EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO PERCEIVED POLITICAL MOTIVES
IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of Psychology

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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By

Kimberly T. Silva

December 2018

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ABSTRACT

Supervisors claim to inflate, deflate, or otherwise manipulate performance ratings to achieve personal goals (Longenecker, Sims, & Gioia, 1987). While we know these goals impact performance ratings (e.g., Wang, Wong, & Kwong, 2010), it is unclear how (or if) supervisors' goals influence employee reactions to performance appraisal. To test this idea, I first grouped supervisors' goals into two political motives categories based on theory of negative and positive politics (Davis & Gardner, 2004): rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives. Next, framed by attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1995), I proposed a process whereby political motives influence employee perceptions of procedural justice, which evoke an emotional response, which impact perceptions of overall fairness. Further, I predicted that outcome favorability would moderate the process, such that the indirect effect holds when ratings are perceived unfavorable rather than favorable. Direct and indirect effects within the model were tested. Results indicated that rater-serving motives decrease perceptions of procedural justice, leading to a negative emotional response, and low perceived fairness. The indirect effect was magnified when appraisal outcomes were more unfavorable. The indirect effect from employee-serving motives to fairness was not significant. Contributions to organizational politics and overall fairness theory are discussed, as well as practical recommendations for approaching political motives in performance appraisal.

Keywords: performance appraisal, organizational politics, rater motivation, attribution theory, overall fairness, procedural justice, sensemaking theory, outcome favorability

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Employee Reactions to Perceived Political Motives

in Performance Appraisal

It is the "annual ritual of fear and loathing" (Noguchi, 2016). The "morale-buster"

that can reduce the toughest men and women to tears—the performance appraisal (Fox, 2009;

Gurchiek, 2017; Motro & Ellis, 2017). Performance appraisal may be the most disliked

organizational practice, nevertheless a most essential one (Adler et al., 2016; Park, 2014).

Despite our best efforts to improve them, performance appraisals remain a constant source of

criticism and complaint. Many employees claim the process is meaningless, nerve-racking,

and unfair which only contributes to its bad reputation (Iqbal, Akbar, & Budhwar, 2015;

Kaylor, 2017; Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). This negative impression may result from

perceived *political motives*—the rater's personal goals that influence performance appraisal

decisions and motivate raters to purposely distort ratings (e.g., inflate, deflate, centralize

ratings) (Longenecker, Sims & Gioia, 1987; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Spence & Keeping,

2011; Rosen, Kacmar, Harris, Gavin, & Hochwarter, 2017). Although politicking in the

appraisal process is not new information (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Latham & Dello-Russo

2008), the actual motivation behind such behavior and how it is perceived by employees is

relatively unknown. By exploring employee reactions to political motives, this research

offers valuable insight that might explain why employees are so averse to performance

appraisal (Spence & Keeping, 2013). Such information could be key for organizations

wanting to improve their performance management system (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

The purpose of this research, therefore, is to explore the political-social milieu of

performance appraisal to determine how the perception of rater's political motives affects the

ratee. To this end, I first define two types of political motives in performance appraisal: rater-

serving motives and employee-serving motives. I then use attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1995) to explore employee reactions to both types of motives. The central idea of attribution theory is that there is a causal process whereby perceived motives influence a person's reaction to a situation or event. I hypothesize that perceived political motives influence employees' perceptions of procedural justice, which affects employee emotion, which leads to perceptions of overall fairness ('fairness') of one's performance appraisal. The links between perceived political motives and the variables within the model are further explained by process-control theory (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992) and affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). I also rely on Davis and Gardner's (2004) explanation of negative and positive politics to reinforce these relationships. Beyond the attribution process, I draw on sensemaking theory (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) to describe the moderating role of outcome favorability. I hypothesize that outcome favorability acts as a "boundary condition" (Wu & Wang, 2013) in the attribution process such that the indirect relationship between perceived political motives and fairness holds when outcomes are unfavorable rather than favorable.

