (1989) proposed that the reactions of individuals to their perceptions of organizational politics may be moderated by their level of understanding and their degree of control over their situations.

Understanding is the knowledge of why and how things happen within the workplace; it is associated with time and experience within that context. Socialization is argued to be one of the ways individuals understand their political climate and it is also an important variable for newcomers in their career development (Gilmore et al., 1996). Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al. (1996) examined the reactions of diverse groups to politics and found that members of the "out-groups" (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities) lacked political skills as a result of not being taught by those who possess political know-how. Because the out-groups were deficient in political skills, understanding did not moderate their reactions to their perceptions of organizational politics. However, with the "in-groups," understanding moderated their reactions to their perceptions of politics (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996). In other words, if a member from an in-group (e.g., a White male) perceived a high level of politics for his workplace but understood how and why organizational politics occurs, then job satisfaction will not be affected. However, if a member from an in-group (e.g., a White male) perceived a high level of politics for his

workplace but did not understand how and why organizational politics occurs, then job satisfaction will be affected in a negative direction (i.e., low-level of job satisfaction). Understanding moderates only job satisfaction with supervision and anxiety and not general job satisfaction. "Understanding of the causal nature of environmental conditions may help lessen negative outcomes for individuals to some extent by reducing ambiguity, and thus anxiety, but still leave workers feeling helpless or victimized, and therefore still potentially anxious and dissatisfied" (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996, p. 247).

Research on work stress found control to be a moderator between stressor (antecedent) and strain (consequent) (Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). Kacmar and Ferris (1993) examined unsolicited responses from participants surveyed in a study on organizational politics and found that many negative stories they received were from individuals who felt helpless about their situations. Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) found that control was a significant moderator between perceptions of politics and their outcomes. Specifically, they found that individuals who perceived a high degree of control over their environments, reported less negative effects on job anxiety and job satisfaction. Although control and understanding are closely related concepts, Ferris et al. (1989) treat these two concepts separately.

### Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring involves a keen sensitivity to social cues and an ability to modify one's behavior accordingly (Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997). In other words, self-monitoring is the extent to which an individual relies on situational cues rather than personal cues when behaving in a social context (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1985). On the basis of self-monitoring theory, individual differences can be found in people to the extent to which they monitor their overt social behaviors and self-presentation (Snyder, 1974).

According to Snyder (1987), people who score high on a self-monitoring scale, otherwise known as high self-monitors are constantly assessing the environment in order to control their impressions in social situations. Because high self-monitors are driven to constantly create favorable impressions in order to remain in good terms with others, they usually emerge as leaders within groups (Kolb, 1998). In the working world, high self-monitors are more likely to change employers, achieve cross-country promotions, and relocate, than their counterparts (Kilduff & Day, 1994). In addition, Morrison (1997) believes that high self-monitors have a predisposition to try to control their environments because he found self-monitoring to be positively correlated with Type A scores. Morrison also

found that high self-monitors tended to be outgoing and friendly.

In contrast, Snyder (1987) views low self-monitors as persons who typically express their true thoughts and emotions. As a result, low self-monitors are "relatively insensitive to social cues and tend to maintain a consistent self-presentation across situations" (Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997, p. 31). In the working world, low self-monitors obtain fewer internal promotions than high self-monitors. The rigidity that low self-monitors seem to display often results in a high attachment to current employers and friends, which could explain why career mobility is higher and faster with high self-monitors (Kilduff & Day, 1994). Moreover, low self-monitors may be more introverted as opposed to extroverted (Bryan, Dodson, & Cullari, 1997), which adds further support to why high self-monitors change employers more often than low self-monitors.

#### Machiavellianism

"Machiavellianism" has become synonymous with deceit, guile, and manipulation (Shepperd & Socherman, 1997). Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), a Florentine diplomat, wrote The Prince, a book which describes how to acquire and maintain power (Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996). In this book he proposed that leaders should use deceit, exploitation, and cruelty to maintain power (Shepperd & Socherman, 1997). Hence, Machiavellianism can be described



as a personality trait that involves social behaviors such as deception, manipulation, and exploitation of others to further one's own self interests (Pinto & Kanekar, 1990).

Christie and Geis (1970) were the first psychologists to study Machiavellianism as a personality disposition, and they constructed a series of tests that measured participants' agreement with various statements that were related to this trait. These tests are known as the MACH tests. Since the construction of these tests, there are now well over 300 references that can be found in the psychological literature dealing with Machiavellianism (Wilson et al., 1996).

Past research has found that high Machs (i.e., those who score high on a MACH scale) differ from low Machs (i.e., those who score low) in many dimensions of behavior (Wilson et al., 1996). For example, high Machs tend to have a greater repertoire of manipulative behaviors, display more persuasive behaviors in bargaining, have more job role conflict and job role ambiguity than low Machs (Hollon, 1996; Shepperd & Socherman, 1997).

