Introduction: back to the future of organizational politics
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Organizational politics (OP) has been a field of intensive and fruitful academic writing and research for more than four decades. According to the Web of Science (May 2015), to date more than 2000 articles have been published in scientific peer-review journals of the social sciences (and related fields), covering a wide variety of issues related to the dynamics of power and influence in the workplace. These topics include a long list of aspects that have been studied over the years with considerable success and noteworthy achievements.

What has been studied in this area so far? A partial list includes, *inter alia*, (1) approaches to its definition and conceptual framework; (2) multilevel approaches to OP, inter-personal, inter-departmental, and inter-organizational work politics; (3) personality and OP; (4) patterns of influence tactics and reasoning for the emergence of OP; (5) development and measurements of political skills; (6) political skill and political will in critical decision-making processes; (7) negative and positive implications of OP; (8) work and non-work politics; are they related? (9) OP and performance; (10) cross-cultural and cross-sectoral meanings of OP; (11) coalitions and politics in organizations; (12) ingratiation and impression management; (13) OP, stress, strain and burnout; (14) OP in state offices and in public administration; (15) OP and state-level political behavior; (16): OP, fairness, and justice; (17) OP and leadership.

Considerable progress has been made since the emergence of the field in the 1970s. At that time scholars suggested that politics in organizations is a hidden phenomenon, hard to define and study due to its fuzzy nature and vague borders. Today, with the accumulation of research and knowledge, politics in organizations is no longer a hidden arena. Considerable advances have been made theoretically, empirically and methodologically, providing a far better understanding of this field.

In 2006 we edited a volume of theoretical and empirical studies on Organizational Politics (Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006). The book became essential reading for many who sought greater familiarity and knowledge about the ongoing developments in this field, both scientifically and practically.

After almost a decade of further exploration, research and theoretical advances in this arena, we believe that the time has come to revisit and update our previous book, and at the same time attempt to look at the potential future development of academic thinking and empirical research in this fruitful and important area of academic scholarship.

One advance on which we may find consensus among all leading scholars of the field is the significant contribution of OP to the study of management, organizational psychology, business and administration in a variety of disciplines. It is well recognized today that this phenomenon is a significant key to the understanding of organizational functioning, outcomes and performances, as well as to employees, managers, customers and other stakeholders' behavior in the organizational arena. Yet, even today, the study of politics in organizations is extremely challenging as both employees and middle managers or top-level executives are inclined to openly discuss and uncover the political dynamics that facilitate the promotion of ideas and decisions that enable organizational change and development.

Hence the new volume, *Handbook of Organizational Politics: Looking Back and to the Future*, revisits the theory on politics in the workplace and examines, beyond the long list of themes suggested above, the progress that has been made over the years. The new volume acknowledges many recent thoughts, conceptual models and empirical findings. We try to reevaluate the knowledge that has been accumulated over the past decade and that was partially addressed in the previous volume, as well as in other projects that were promoted over the years (e.g. Ferris and Treadway, 2012; Cropanzano and Kacmar, 1995; Pfeffer, 1992). The chapters in the present volume also touch on aspects of this behavior that were not given sufficient attention in past studies, such as the relationship between OP and emotions, the meaning of OP in the mess-media era, and the constructive aspects of this behavior in a complex setting of considerations by individuals, teams and top management.

We present fresh and new contributions suggesting innovative and emerging frontiers in the study of OP. By looking back and to the future we add new dimensions to the understanding of power, influence and politics in the workplace from the less conventional perspectives and angles relevant to modern societies and post-modern worksites. Similar to the first volume, the book is intended as a comprehensive collection of original or reworked studies and aims to depict the state of the art in the understanding of workplace politics based on theoretical ideas and empirical findings from around the world (e.g. the USA, the UK, Israel, Australia, Greece and Chile).

The chapters in this volume cover a long list of topics that look into organizational power, politics and influence in new and provoking ways.

They were written by a group of ambitious scholars, some of whom are well established and highly reputed, while others are young and enthusiastic newcomers who will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the future of this field. With their help and inspiration we attempt to offer a comprehensive view of a field that for many years seemed interesting but almost impossible to study.

A GLANCE AT THE CONTENT

The book is divided into four parts, each one focusing on a common conceptual world of content in connection with the politics of organizations.

Part I

The first part deals with "Political Skill, Political Will, Leadership and Performance". It presents four chapters covering some conceptual boundaries and dealing with practical concerns.