This study proposes that employees classify political motives as either rater-serving or employee-serving. *Rater-serving motives* describe goals that are first and foremost meant to benefit the supervisor (i.e., rater) and are primarily self-serving (e.g., giving lower ratings to remind an employee that the supervisor controls the process. *Employee-serving motives* describe goals that chiefly benefit an employee(s) and are primarily other-serving (e.g., giving higher ratings to protect an employee's reputation. This distinction is a direct reflection of Davis and Gardner's (2004) explanation of negative and positive politics. The

scholars suggest that the nature of political perceptions depends on the observer's attribution of the actor's intentions. Intentions meant to enhance one's own welfare or maintain control represent negative politics whereas those meant to enhance or maintain the well-being of others represent positive politics. Applied to performance appraisal, rater-serving motives may be perceived as negative, unacceptable reasons for distorting ratings while employee-serving motives may be perceived as positive, acceptable reasons for distorting ratings.

Perceived political intentions and/or behaviors can alter an employee's perception of their environment (Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2008). Additionally, the type of political intention and/or behavior perceived can have differential effects on employees' perceptions (Davis & Gardner, 2004). Therefore, I aim to determine if perceived rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives shape employee reactions to the performance appraisal process (i.e., *procedural justice, emotion, fairness*). According to attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1995), people seek to understand the motives behind an actor's behavior to reduce uncertainty about an outcome or event. People then use perceived motives to guide their reactions to that outcome or event. For instance, a received outcome motivates a person to question and evaluate the cause of the outcome, which leads to an emotional response (e.g., happiness, anger), which leads to a reaction. The proposed model (Figure 1a and 1b) builds on this framework.

I hypothesize that employees will consider the supervisor's political motives (i.e., rater-serving, employee-serving) following their appraisal—*Why did my supervisor give me this rating?* Since political motives have an inherent justice quality (i.e., acceptability), employees will view political motives as an indicator of procedural justice (political motive → procedural justice). The model then proposes that employees will have an emotional

response based on their perception of procedural justice (procedural justice → emotion). The emotional response will then influence perceptions of appraisal fairness (emotion → fairness). If the political motive is rater-serving, an employee will likely perceive low procedural justice, have a negative emotional response, and judge the overall appraisal as less fair. However, if the political motive is employee-serving, the employee will likely perceive high procedural justice, have a positive emotional response, and judge the appraisal as fairer. Together, the model predicts a causal chain between the type of political motive perceived, procedural justice, emotion, and fairness (political motive → procedural justice → emotion → fairness). While I expect a serial effect from perceived political motives to fairness through procedural justice and emotion, I also predict several direct and indirect effects between the variables. The purpose of exploring these links is to better understand *why* there might be relationships between perceived political motives, procedural justice, emotion, and fairness; not just *how* employees use this information to judge the fairness of their performance appraisal.

Eloquently said by Colquitt and Zipay (2015), "employees don't just think a situation is unfair, they feel it is unfair" (p.10). In uncertain situations, people use both cognitive and affective information processing strategies to assess fairness (Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterston, 2008). Thus, employees may take a cognitive, justice-laden route and/or an affective, emotion-laden route from perceived political motives to fairness. From the cognitive perspective, I use process-control theory (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992) to explain a possible relationship between perceived political motives and procedural justice. Due to its self-serving nature, I hypothesize that perceived rater-serving motives have a negative effect

on procedural justice because they communicate to employees less control over the appraisal process and risk of exploitation and exclusion. In contrast, employee-serving motives have an other-serving nature. Thus, employee-serving motives may have a positive effect on procedural justice because they communicate greater control and felt value by authority. Since justice information can be used to form fairness perceptions (Lind, 2001) and may be more proximal to political motives than global perceptions of fairness, I also predict that procedural justice will have a direct positive effect on fairness and the relationship between political motives and fairness will be indirect through procedural justice.