Although the efficacy of the MACH tests has been well established, the major criticism seems to be a tendency within the scale towards a response bias of social desirability (Hofer & Silver, 1998). However, Hofer and Silver (1998) found that high Machs tended to score lower on social desirable responding than their respective counterparts who scored higher. They believe that these

findings are more than just a response bias in the scale, rather they claim that high Machs are simply more willing to endorse less socially desirable attitudes than low Machs because it is consistent with the cynical characteristics of the trait itself.

Because opportunistic and manipulative tendencies characterize high Machs, Ferris et al. (1989) theorized that they would be more inclined to perceive their environment in political terms than low Machs (Ferris et al., 1989). The assumption is that because self-interest issues are more salient to high Machs than low Machs, high Machs would be more perceptive of them. And because self-interest issues are at the core of most political behaviors, high Machs will probably perceive higher levels of organizational politics than their counterparts. Interestingly though, this theory was never tested. Since Ferris et al. proposed Machiavellianism as a predictor variable in their model, there has yet to be a study that validates their expectations that high Machs would perceive higher levels of organizational politics when compared to their counterparts (i.e., low Machs).

#### Negative Affectivity

Negative affectivity is viewed as a mood-dispositional dimension that is characterized by negative emotions and self-concept. A mood-dispositional dimension is basically another name for a personality trait that falls along an affective continuum. The aversive mood states experienced

by negative affectivity include nervousness, fear, guilt, disgust, contempt, and anger (Watson & Clark, 1984). Negative affectivity is a stable and global trait that influences a wide range of behaviors (Adler, Nelson, & Hoffman, 1998). However, as a temporal mood state, negative affect is linked to stress reactions, aggression, and alienation (Almagor & Ehrlich, 1990). Traits are distinct from states in that they are stable, whereas states are affected by environmental/situational influences and can vary in time (George, 1992). Because this study focuses on personality, negative affectivity will be treated as a trait and not a state.

Numerous scales have been developed and studied to research the construct of negative affectivity. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) are one of the self-report inventories used to tap the two dominant dimensions of affective structure. The PANAS scales allow one to choose between seven temporally different instructions to specify what time frame these states are experienced in (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). When the word "generally" is used in the instruction set it implies a trait measure. In support, Watson et al. (1988) found that the stability coefficient of the PANAS subscale (i.e., negative affect schedule) is high enough to validate the use of this subscale to measure negative affectivity as a global trait.

Those high in negative affectivity seem to have poor coping skills and more self-reported stress, health complaints, and frequency of unpleasant events (Watson et al., 1988). High negative affectivity individuals are also particularly sensitive to everyday irritations, frustrations, and minor failures (George, 1990). In a study of work groups, affectivity was found to be positively related to the affective tone of the group. Specifically, the negative traits of the group members influenced the tone of the group in a way that discouraged the engagement of prosocial behavior (George, 1990). In general, high negative affectivity individuals seem to view the world negatively (Watson & Clark, 1984) and influence the behavior of the individuals around them (George, 1990; George, 1992; George & Jones, 1997).

In contrast, individuals who possess low negative affectivity experience more states of serenity and calmness than their counterparts (Watson et al., 1988). In addition, low negative affectivity individuals also have an increased desire to affiliate with others and to value social relationships. Reports from clinicians' Q sort ratings showed low negative affectivity individuals as socially facile, sympathetic, popular, and dependable. However, individuals with high negative affectivity were seen as rebellious, nonconforming, aloof, distrustful, and more hostile (Watson & Clark, 1984).

Because perceptions of organizational politics has a negative bent (G.R. Ferris, personal communication, April 19, 1998), individuals who concentrate on negativity in general (i.e., high negative affectivity) will be more inclined to perceive higher levels of politics than individuals who do not concentrate on negativity (i.e., low negative affectivity individuals). Although negative affectivity was not proposed in the Ferris et al. (1989) model, the characteristics of this trait warrant the investigation of this trait as a potential predictor of organizational politics perceptions.

#### The Present Study

In an attempt to build on the perceptions of organizational politics model originally proposed by Ferris et al. (1989), three personality variables were examined in this study: the self-monitoring trait, the Machiavellian trait, and the negative affectivity trait. This study will consist of a re-examination and two novel explorations.

Although the self-monitoring trait was originally proposed as a predictor of organizational politics perceptions (Ferris et al., 1989), it has yet to be substantiated. As mentioned earlier, Ferris and Kacmar (1992) tested this variable once, however they found no significant relationship between self-monitoring and perceptions of organizational politics.