The first chapter, "The roles of political skill and political will in job performance prediction: a moderated nonlinear perspective", by John N. Harris, Liam P. Maher and Gerald R. Ferris, suggests that, although political skill and political will have been conceptualized as important predictors of performance and effectiveness in organizations for over three decades, virtually no research has investigated the respective roles played by these two constructs in explaining behavior in organizations. Because political skill and political will are believed to be inextricably intertwined, these two constructs should interact to explain organizational outcomes (e.g. job performance) better than either construct individually. However, the authors suggest that the interaction effect may be more complex than one might initially expect. This chapter proposes a theoretical model and testable propositions regarding the roles played by political skill and political will, arguing for a moderated nonlinear relationship between political skill and will and job performance prediction. Additionally, in the future research directions section, the authors discuss how political skill, political will and political behavior work together to influence important work outcomes in organizations. Implications for theory and research and directions for future research are discussed.

The second chapter, "Playing the political game at work: the roles of political will, political prudence and political skill", by Ilias Kapoutsis, suggests that, at work, people quickly realize that achieving personal and organizational objectives largely depends on their political behavior. But little is known about the motivational and cognitive aspects that initiate,

shape and make such behavior effective in the long run. This chapter focuses on two largely under-investigated topics: political will and political prudence. Contrary to the established view that political behavior is self-serving in nature, current advances in the political-will literature suggest that willingness to expend political capital can also start from benevolent motives. However, while political will may be seen as the fuel that keeps the political machine running, it also runs the risk, if left uncontrolled, of depleting quickly, and may thus fail to bring about the intended change to the status quo. It is suggested that political prudence would mitigate this risk. The direction, intensity and persistence of political behavior is set by a decision-making process wherein individuals rely on rationality and realism to assess alternative courses of action and find the one most situationally appropriate. It is proposed that political prudence is a construct encompassing five dimensions, and that it may either buffer the effect of political will on political behavior and/or exacerbate it in respect of strategic goal attainment. Finally, the chapter highlights the role of political skill as a quality assurance mechanism that can help prudent decisions not only to be made but also to be effectively implemented.

The third chapter, "Political skill, leadership and performance: the role of vision identification and articulation", by Andreas Wihler, Rachel Frieder, Gerhard Blickle, Katharina Oerder and Nora Schütte, suggests that, while previous research has found that transformational and transactional leadership behavior mediate the leader political skill–leader effectiveness relationship, the purpose of this study is to specify which facet(s) of transformational leadership play(s) the most important role in this mediated relationship. Based on a political lens of leadership and the social/political influence theory of organizations, the chapter argues that politically skilled leaders should be more effective as a result of their superior abilities to identify and articulate visions. Moreover, the chapter also examines the moderating effect of leaders' positional power as a characteristic capable of reinforcing politically skilled leaders' use of vision identification and articulation behaviors. Consistent with argumentation that politically skilled leaders can more effectively use vision articulation to strategically direct, unify and mobilize followers, results indicated that leaders who were both politically skilled and positionally powerful were perceived by followers to engage in greater amounts of vision identification and articulation behaviors, and these behaviors, in turn, predicted leader effectiveness. As such, this study builds on the small body of research that links leader political skill to leader effectiveness through leader behavior, and draws on insights from previous research regarding the interactive effects of multiple sources of leader power. The authors discuss how this study contributes

to the existing literature with an eye towards the future of leadership and politics research.

The final chapter in this part, "Political is the new prosocial: leaders' support of followers through political behavior", by B. Parker Ellen III, Gerald R. Ferris and M. Ronald Buckley, maintains that, given that organizations have been classified as political arenas, and that political will and skill are necessary for managerial success, leaders often must behave politically in order to succeed within organizational environments. However, despite a growing body of work on leader political skill, relatively little research has addressed the actual political behavior of leaders. Explanations for this gap in the leadership and organizational politics literatures have focused on the apparent paradox between the other-centered concept of leadership and the self-interested nature of political behavior. Recently, leader political support, which captures leaders' political behavior on behalf of others (i.e. their followers), has been introduced in an effort to address this gap. In this chapter, the authors expand the conceptual thinking on leader political support, and argue that it can be considered a form of prosocial leader behavior. Following a brief overview of the construct, and an explanation of the characteristics that link it to forms of prosocial behavior, the chapter uses existing research on prosocial motivation to explore the possible motives for leaders' political behavior in support of followers, before offering some potential avenues for future inquiry.