From the affective perspective, I use affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) to support a proposed link between perceived political motives and employee emotion. Affective events theory maintains that an event motivates a person to evaluate the situation, which sparks an emotion, which influences subsequent judgments. I hypothesize that perceived rater-serving motives will prompt a negative emotional response (e.g., anger) while employee-serving motives prompt a positive emotional response (e.g., happiness) based on Davis and Gardner's (2004) definition of negative and positive politics. Even though there is little evidence on the relationship between perceived politics and emotion (Rosen, Harris, & Kacmar, 2009) and almost none in the context of performance appraisal, scholars are adamant that employees recognize politics in performance appraisal (Dhiman & Maheshwari, 2013) and have strong feelings about the process (Gurchiek, 2017). Thus, it is worthwhile to explore a possible relationship between perceived political motives and emotion.

Concerning the relationship between emotion and fairness, research shows that people use their current affective state to judge the fairness of a situation: negative states can decrease fairness perceptions while positive states can increase fairness perceptions

(Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterson, 2008). I predict that this relationship exists in the performance appraisal context: negative (positive) emotion will decrease (increases) perceptions of appraisal fairness. On a similar note, evidence suggests that negative and positive emotion is associated with lower and higher levels of perceived procedural justice, respectively (Cropanzano, Weiss, Suckow, & Grandey, 2000; Hegtvedt & Killian, 1999; Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999). Yet, it is unclear whether perceptions of justice influence emotion or the reverse—both relationships are supported in the literature (Barsky, Kaplan, & Beal, 2011; Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000). Unique to this study, I explore the possibility that emotion is sandwiched between procedural justice and fairness. That is, procedural justice directly influences emotion and indirectly influences fairness through emotion. Results should provide more clarity on the matter.

Political motives, procedural justice, and emotion are probably not the only information employees consider when evaluating the fairness of their performance appraisal. The actual outcome of the performance appraisal likely influences perceptions, too. Namely, the favorability of the appraisal rating (i.e., *outcome favorability*). This study uses sensemaking theory (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Weick et al., 2005) to explain *when* outcome favorability might influence the attribution process. According to the theory, people become highly motivated to understand an event given an unfavorable outcome, making them especially susceptible and sensitive to process information when forming judgments. But, individuals are less concerned with the process when the outcome of the event is favorable (e.g., Brockner, Siegel, Daly, Tyler, & Martin, 1997). In performance appraisal, an employee may be especially curious about political motives when their appraisal seems unfavorable but less so when favorable. Imagine, an employee may not spend much time

wondering why she received a 'good' performance rating but might ruminate about the supervisor's motives given a 'poor' rating. Ergo, the magnitude of the indirect relationship between perceived political motives and fairness may depend on whether the appraisal outcome is perceived as unfavorable versus favorable.

Scholars have called for more research on the social nature of performance appraisal rather than its structural components (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Levy & Williams, 2004; Pichler, 2012). To answer this call, I explore politics as a social phenomenon that permeates the appraisal process (Folger, Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1992; Iqbal et al., 2015; Townley, 1990). There are four key reasons for this specific study. First, existing research fails to consider the effect of political motives on employees and instead focuses on the effect of rater's goals on performance ratings (e.g., Wang, Wong, & Kwong, 2010). Failing to consider the employee's point of view is unwise given that employee reactions can have a considerable impact on the quality and utility of an appraisal (Cardy & Dobbins, 1994). One exception is Poon's (2004) study on perceptions of rating manipulation. Poon determined that ratees had lower job satisfaction and greater intentions to quit when the reason for rating manipulation seemed self-serving rather than other-serving. Poon speculated that the relationship existed because intentions to benefit one's self are perceived as unjust and unfair but those meant to benefit others are more acceptable and fairer. The idea is interesting and reasonable, but the link between perceptions of rating manipulation, acceptability (i.e., justice), and fairness was not tested. Therefore, it is worthwhile to evaluate these factors in order to understand what drives employee reactions to the appraisal process.