They proposed that because high self-monitors have a propensity to constantly scan their social environments,

they would perceive more organizational politics than their counterparts. However, the propensity to scan for social cues does not imply a proneness to perceive a differential amount of politics. Creating perceptions are not dependent on the amount of environmental scanning one does. Although more environmental information is probably factored into the decision-making process; perceptions can be formed on a little or a lot of environmental information. A low self-monitor, for example, may perceive just as much politics as a high self-monitor.

The difference is not how much they perceived but how they choose to react to their perceptions. For example, the high self-monitor would probably engage in political type behaviors if it is more socially adaptive to do so. On the other hand, the low self-monitor would probably choose not to engage in those political behaviors if doing so is incongruent with their own values. Although these two types may perceive equal amounts of politics, it is how they react to their perceptions that create differences. Based on this rationale it was hypothesized that no relationship would be found between high self-monitors and low self-monitors on how much organizational politics they would perceive.

The Machiavellian trait was also originally proposed as a predictor of organizational politics perceptions in the Ferris et al. (1989) model, however this claim was also never substantiated. In fact, this relation has never been

tested. Because high Machs have the disposition to view the world as a political arena, it was hypothesized that they would also perceive more organizational politics than low Machs.

Although not originally part of the Ferris et al. (1989) model, the negative affectivity trait was included in this study. The rationale to include this trait into the model as a predictor variable is due to the negative connotations organizational politics seem to carry. Individuals seem to perceive organizational politics as self-serving behavior that is very negative. As described earlier, those high in negative affectivity seem to view the world very negatively and because organizational politics carries negative implications, they would be more inclined to perceive greater organizational politics than their counterparts (i.e., individuals low in negative affectivity) (G.R. Ferris, personal communication, April 19, 1998). Therefore, it was also proposed that those who are high in negative affectivity would be more inclined to view their environments as more political than those who are low in negative affectivity.

Based on these reasons, the following hypotheses were tested by this study:

Hypothesis 1. High self-monitors would not perceive significantly more organizational politics than low self-monitors.

Hypothesis 2. High Machs would perceive significantly more organizational politics than low Machs.

Hypothesis 3. Individuals who are high in negative affectivity would perceive significantly more organizational politics than individuals who are low in negative affectivity.



## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Participants

The study was conducted in Honolulu, HI using a sample of 83 employees (50 women, 31 men, and 2 unknown), ranging from line employees to vice presidents. The majority of the sample 75.9% ( $n = 63$ ) consisted of Asian/Pacific Islanders, while 16.9% ( $n = 14$ ) were White, 2.4% ( $n = 2$ ) were listed in the "other" category, and 4.8% ( $n = 4$ ) did not answer. In an effort to gain a broad representation of organizations, five different firms were selected, which included two private financial institutions (one corporate headquarters and two branches), one educational institution, one service oriented firm and one private retailing firm. All participants came from organizations that were selected on the basis of their willingness to cooperate in the study.

Out of the 471 potential participants, only 83 participants volunteered and turned in usable data resulting in an 18% response rate. Although this may appear to be low, response rates lower than 30% are not uncommon in field research (see Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996; Zhou & Ferris, 1995), especially for research that is as sensitive in nature as this study.

#### Design

This study separately analyzed three independent variables (i.e., MACH IV scores, self-monitoring scores,

and negative affectivity scores) on one dependent variable (i.e., perceptions of organizational politics scores). Each independent variable was artificially divided into two groups (i.e., high scorers versus low scorers) based on a median split. Specifically, the high scorers were those individuals who scored at or above the median and the low scorers were those individuals who scored below the median on each of the personality inventories (e.g., MACH IV). After these groups were established, the high scorers were compared to the low scorers on the perceptions of organizational politics scale. Analysis of the data were conducted on the Windows version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program.

#### Instrumentation

Five primary instruments were used in this study. These instruments included a demographic sheet, the MACH IV scale, the Self-Monitoring scale, a PANAS subscale (i.e., Negative Affect Schedule), and the Perceptions of Organizational Politics scale.

Demographic information. Demographic information was assessed using a short questionnaire (see Appendix A) that asks the participant their sex, ethnicity, length of time working in their present organization, and their present position/title held. However, some participants withheld this information.

Perceptions of organizational politics. Perceptions of organizational politics was assessed using a 31-item

scale (see Appendix B) created by Ferris and Kacmar (1992). This questionnaire examines various dimensions of political behavior in organizations that were originally derived from anecdotal evidence and research literature (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). The participants used a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = somewhat disagree; 5 = strongly disagree) to evaluate their working environment. The coefficient alpha reliability for the aggregate measure of perceptions of politics is .91 (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

Machiavellianism. The Machiavellianism scale, otherwise known as the MACH IV scale (see Appendix C) measured the Machiavellian personality trait. The MACH IV scale developed by Christie and Geis (1970) is the most commonly used measure of Machiavellianism. This brief, 20-item scale is reported by Christie and Geis to have a split-half reliability coefficient of .79. Internal consistency (coefficient alpha) ranges from .76 (Rawwas et al., 1995) to .79 (Hollon, 1996). Half the items endorse Machiavellian type statements, whereas the other 10 items are keyed in the opposite direction. Participants used a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = slightly agree; 4 = no opinion; 5 = slightly disagree; 6 = somewhat disagree; and 7 = strongly disagree) to rate each item.