Part II

The second part of the book, "Organizational Politics and the Social Sphere", includes three chapters. The first one, "Pay-for-politics: considering the variable compensation–organizational politics relationship", by Timothy P. Munyon, Jacquelyn D. Jacobs, Andrew M. Carnes and Sergio López Bohle, suggests that compensation is one of the most important human resource practices in organizations. However, it can also be one of the most contentious, potentially eliciting political behavior and maneuvering as employees jockey to gain desired pay and rewards. The compensation–organizational politics relationship is thus extensively studied. The chapter reviews the literature to date regarding this relationship and summarizes key findings. The pay system and managerial characteristics that create a context for political behavior and perceptions of organizational politics are evaluated. Special attention is given to the question of how pay dispersion, reward size and intensity, managerial discretion, ambiguity and line of sight, and transparency can create a context conducive to political behavior and perceptions of politics. Moving to the group and team level, the chapter

considers how blended rewards and reward allocation methods influence employee political reactions and perceptions.

The second chapter, "How social media can impact the organizational political process", by Gordon B. Schmidt, argues that, while organizational politics are seen as an inherent part of work life, to date little research has examined how technology can impact the organizational process. One important technology influencing how people communicate is online social media, websites and applications that allow users to create and exchange content. This chapter describes how online social media can be used as a channel for workers to engage in organizational political behaviors. Online social media are also discussed as an information source for workers in perceptions of politics at their organization. Testable propositions are offered for both. Future research directions for better understanding of the use of social media in the organizational politics process are discussed.

The third chapter in this part is "Political blunders within organizations" by Andrew J. DuBrin. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the set of behaviors within organizations referred to as political blunders, or insensitive acts that bring workers into conflict with their manager and organization, and can damage their career. Blunders are also referred to as committing a faux pas, committing a gaffe, or "putting one's foot in one's mouth". The theoretical basis for understanding why blunders occur centers on the theory of emotional intelligence, and more broadly the theory of self-defeating behavior. The latter refers to activities or attitudes that work against one's best interests even when the individual appears to have the resources to avoid such behavior. Effective tactics for recovering from political blunders are based on knowledge of conflict resolution, including the effectiveness of apologies as a way of being forgiven for the blunder or blunders. The career-retarding blunders described are (a) public humiliation of others, (b) violation of company codes of ethics, (c) out-of-control avarice, (d) disseminating negative messages and misdeeds electronically, (e) bypassing the boss, (f) being revengeful and hostile during an exit interview, (g) indiscreet behavior in private life, and (h) conducting an office romance improperly. The blunders leading to embarrassment and minor setbacks described are (a) being politically incorrect, (b) displaying impatience for promotion, (c) gossiping about taboo subjects, (d) attacking sacred cows, (e) refusing to take vacations, (f) rejecting business social invitations, (g) wearing overly sexy clothing, (h) inappropriate consumption of alcohol, and (i) insensitivity to public opinion. A recommended way of recovering from a blunder is for the organizational member to admit that he or she made a mistake, apologize, and then refrain from committing the same blunder again.

Part III

The third part of the book deals with organizational politics from a value-based perspective. It is titled "Between Dark and Bright: Organizational Politics in Colors" and presents four chapters.

The first chapter, "Learning culture and organizational politics: a theoretical model and preliminary test of their impact on effective organizational auditing", by Moshe Mizrahi, Dana R. Vashdi and Eran Vigoda-Gadot, deals with internal auditing as an inherent part of the production and service process in every modern organization. Internal auditing systems are suggested as having become essential in the last decades as a central gatekeeper for high performance, quality standards, efficiency, effectiveness and especially proper conduct of behavior and moral standards of organizational members. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of perception of organizational politics on the relationship between organizational learning culture, and effectiveness of the internal audit in local authorities. The chapter focuses on the relationship between organizational learning culture and internal audit effectiveness, and mainly on the role of organizational politics in this relationship. The sample consisted of 426 employees/managers from 44 Israeli municipalities. Effectiveness of the internal audit was operationalized as an objective measure, examining the percentage of repaired deficiencies. It was found that the value of issue orientation was related to the effectiveness of auditing, and that perceptions of organizational politics moderated the relationship between issue orientation and effectiveness of the audit. As perceptions of organizational politics get stronger, the relationship between the extent to which an organization is seen to value issue orientation and the effectiveness of the internal audit is weaker.