A second reason for this study is to bring attention to the negative and positive nature of politics. Until recently, scholars have painted a wholly negative picture of politics,

essentially ignoring its benefits to the organization (Vigoda, 2003). As a result, the politics literature has become largely one-sided with many questionnaires that only measure a portion of the construct. To address this issue, I create a questionnaire that distinguishes negative politics from positive politics in performance appraisal (i.e., rater-serving motives, employee-serving motives) then use it to explore different pathways to perceptions of fairness. If the constructs are distinct, this research would support emerging evidence on positive politics and perhaps change the way people view politics and its place in the organization.

The third reason for this study is to extend the literature on overall fairness by operationalizing it as a unique employee perception, not a synonym for justice (Jones & Martens, 2009). 'Justice' and 'fairness' are traditionally used interchangeably, but they are not the same construct (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015). While *justice* describes adherence to a set of systematic rules (i.e., distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, informational justice, Colquitt, 2001), *fairness* is a global perception of appropriateness that draws information from justice and other sources, like affect (Lind, 2001; Rodell, Colquitt, & Baer, 2017). People use different types of information to evaluate fairness; so, focusing only on justice rules may not provide a complete or accurate picture of how individuals judge situations or events (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). By hypothesizing procedural justice and emotions as antecedents of fairness, I help clarify the sorts of information employees use to gauge the fairness of performance appraisal.

A final reason for this study is to provide the framework for an unconventional yet interesting idea—purposely distorting ratings to improve employee reactions. If certain political motives (i.e., employee-serving motives) can boost positive reactions, then communicating and acting on those goals could have advantageous outcomes for

organizations and its members. Supervisors claim that they manipulate performance ratings to promote positive reactions (Longenecker et al., 1987) and "soften" negative information to avoid negative reactions (Sirota & Juanchich, 2015). However, there is no evidence that this strategy is effective in performance appraisal (Scott, Garza, Conlon, & Kim, 2014). By exploring the relationship between political motives and employee reactions, I help uncover whether distortion and politics is useful and "nothing more than good management" (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995, p. 1995) or a detriment to the performance appraisal process.

In summary, I propose that employees perceive supervisor's (i.e., rater's) political motives as either rater-serving or employee-serving. This classification may prompt a chain of reactions where perceived political motives lead to perceptions of procedural justice, which affect employee emotion, and influence perceptions of fairness (direct and indirect effects between variables are also hypothesized). Additionally, I propose that the favorability of the performance appraisal rating influences this attribution process from political motives to fairness.

The following literature review examines theory and evidence pertaining to supervisors' political motives in performance appraisal. It begins with a conceptual review of organizational politics and rater motives to provide a framework for the proposed types of political motives. I then examine attribution theory and the nature of fairness to form hypotheses about the pathways from political motives to fairness. Specific attention is paid to the direct relationships between political motives, procedural justice, emotion, and fairness. Last, I review sensemaking theory and offer a final hypothesis on the moderating role of outcome favorability.

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics ('politics') is alive and well in corporations and there is no sign of it going anywhere soon (Eldor, 2017; Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). Thus, there is a constant need to explore the influence of politics on organizations and its members, especially in performance appraisal (Byrne, Manning, Weston, & Hochwarter, 2017; Latham & Dello Russo, 2008; Maslyn, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2017). *Organizational politics* can be defined as goal-directed, rational, and conscious intentions or behaviors meant to satisfy personal objectives (Fedor et al., 2008; Maslyn, Fedor, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2005; Valle & Perrewé, 2000). Although objective political intents and behaviors are interesting, evaluating the *perception* of politics tends to be the more common and useful approach when evaluating employee reactions (Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989). This is because people react to what they perceive, not necessarily what truly occurs (Weick, 1979). For this reason, I focus on the perception of politics rather than existing politics in organizations. The term 'perception' is implied when discussing the proposed model from this point forward.