Self-monitoring. To measure the construct of self-monitoring, the 18-item self-monitoring scale (see Appendix D) by Snyder (1987) was used. Self-monitoring has been shown to be relatively independent of other psychological constructs such as social desirability and a number of MMPI scales (Snyder, 1979). Participants responded either true or false to statements that refer to an individual's tendency to monitor their self-presentation style. For example, "I would probably make a good actor" is one of the statements on the scale. Scale scores range from 0 to 18. This scale has been shown to be psychometrically sound and yields a coefficient alpha range of .70 (Snyder, 1987) to .75 (Kilduff & Day, 1994).

Negative affectivity. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scales (see Appendix E) were used to measure the negative affectivity trait. Specifically, only the negative subscale portion of the PANAS was used. This 10-item subscale required the participants to rate each item on a 5-point scale (1 = very slightly or not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = moderately; 4 = quite a bit; 5 = extremely) on the extent to which they "generally feel this way, that is, on average." In other words, this instruction set is attempting to tap the trait dimension rather than the state dimension of this construct (for a thorough explanation of the distinction between these two constructs, see Burke, Brief, & George, 1993). Responses on the negative affectivity subscale were made to such

descriptors as "distressed" and "guilty". This subscale is shown to be stable and shows a coefficient alpha range of .76 (Strumpfer, 1997) to .87 (Watson et al., 1988).

### Procedures

Participant searches began the day after permission was granted from the Institutional Review Board for Treatment of Human Subjects (see Appendix F). A search was conducted to find organizations that were willing to participate in this study. Organizations were found by using the phonebook, Yellow Pages, and word-of-mouth contacts. After organizations were identified, the researcher contacted a member of upper-management for each firm. If these individuals agreed to participate, appointments to meet with them and explain the study were set up. A vice president from one financial institution and several managers of two different private financial institutions, a dean of an educational institution, a director of human resources for a private service oriented firm, a manager of a retailing firm, and an instructor for a summer MBA course agreed to participate in the study by allowing the researcher access to persons within their organizations.

The supervisors of each organization were provided with questionnaire packets. These packets contained an informed consent form (see Appendix G), a demographic questionnaire, the perceptions of organizational politics scale, the self-monitoring scale, the MACH IV scale, and

the negative affectivity subscale of the PANAS scale. Individuals within several different levels and departments were targeted. These individuals were then asked by their supervisors, either through e-mail or orally, whether they would like to participate in this study. The individuals who expressed interest were sent a questionnaire packet. They were instructed to separate their signed informed consent form from the rest of the packet in order to insure anonymity. Then, they were instructed to put completed packets into sealed envelopes, along with their informed consent forms (in separate envelopes), and place them into a box that was located in a designated area.

There were three exceptions to this procedure, however. First, a manager of one of the financial institution's branches allowed the researcher to administer and collect the packets on-site before they were open for business. This method yielded the highest return rate. Second, the educational institution had their completed packets sent to a specified office where a secretary placed them into a box. Finally, the MBA students who participated were asked to complete the packets overnight and return them to the next class meeting.

## CHAPTER III

## RESULTS

This study examined the perceptions of organizational politics with three personality traits (i.e., self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and negative affectivity). Self-monitoring scores, MACH IV scores, and the negative affectivity scores were dichotomized into high versus low scorers using median splits to create the independent variables. Specifically, the trait scores reported at or above the median were considered high groups while the trait scores that were reported below the median were considered low groups. Thus, cell sizes for high and low groups were not equal. For example, the negative affectivity groups consisted of high ( $n = 50$ ) and low ( $n = 33$ ) based on the median split method. With one dependent variable (i.e., perceptions of organizational politics scores), a  $t$ -test for independent samples with an alpha level of .05 was used for all the statistical tests. A summary of the results are illustrated in Table 1.

## Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

High self-monitors were hypothesized not to perceive significantly more organizational politics than low self-monitors. The high self-monitors did not score significantly higher than the low self-monitors on their perceptions of organizational politics. Thus, Hypothesis 1

Table 1

Independent samples t-tests for personality traits  
on perceptions of organizational politics

| Independent Variables     | <u>n</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>t</u> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| High self-monitors        | 42       | 85.81    | 15.44     |           |          |
|                           |          |          |           | 76        | -.10     |
| Low self-monitors         | 41       | 86.20    | 19.57     |           |          |
| High Machs                | 45       | 89.96    | 16.47     |           |          |
|                           |          |          |           | 81        | 2.30*    |
| Low Machs                 | 38       | 81.32    | 17.72     |           |          |
| High negative affectivity | 50       | 86.08    | 18.46     |           |          |
|                           |          |          |           | 81        | .05      |
| Low negative affectivity  | 33       | 85.88    | 16.19     |           |          |

Note. \* $p < .05$



was supported. The median score used to divide groups into high and low for self-monitoring was 7.00. The degrees of freedom was reported as 76 because the homogeneity of variances was violated.