The second chapter in this part is "Looking on the bright side: the positive role of organizational politics in the relationship between employee engagement and work performance" by Liat Eldor. It suggests that scholars have focused on the negative aspects of organizational politics, defined as self-serving tactics that impede employees' performance. In contrast, the chapter maintains that organizational politics has positive aspects and moderates the relationship between employee engagement and work performance behaviors such as knowledge sharing, creativity, proactivity and adaptability. Using data from 253 high-tech employees and their supervisors in Israel, our findings demonstrate that perceptions of organizational politics strengthen the relationship between employee engagement and work performance. When engaged employees perceive their workplace to be political, they are more proactive, creative and adaptive, and more likely to share their knowledge with their peers. These findings confirm

the challenge/opportunity stressor theory regarding perceptions of organizational politics and suggest that whether politics is viewed as positive or negative depends on the employees' point of view. For those who are engaged and more actively involved in their jobs, politics can be regarded as a challenge and even an opportunity for obtaining more resources to improve their performance. Implications for the development of theory and practice in this area are discussed.

The third chapter, "The ethical sphere: organizational politics, fairness and justice", by Duane Windsor, examines the ethical sphere of organizational politics and office politics in relationship to employee conceptions of fairness and justice within organizations. The ethical sphere is defined as the interaction of organizational politics, employee perceptions of fairness and justice, and the ethical climate and culture of the organization. This interaction affects important dimensions of employee and organizational performance. The chapter provides a conceptual framework for studying political, ethical and justice relationships within an organization's ethical sphere. The chapter explains key relevant theoretical and empirical literature on development, maintenance and performance effects of this ethical sphere.

The title of the last chapter, "The effects of Machiavellian leaders on employees' use of upward influence tactics: an examination of the moderating roles of gender and perceived leader similarity", by Hataya Sibunruang and Alessandra Capezio, suggests that Machiavellian leaders have a strong propensity to advance their personal interests, which may unknowingly precipitate their employees to behave in a similar manner through the exercise of upward influence tactics as a representative of political behaviors. Machiavellian leaders can be broadly described as displaying strategic and self-serving, misanthropic and agentic orientations. Thus employees may find it hard to work with such leaders and, subsequently, recognize the relevance of exercising social influence in order to facilitate their supervisory relationships. Accordingly, this chapter examines the effects of a leader's degree of Machiavellianism on employees' use of upward influence tactics, and further examines how the moderating roles of the gender of the employee and their perceived leader similarity come into play. In so doing, this chapter addresses the dearth of research examining the effects of Machiavellian leaders on employees' performance of political behaviors. More specifically, it develops a better understanding of how Machiavellians may influence employees' choices of upward influence tactics, and identifies some relevant conditions that may impact the exercise of social influence.

Part IV

The fourth and closing part of the volume deals with "New Frontiers: Maturity, Emotions and New Methods" in the study of organizational politics. It contains four chapters.

The first one, "Organizational politics and a maturity model: an integration and extension of existing models and dimensions", is by Erin M. Landells and Simon L. Albrecht. This chapter describes the development of an organizational politics maturity model based on a qualitative study of organizational politics involving 14 individual in-depth interviews conducted across three organizations. The organizational politics maturity model integrates and extends previous conceptualizations of organizational politics and acknowledges the reality of both "good" and "bad" organizational politics. Existing definitions, dimensions and measures of organizational political behavior, political skill, perceptions of organizational politics and power bases are first described at varying levels of analysis. Next, the chapter overviews recent qualitative research aimed at developing a greater understanding of organizational politics in contemporary organizational contexts, including whether employees perceive organizational politics to be both positive and negative. The chapter then presents a maturity model of organizational politics that can help organizations assess, manage and develop organizational politics in their particular context. The model proposes five levels of organizational politics perceptions: unaware, reactive, reluctant, strategic and integrated. The maturity model also incorporates five categories of political behavior that correspond to five established bases of organizational power: connection power, information power, coercive power, positional power and personal power. Finally, the authors point to the practical, theoretical and research implications of the model. The major contribution of this chapter is in integrating and extending existing negatively skewed conceptualizations and in its useful implications for theory and practice.