The above definition of organizational politics permits a positive or negative interpretation of politics depending on the observers' interpretation of the actor's intentions and/or behaviors. Traditionally, politics was framed as a negative phenomenon that hindered organizational functioning (e.g., Mintzberg, 1983). This characterization led to negatively biased measures, such as the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS, Ferris & Kacmar, 1989), and a considerable focus on the "dark side" of politics (Ferris & King, 1991; Ullah, Jafri, Gondal, & Bin Dost, 2011). Fortunately, the scope of politics has recently expanded. Scholars have begun to highlight the functional aspect of politics, shifting research

towards the "bright side" of politics (Eldor, 2017; Ellen, 2014). Although there is some evidence of distinct negative and positive politics, research has not thoroughly captured how the valence of politics relates to the organization. The following sections describe the theoretical rationale behind the difference between negative and positive politics as well as the antecedents and outcomes related to perceptions of politics.

Theoretical Background of Organizational Politics

Davis and Gardner (2004) report that what makes politics seem more negative or positive may depend on the observer's impression of the actor's intentions. According to the scholars, intentions that seem predominately self-serving are more likely to be perceived as unacceptable and negative whereas those that are predominately other-serving are likely to be perceived as acceptable and positive. In other words, if an employee believes a supervisor engages in politics to enhance the supervisor's own well-being, the employee may judge the intention (i.e., motive) as more negative. If an employee believes a supervisor engages in politics to enhance the well-being of the employee(s), the employee may judge the intention as more positive. Fedor et al. (2008) provided a similar perspective on the distinction between negative and positive political behavior. According to Fedor and colleagues, political behavior is inherently self-serving. However, politicking may be perceived as more acceptable if the self-serving behavior also enhances organizational effectiveness.

The key difference between negative and positive politics may be the observer's impression of who benefits from politicking (Fedor et al., 2008). This explanation serves as the foundation for later discussion on political motives in performance appraisal. Namely, that the acceptability of politics may depend on an employee's perception of the supervisor's rating motives. Having reviewed the basis for distinguishing negative from positive politics, I

next discuss antecedents and outcomes of each factor to help illustrate how politics influence employee reactions.

Negative Organizational Politics

Negative organizational politics ('negative politics') can be defined as unsanctioned intentions and/or behaviors to maximize self-interests with little regard for the organization or its members (Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Mintzberg, 1983). Negative political intentions are generally thought to be dysfunctional and may motivate behaviors such as such as sabotage, lying, impression management, trading favors, or intimidation (Buchanan, 2008; Ferris & Hochwarter, 2011; Horner, Baack, & Baack, 2017; Rosen & Hochwarter, 2014). By reviewing well-known antecedents and outcomes of negative politics, it becomes clear why politics were originally characterized as solely negative.

Antecedents of Perceived Negative Politics. In their meta-analytic examination of organizational functioning, Atinc, Darrat, Fuller, and Parker (2010) discussed three types of factors that contribute to the perception of negative politics: (1) organizational factors, (2) job/work environment factors, and (3) personal factors. The perception of politics increases or decreases depending on the nature of the specific antecedent. For example, employees in highly centralized organizations (i.e., "the extent to which power and control is concentrated in the upper echelons of the organization", p. 496) tend to perceive greater negative politics. In contrast, employees who perceive more opportunity to participate in decisions report fewer negative politics. One of the most relevant antecedents discussed in Atinc et al.'s study is uncertainty (i.e., a sense that an event or behaviors are not governed by a clear set of rules; Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). The more uncertainty an employee

experiences in the organization, the more likely the employee will perceive negative politics. Uncertainty is a key factor because the performance appraisal process is characteristically ambiguous (Harris, Harris, & Wheeler, 2009) and essentially a "hot-bed" for politics (Latham & Dello-Russo, 2008).

Outcomes of Perceived Negative Politics. The perception of negative politics is associated with various outcomes that can harm the organization and employees. For example, negative politics is associated with greater turnover intentions, low job satisfaction, low task performance, employee strain, and less affective commitment to one's employer (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009). A particularly robust finding is the inverse relationship between negative politics and justice. Research consistently shows that negative politics relates to lower perceived distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice in the workplace (e.g., Bedi & Schat, 2013; Harris, Andrews, & Kacmar, 2007). According to Cacciattolo (2015), negative politics "mute and warp the voices and opinions of individuals" leading to a sense of unfairness and disregard for justice (p. 124).