### Hypothesis 2

High Machs were hypothesized to perceive significantly more organizational politics than low Machs. The high Machs did score significantly higher than the low Machs on their perceptions of organizational politics. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. The median score used to divide groups into high and low for Machiavellianism was 68.00.

### Hypothesis 3

Individuals who are high in negative affectivity were hypothesized to perceive significantly more organizational politics than individuals who are low in negative affectivity. The high negative affectivity individuals did not score significantly higher than the low negative affectivity individuals on their perceptions of organizational politics. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The median score used to divide groups into high and low for negative affectivity was 15.00.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The present research involved a field study in Hawaii composed of workers from various organizations. The purpose of this study was to examine personality variables to build on the perceptions of organizational politics model initially proposed by Ferris et al. (1989). These researchers originally proposed two personality traits, self-monitoring and Machiavellianism, as possible predictors of organizational politics perceptions. Since the time Ferris et al. first presented these traits as possible predictors, the only personality trait tested was self-monitoring. In their study, Ferris and Kacmar (1992) found no support for the inclusion of self-monitoring into the model. Interestingly, the relationship between Machiavellianism and perceptions of organizational politics had never been examined until this study.

Self-monitoring needed to be re-examined for its ability to predict organizational politics perceptions because of the discrepancy between the Ferris et al. (1989) proposal and the Ferris and Kacmar (1992) finding. Machiavellianism also warranted an investigation because this trait was originally proposed by Ferris et al. (1989) as a possible predictor of organizational politics but were never examined. In addition, a third personality trait (i.e., negative affectivity) was studied for possible incorporation into the perceptions of organizational

politics model. Although negative affectivity was not a part of the Ferris et al. model of organizational politics perceptions, its characteristics also warranted an investigation for its possible inclusion into the model.

### Interpretation of Results

The first hypothesis predicted that high self-monitors would not perceive significantly more organizational politics than low self-monitors. The results supported this hypothesis by yielding no significant differences between the high self-monitors ( $\bar{M} = 85.81$ ) and the low self-monitors ( $\bar{M} = 86.20$ ) in regards to their levels of organizational politics perceptions. Ferris et al. believed that because high self-monitors have a propensity to constantly scan their environments, they would perceive more organizational politics than their counterparts (i.e., low self-monitors). However, self-monitoring types (i.e., high versus low) are not characterized by differential levels of perceptions. In fact, the self-monitoring theory does not mention perceptions as a factor that separates high self-monitors from low self-monitors (see Snyder, 1987). Specifically, self-monitoring theory "presumes consistent patterns of individual differences in the extent to which people regulate their self-presentations" (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984, p. 1349). For example, both a high self-monitor and a low self-monitor may perceive the same level of organizational politics, but the manner in which they will behave based on these perceptions is characteristic of

their self-monitoring styles. The high self-monitor will probably play politics if, based on social cues, their situations favored political-type behavior. However, the low self-monitor will probably not play politics if doing so is contrary to their beliefs. Therefore, based on the following argument, this finding's results and the Ferris and Kacmar (1992) results, self-monitoring should not be included into the perceptions of organizational politics model.

Although self-monitoring was not found to predict organizational politics perceptions, this trait should continue to be studied with its relation to organizational behavior. In support, Graziano and Bryant (1998) state that self-monitoring consistently demonstrated its relations to many aspects of social behavior. Specifically, a plethora of studies have illustrated the utility of self-monitoring as a significant correlate to many issues of organizational behavior (e.g., Kilduff & Day, 1994; Kolb, 1998; Morrison, 1997; Riordan, Gross, & Maloney, 1994); therefore, it should continue to be studied.

The second hypothesis predicted that high Machs would perceive significantly more organizational politics than low Machs. The results supported this hypothesis by yielding significant differences between the high Machs and the low Machs in regards to their levels of organizational politics perceptions. Specifically, the high Machs

( $M = 89.96$ ) perceived significantly higher levels of organizational politics than the low Machs ( $M = 81.32$ ). This finding is not surprising in that high Machs are characterized as manipulative, exploitative, and opportunistic individuals who view the world as a political arena (Christie & Geis, 1970; Pinto & Kanekar, 1990; Shepperd & Socherman, 1997). Because organizational politics is often interpreted as opportunistic and self-serving behavior, it is not surprising that Machiavellianism was first proposed by Ferris et al. (1989) as a potential predictor of organizational politics. Specifically, Ferris et al. (1989) theorized that high Machs would perceive significantly higher levels of organizational politics than low Machs. Thus, based on the characteristics of Machiavellianism and this study's results, Machiavellianism should remain in the model of organizational politics perceptions as an actual personality predictor.