The second chapter in this section, "Emotion and emotional intelligence in organizational politics", is by Amos Drory and Galit Meisler. It suggests that organizational politics evokes emotional reactions among organizational members, yet little research attention has been paid to the interplay of emotion and organizational politics. The chapter attempts to address this void by providing an updated review of the literature on emotion as it pertains to perceptions of organizational politics (POP), political behavior and political skill. Based on this review, the authors propose an integrative model describing the relationships between organizational politics, emotional reactions, emotional intelligence and work outcomes, along with specific propositions. According to the model, POP and aggressive

political behaviors such as intimidation, pressure, assertiveness, coalitions and upward appeals elicit negative emotional reactions, which, in turn, affect work outcomes. The model further proposes that emotional intelligence serves as a buffer against the negative emotional reactions evoked by organizational politics. The chapter concludes with directions for future research and point to potential methodological concerns in the exploration of emotion in organizational politics.

The third chapter, "Rats in the shadows: researching organizational politics", by David A. Buchanan, explores innovative approaches to the study of organization politics, which is widely considered to be a "difficult" research topic. However, self-disclosure in this domain depends on how participants are approached, the relationship between researcher and participant, style of questioning, and the intended research outputs. Variations in approach, relationship, questioning and outputs are discussed, identifying more and less successful combinations of tactics, thus challenging, with examples, the assumption that participants will necessarily find this an uncomfortable subject to talk about, even with a stranger. In addition to conventional forms of (more or less structured) one-on-one interviews and focus groups, direct research methods include: focused life-history interviews; participant observation by embedded researchers; quizzing participants on management development programs; and single or small-n case studies. Proxy methods can also be used to explore the antecedents, tactics and consequences of political behavior in organizations, including analysis of feature films (*Elizabeth*, *Contact*), television programs (*House of Cards*, *Borgen*), and novels (such as the Booker prize-winning *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel). This discussion of methods will be underpinned by a constructivist–interpretive epistemology, and a processual–contextual perspective. The "problem" of generalizability is addressed, particularly in relation to single and small-n case study research. The chapter explores *moderatum* generalization, *naturalistic* generalization (or transferability), *analytical* generalization (or refinement), and *isomorphic learning*. The chapter concludes with the assertion that the kinds of questions and settings that are involved in studies of organization politics are more often better approached through constructivist, processual, qualitative methods.

Finally, the closing of the entire volume is "Political behaviors, politics perceptions and work outcomes: moving to an experimental study" by Sarah E. Hill, Amanda L.E. Thomas and John P. Meriac. It argues that, despite an extensive amount of research on organizational politics, the relationship between two key forms of politics, namely political behaviors and politics perceptions, remains unclear. The relationship between these forms of politics has often been assumed (e.g. Ferris et al., 2000),

resulting in a primary focus on perceptions of politics in theoretical discussions and empirical research. Definitions of organizational politics and political behavior have not maintained the focus and consensus needed to adequately understand the assumed linkage of behaviors and perceptions. This chapter presents a review of definitions of organizational politics, and results from an empirical study using an experimental method to test the relationship between political behaviors and politics perceptions. Relationships among political behavior, job satisfaction and intentions to turnover are also examined, as well as the mediating role of politics perceptions. Based on findings from the experimental results and the politics literature, this chapter offers directions for future research to pursue an integrated view of organizational politics, acknowledging the distinction between the political behavior one enacts versus that which one witnesses in others. Essential to this goal is clarifying the definition of political behavior and addressing any conceptual differences based on focus or level.

TARGET READERS

This book is both a look back and a look to the future of organizational politics as a vivid and developing field of study in organizational behavior and management. It presents to academic readers, as well as to students and practitioners, a collection of up-to-date, original studies conducted around the world at various levels of analysis and from manifold perspectives.

As with the first edition of the *Handbook of Organizational Politics* (2006), such a collection should be of great interest to scholars in various fields of the behavioral and social sciences such as organizational behavior, management and business, occupational psychology, sociology and political science. It offers a useful tool for academics and managers from the public and private sectors looking for better explanations of internal processes in businesses, as well as in large federal or state organizations.

While most of the book's readers will probably be academics, the chapters provide a wealth of information that may prove useful for other audiences. The theoretical chapters mostly offer clear propositions that can be useful for scholars who may want to use it as a starting point for more empirical examinations. In addition, the empirical data provided throughout the other chapters should help scholars and graduate students in the social sciences seeking a better understanding of intra-organizational dynamics, the development of conflicts in organizations, and the nature of power influence and authority in various worksites. Finally, the book,

with its strong thematic and academic orientation, delineates some important current developments in an area that is both covert and hard to study, but which holds great potential and promise for the future understanding of human political behavior. We hope the audience will benefit from this collective effort.

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