Positive Organizational Politics

Positive organizational politics ('positive politics') are defined as intentions and/or behaviors that improve or protect employee or organizational well-being (Fedor & Maslyn, 2002; Hochwarter, 2012). Like negative politics, positive politics are still informal and discretionary but do not threaten the interests of others (Maslyn et al., 2005). As a result, positive politics tend to be viewed as functional intentions or social tactics to secure benefits for employees (e.g., using politics to help a mentee advance his or her career; Buchanan, 2008; Windsor, 2016). Because the topic of positive politics is so nascent, there is limited

empirical evidence on its antecedents and outcomes. Therefore, one relevant potential antecedent (i.e., trust) is discussed as well as available outcome evidence.

Antecedents of Perceived Positive Politics. It is not clear why some political intentions or behaviors seem acceptable to employees. However, there is reason to believe that the factors that influence perceptions of negative politics may also influence positive politics. Trust, for example, may be one of those factors (Atinc et al., 2010). Trust is a relevant factor because it is strongly tied to justice and fairness which are discussed later in this research (Van den Bos, 2001). In a qualitative study conducted by Landells and Albrecht (2017), participants mentioned the need for trust when differentiating between positive and negative politics. If a supervisor can be trusted to have the employee's best interest in mind, the employee may be more inclined to believe the supervisor has prosocial intentions when engaging in politics. Parker and Dipboye (1995) offered a similar idea in their review of positive politics. They proposed (but did test) the premise that the perception of positive politics depends on the perceiver's level of trust in a person who controls the process. This relationship may be especially salient when the process is important to the perceiver (like a performance evaluation).

Outcomes of Perceived Positive Politics. More is known about the outcomes of positive politics compared to its antecedents. Scholars have linked the perception of positive politics to employee attitudes and behaviors including greater job satisfaction, higher productivity, innovation, and improved conflict resolution (Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2008; Hochwarter, 2012; Landells & Albrecht 2017). These findings reveal that employees may be receptive to politics that appear to benefit them personally or may see the "good" in some political behavior.

In summary, organizational politics can be categorized as unacceptable (negative) or acceptable (positive) intentions and/or behaviors that either inhibit or promote organizational functioning and employee well-being. Factors related to the organization, situation, and people involved influence the perception of negative politics and potentially positive politics, too. Bordering on the obvious, negative politics tends to lead to negative reactions while positive politics tends to lead to positive reactions (e.g., low/high job satisfaction).

Rater's Political Motives in Performance Appraisal

Roughly once a year supervisors break from their normal routine to rate employee performance—a task that allows for some "creative discretion" (Longenecker & Ludwig, 1990, p. 961). Scholars and practitioners recognize that supervisors are motivated raters that purposely distort employee evaluations to meet personal goals. Although many scholars discuss the concept of rater motivation, few examine it empirically (Spence & Keeping, 2005). The lack of evidence may be due to confusion regarding rater motive terminology, especially the terms used to categorize supervisors' (or raters') goals (Spence & Keeping, 2005). Terms that often appear in the literature include rater motives, appraisal politics, rater goals, impression management, and leniency/severity (e.g., Greenberg, 1983; Harris, 1994; Longenecker et al., 1987; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Spence & Keeping, 2011). To reduce confusion regarding the subject matter, I discuss the overlap between these terms as well as related conceptual and empirical research. For simplicity, 'goals' will be used to describe the specific objectives raters aim to achieve, and 'rater motivation' to describe the theoretical process concerning rating distortion.