This significant finding is the first support for a personality trait as a predictor of organizational politics perceptions. There have been several hundred studies on Machiavellianism and its relation to social phenomena (Al-Khatib, Vitell, & Rawwas, 1997). Less than 100 of these studies actually examined the relationship of Machiavellianism with organizational behavior issues. In fact, many of the studies that examine Machiavellianism and its relation to organizational behavior tend to be mixed

(see Corzine, 1997; Hunt & Chonko, 1984; Vleeming, 1979). Unlike many other studies that examine Machiavellianism with organizational behavior, this study found support for Machiavellianism as a valid predictor of organizational politics perceptions.

In addition, this finding was also important to the understanding of organizational behavior in that it helps explain why politics is a fact of life in many organizations. Lewin and Stephens (1994) stated that many executives are characteristically high in Machiavellianism. The present study found that those high in Machiavellianism perceive higher levels of organizational politics. If these relations are true, and most organizations consist of a large body of executives, then the presence of executives in organizations could explain why many would claim that politics is a fact of organizational life.

The third and final hypothesis predicted that individuals who are high in negative affectivity would perceive significantly more organizational politics than individuals who are low in negative affectivity. The results counter this hypothesis by yielding non-significant differences between high and low negative affectivity individuals on their perceptions of organizational politics. There was no significant difference between the high negative affectivity individuals ( $\bar{M} = 86.08$ ) and the low negative affectivity individuals ( $\bar{M} = 85.88$ ) on their perceptions of

organizational politics. The reason why this trait was tested as a possible predictor of organizational politics is that organizational politics is often viewed by employees in a negative light (G.R. Ferris, personal communication, April 19, 1998). Therefore, it seemed plausible that those who have a negative predisposition would probably perceive high levels of organizational politics. However, based on these results, this is not the case. High negative affectivity individuals seem to perceive about the same level of organizational politics as low negativity individuals. Thus, negative affectivity should not be included in the perceptions of organizational politics model.

Much like self-monitoring, the importance of negative affectivity to the understanding of organizational behavior should not be dismissed due to the results of this study. The identification of negative affectivity's role in many aspects of organizational behavior has been well documented (e.g., George, 1990; George, 1992; George & Jones, 1997). For example, negative affectivity has been found to be a valid predictor of job performance and work-related attitudes (Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993). In a recent study, Daniels (1998) found a positive correlation between negative affectivity and poor organizational performance, which has strong implications for Human Resource professionals. Thus, negative affectivity should

continue to be studied by organizational behavior researchers.

### Limitations

Because this study was conducted on employees in Hawaii, caution should be used when generalizing these findings. Most of the studies on organizational politics were conducted in North America where the majority of the participants were White. However, in this study, White participants ( $n = 14$ ) only accounted for 16.9% of the sample whereas Asian/Pacific Islanders ( $n = 63$ ) accounted for 75.9% of the sample. In addition, the organizations in Hawaii may be significantly different from the organizations in North America because of Hawaii's unique culture. Although Hawaii is a part of the United States of America, it is also heavily influenced by Asian cultures (e.g., Japanese). In fact, contact between American and Asian cultures are increasing due to a rise in Asian immigration and tourism in Hawaii (Vatikiotis, 1993). Therefore, Hawaii has become a unique culture consisting of Eastern and Western values. This uniqueness can be seen in all aspects of life in Hawaii, especially in the business practices. For example, Simon (1996) states that executives in Hawaii are perceived as more approachable than their North American counterparts. Thus, the obvious cultural differences may have had an effect on this study's results.



Another limitation of this study is that causal inferences cannot be made because this study's design is not experimental. Although the Ferris et al. (1989) model implies directional causation, inferences of this nature should be cautioned. For example, high perceptions of organizational politics could have caused one to become high in Machiavellianism and not the other way around as the model implies. "In all likelihood, the causal relationships are complex and reciprocal between perceptions of politics and the variables treated as antecedents and outcomes in this study" (Parker et al., 1995, p. 910). Thus, causative inferences should be avoided.

A final limitation of this study is the sampling bias. Aside from the obvious racial composition and cultural differences of this sample, the characteristics of the individuals who participated in the study versus the individuals who refused to participate in this study could have yielded biased results. Because participants were elicited by members of upper-management, the employees who agreed to participate in this study may have been characteristically different from those who refused to participate. For example, those who did cooperate in this study could have felt obligated to participate because the request was given by a member of upper-management. These individuals could be more compliant than those who refused

to participate. As a consequence, the sample used in this study may not be representative of the average worker.