Terminology and Evidence of Rater Motivation

   Rater Motives. *Rater motives* may be the broadest term used to describe the goals that direct rating behavior. This term is a catch-all label that conveniently describes appraisal goals in general. It also meshes well with theoretical explanations, like Harris's (1994) model of rater motivation. Harris proposed one of the first models that illustrated the causes and effects of purposeful rating distortion specific to the performance appraisal context. The theoretical framework suggests that situational and personal variables influence motivation factors, which in turn influence how raters process performance information (i.e., observation, storage, retrieval, integration, rating, and feedback). According to the model, there are three types of rater motives: (1) rewards, (2) negative consequences, and (3) impression management. These categories group the specific goals that raters work towards (e.g., "to maintain an appropriate image vis-à-vis his or her subordinates", p. 742) or work to avoid when completing performance appraisal evaluations (e.g., to avoid "providing feedback [that] will demoralize rather than motivate the employee", p. 741)

   Spence and Keeping (2011) also used 'rater motives' to describe "the influences that cause raters to rate inaccurately and of which they are consciously aware" (p. 87). The scholars maintain that rater motives stem from the desire to approach positive outcomes and avoid negative outcomes, politics, impression management, and leniency. Spence and Keeping grouped goals into three types of rater motives: (1) achieving/maintaining a positive image of themselves or workgroup, (2) achieving/maintaining a positive relationship with employees, and (3) achieving/maintaining behaviors supportive of organizational norms and goals. The overlap between these groupings and others found in the literature becomes apparent in the following review.

Appraisal Politics. Some of the earliest works on rating distortion place goals under the umbrella of organizational politics. *Appraisal politics* are defined as the rater's considerations that act as a source of bias or inaccuracy in employee appraisal (Gioia & Longenecker, 1994; Longenecker et al., 1987). In a series of candid interviews with supervisors, Longenecker and colleagues learned that political considerations were almost always a part of the appraisal process. These considerations motivated supervisors to purposefully inflate or deflate subordinate performance ratings. For example, ratings were inflated to "promote a subordinate 'up and out' when the subordinate was performing poorly" (p. 189) but deflated to "teach a rebellious subordinate a lesson" (p. 190). Gioia and Longencker took a similar approach in their review of politics in performance appraisal among senior leaders. The scholars defined appraisal politics as "any deliberate attempt on the part of a higher-ranking executive to enhance, control, or protect self- or organizational interests via the appraisal of subordinate executives" (p. 48). From this perspective, the appraisal process is seen as a tool to achieve desired goals that are not conducive to rating accuracy.

In 1996, Tziner, Latham, Price, and Haccoun conducted a much-needed empirical analysis of appraisal politics. The political considerations were defined as raters' personal goals that motivate them to intentionally distort performance ratings. The questionnaire that resulted from the study maintained that raters largely manipulated ratings to acquire benefits for themselves (i.e., Questionnaire of Political Considerations in Performance Appraisal; QPCPA). Example items read, "supervisors produce accurate ratings only to the extent they perceive that they may be rewarded for doing so or penalized for failing to do so" and "the fear that performance ratings may threaten the self-esteem of employees discourage

supervisors from giving negative—though accurate—ratings" (p. 184). The major issue with the QPCPA is that it does not completely capture the entire scope of politics according to today's definition of negative and positive politics. Instead, it paints goals as entirely negative ignoring those that may be considered positive. This issue was address by Poon (2004) in a subsequent analysis.

Poon (2004) conducted a factor analysis on the QPCPA and revealed that political goals were best represented by two factors: (1) personal bias/punishment motive and (2) motivational motive. The personal bias/punishment motive included goals related to favoritism, favors, and punishing tactics while the motivational motive included goals related to rewarding employees or maintaining a positive workgroup climate. When used to predict employee reactions, the results indicated that perceived personal bias/punishment motives for altering ratings led to greater turnover intentions and lower job satisfaction while motivational motives did not have a significant effect on reactions. Sogra, Shahid, and Najibullah (2009) replicated and expanded on Poon's study using a similar measure. The findings showed that perceived punishment motives led to lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment whereas motivational motives led to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment among executive MBA students in Bangladesh. Given this empirical evidence, it is reasonable to address goals from a political perspective as long as both negative and positive politics are considered.