### Implications and Future Research

To date, organizational behavior researchers have only started understanding organizational politics. The Ferris et al. (1989) model is a conceptual attempt to understand the construct of organizational politics by examining its predictors, moderators, and outcomes. This study attempted to test this model by substantiating personality traits as predictors of organizational politics. Although two out of the three traits tested were not shown to predict organizational politics, the major finding of this study is the validation of Machiavellianism as a predictor of organizational politics. In fact, Machiavellianism has been the only personality variable shown to predict organizational politics perceptions. Therefore, there is a need for organizational behavior researchers to propose and validate other personality traits as predictors of organizational politics perceptions. Their findings would increase the understanding of organizational behavior by examining organizational politics as a useful construct. Specifically, identification of valid personality predictors of organizational politics (e.g., Machiavellianism) could help Human Resource professionals.

Within Human Resources, selection and placement are areas where identification of personality predictors would

prove useful. For example, if high levels of organizational politics is found to be detrimental to the organization's productivity, selection decisions should take valid personality predictors into account. The employees that are already working for the organization could be identified by their trait levels and based on these scores, they can be placed into groups that are composed of different trait levels. Thereby, group levels of organizational politics should be balanced to ensure that overall productivity is not negatively affected. If a choice had to be made between identifying employees during selection or during placement, the identification of present employees based on traits is a more practical endeavor than installing new organizational systems such as a new selection program (Ferris, Fedor, Chachere, & Pondy, 1989). Finally, although the use of personality measures for personnel selection purposes has low validity as a predictor of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), the utility is different in this context. Personality predictors in this context is for the prediction of organizational politics perceptions that has outcomes unique to its construct (e.g., turnover) and, therefore, should not be confused with the research that has investigated the role of personality to job performance.

Future research in this area is needed to build a more complex model of organizational politics perceptions. For example, Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al. (1996) suggest that

potential variables and linkages of organizational politics need to be articulated more precisely and re-tested in different social contexts in order to improve on the model. In addition, future research should re-examine Machiavellianism and negative affectivity as predictors of organizational politics in North America. A study of North American organizations will allow more freedom for generalizations than this study has provided. An interesting study would be cross-cultural comparisons of various countries. Because the majority of studies examine the dynamics of organizational politics with American businesses, it would be interesting to see whether certain personality types predict organizational politics in certain countries and not others. Finally, another interesting study would be to do a longitudinal study of personality traits and perceptions of organizational politics. This study would allow researchers to examine how much certain traits and perceptions of organizational politics vary and how they interact with each other through time. This type of study could also reveal how organizational changes (e.g., downsizing) affect personality and perceptions of organizational politics scores.

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APPENDIX A  
Demographics

Demographics

- 1) Sex (circle one)  
Male            Female
- 2) Ethnicity (circle one)  
White/Caucasian    Asian/Pacific Islander    African American    Other
- 3) Length of time working for your present organization \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., 3 years)
- 4) Present position/title \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., Director of Budgets)

## APPENDIX B

## Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale

## Questionnaire #1

Please circle the number that best corresponds to your personal opinion to the following statements below. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly Agree    Somewhat Agree    Neutral    Somewhat Disagree    Strongly Disagree

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



- 15) The old saying that the "squeaky wheel gets the grease" really works around here when resources are distributed.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 16) Rewards come only to those who work hard in this organization.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 17) People who are willing to voice their opinion seem to do "better" here than those who don't.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 18) Promotions in this department generally go to top performers.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 19) My co-workers help themselves, not others.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 20) I have seen people deliberately distort information requested by others for purposes of personal gain, either by withholding it or selectively reporting it.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 21) Managers in this organization often use the selection system to hire only people that can help them in their future or who see things the way they do.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 22) People in this organization often use the selection system to hire only people that can help them in their future or who see things the way they do.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 23) I have seen changes made in policies here that only serve the purposes of a few individuals, not the work unit or the organization.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 24) Overall, the rules and policies around here concerning promotion and pay are specific and well defined.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 25) The rules and policies concerning promotion and pay are fair; it is how supervisors carry out the policies that is unfair and self-serving.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 26) When you need help at work, you can always rely on a co-worker to lend a hand.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 27) Connections with other departments are very helpful when it comes time for a favor.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 28) Whereas a lot of what my supervisor does around here (e.g., communicates and gives feedback, etc.) appears to be directed at helping employees, it is actually intended to protect himself/herself.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 29) The performance appraisals/ratings people receive from their supervisors reflect more of the supervisor's own agenda (e.g., likes and dislikes, giving high or low ratings to make themselves look good, etc.) than the actual performance of the employee.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

- 30) If a co-worker offers to lend some assistance, it is because they expect to get something out of it (e.g., makes them look good, you owe them a favor now, etc.), not because they really care.
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- 31) Pay and promotion policies are generally communicated in this company.
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

APPENDIX C  
MACH IV Scale

## Questionnaire #2

Please circle the number that best corresponds to your personal opinion to the following statements below. Use the following scale to record your answers.

| 1              | 2              | 3              | 4          | 5                 | 6                 | 7                 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Slightly Agree | No Opinion | Slightly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

- 1) Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is useful to do so.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 2) The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3) One should take action only when sure it is morally right.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 4) Most people are basically good and kind.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 5) It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak and it will come out when they are given the chance.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 6) Honesty is the best policy in all cases.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 7) There is no excuse for lying to someone else.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 8) Generally speaking, people will not work hard unless they are forced to do so.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 9) All in all, it is better to be humble and honest than important and dishonest.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 10) When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give the real reasons for wanting it rather than giving reasons which might carry more weight.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 11) Most people who get ahead in the world lead clean, moral lives.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 12) Anyone who completely trusts others is asking for trouble.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 13) The biggest difference between criminals and others is that the criminals are stupid enough to get caught.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 14) Most people are brave.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 15) It is wise to flatter important people.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 16) It is possible to be good in all respects.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- 17) Barnum was very wrong when he said that there is a sucker born every minute.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 18) It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 19) People suffering from incurable diseases should have the choice of being put painlessly to death.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 20) Most people forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their property.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## APPENDIX D

## Self-monitoring Scale

## Questionnaire #3

Please read each statement below and circle the answer (True or False) that best describes you.

- 1) I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.  
True            False
- 2) At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.  
True            False
- 3) I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.  
True            False
- 4) I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.  
True            False
- 5) I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.  
True            False
- 6) I would probably make a good actor.  
True            False
- 7) In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.  
True            False
- 8) In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.  
True            False
- 9) I am not particularly good at making other people like me.  
True            False
- 10) I'm not always the person I appear to be.  
True            False
- 11) I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone or win their favor.  
True            False
- 12) I have considered being an entertainer.  
True            False
- 13) I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.  
True            False
- 14) I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.  
True            False
- 15) At a party I let others keep the jokes and stories going.  
True            False
- 16) I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as well as I should.  
True            False
- 17) I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).  
True            False
- 18) I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.  
True            False

APPENDIX E  
PANAS SubScale



## Questionnaire #5

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you **GENERALLY** feel this way, that is, how you feel on average. Use the following scale to record your answers.

| 1                              | 2        | 3          | 4           | 5         |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| very slightly<br>or not at all | a little | moderately | quite a bit | extremely |

1) \_\_\_\_\_ Distressed

2) \_\_\_\_\_ Upset

3) \_\_\_\_\_ Guilty

4) \_\_\_\_\_ Scared

5) \_\_\_\_\_ Hostile

6) \_\_\_\_\_ Irritable

7) \_\_\_\_\_ Ashamed

8) \_\_\_\_\_ Nervous

9) \_\_\_\_\_ Jittery

10) \_\_\_\_\_ Afraid

## APPENDIX F

Approval Letter from the Institutional Review Board

**EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY**1200 COMMERCIAL EMPORIA, KANSAS 66801-5087 316/341-5351  
FAX 316/341-5909

RESEARCH AND GRANTS CENTER - BOX 4003

June 10, 1998

Sherman A. Lee  
806 Hahaione St.  
Honolulu, HI 96825

Dear Mr. Lee:

The Institutional Review Board for Treatment of Human Subjects has evaluated your application for approval of human subject research entitled, "Perceptions of Organizational Politics: An Investigation into the Links that Compose a Model." The review board approved your application which will allow you to begin your research with subjects as outlined in your application materials.

Best of luck in your proposed research project. If the review board can help you in any other way, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John O. Schwenn".

John O. Schwenn, Dean  
Graduate Studies and Research

pf

cc: Brian Schrader

Appendix G  
Informed Consent Form

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Division of Psychology and Special Education at Emporia State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participation in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach. The information you are providing will be kept confidential and will not be shared, viewed, handled, and/or used by anyone except the investigator (Sherman A. Lee) and his advisor (Dr. Brian W. Schrader).

You are being asked to complete a questionnaire packet dealing with personality and issues related to work. It will take approximately 20-40 minutes to complete. Please feel free to ask questions at any time. Your sincere responses and participation are greatly appreciated.

"I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach."

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

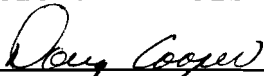
I, Sherman Aclaracion Lee, hereby submit this thesis to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Author

12/7/98  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

Machiavellianism, Self-Monitoring, and  
 Negative Affectivity as predictors of  
 organizational politics perceptions: A  
 Field Study of Workers in Hawaii

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Title of Thesis

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Graduate Office  
 Staff Member

December 8, 1998  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Received

*original*