Rater Goals. In 1995, Murphy and Cleveland published a seminal book that addressed rater motivation in performance appraisal. The scholars labeled the goals that direct rating behavior and may be responsible for inaccurate or accurate ratings as *rater goals*. The specific goals were grouped into four categories: (1) task-performance goals, (2)

interpersonal goals, (3) strategic goals, and (4) internalized goals. Murphy and Cleveland did not provide a list of specific goals, nor did they provide empirical evidence for the typology. Rather, they gave a general description of the four goal categories and offered possible rating strategies used to achieve such goals. For example, interpersonal goals involve using an appraisal "to maintain or improve interpersonal relations between the supervisor and subordinates" which might be accomplished by inflating performance ratings (p. 222). Murphy and Cleveland wanted to untangle rater goals from politics because the 'politics' label gave the incorrect impression that the objectives were predominately evil or cynical. Most supervisors are probably not distorting ratings as part of a diabolical or vengeful plan. Still, the typology of rater goals was published in an era when negative politics dominated the literature so the concern is warranted.

The conceptual typology of rater goals was followed by Murphy, Cleveland, Skattebo, and Kinney's (2004) empirical analysis of rater goals in performance appraisal. Murphy and colleagues created a questionnaire to assess the goals pursued by raters when evaluating their instructors. Rater goals were represented by four factors: (1) goals to identify weaknesses, (2) goals to identify strengths, (3) fairness goals, and (4) motivating goals. Sample items include, "improve my instructor's confidence" (i.e., motivating goals) and "convey my satisfaction with the instructor's performance" (i.e., identify strengths). Although the study makes no mention of politics, it referenced the same phenomenon—that individuals have different goals when completing the performance appraisal and give different ratings depending on those goals. The study does however mention that rater goals may be a function of the costs and benefits of giving high or low ratings, much like the rater

motives in Harris's (1994) theoretical model of rater motivation (i.e., rewards and negative consequences).

Later, Wong and Kwong (2007) conducted an experiment to assess the effect of rater goals on performance scores. The experimenters asked participants to complete a peer evaluation at two time points according to the goals (1) fairness, (2) harmony, (3) motivation, or (4) identification of true performance. Results of the experiment indicated that raters increased mean ratings and decreased discriminability between performance ratings when pursing a harmony or fairness goal. The experimental model was expanded by Wang et al. (2010) to include performance level of the ratee as a moderator. Findings revealed that raters inflated peer ratings when pursuing harmony, fairness, and motivation goals and more so for low performers than high or medium performers. Although neither study mentioned appraisal politics, the featured categories mirror some of the goals listed in the politics literature. For example, the harmony goal is described by a sub-goal to reduce employee dissatisfaction and avoid antagonistic behaviors (Wong & Kwong, 2007). The sub-goal reflects political goals "to avoid a confrontation with a subordinate" (Longenecker et al., 1987, p. 189) and the perception that "supervisors avoid giving performance ratings that may antagonize employees" (Tziner et al., 1996, p. 183).

Impression Management. *Impression management* refers to the broad objective to influence another person's perception of an individual to attain a personally valued goal (Villanova & Bernardin, 1989). Impression management is limited in terms of its ability to describe the goals for distorting ratings and may be better suited to describe the behaviors that stem from a goal. Moreover, in the context of performance appraisal, impression management is typically studied as an employee's motive to influence supervisor's rating

decisions, not the supervisor's motive to use the appraisal to influence employee reactions (e.g., Wayne & Kacmar, 1991; Wayne & Liden, 1995). However, impression management does appear in many of the beforementioned descriptions of goals, therefore, can be considered a key feature of rater motivation.

Leniency/Severity. Rating *leniency* and *severity* refer to the tendency to give scores that are higher or lower than deserved, respectively (Borman, 1977). Like impression management, leniency/severity may better represent a rating behavior instead of a goal. Yet, some scholars have grouped specific goals under reasons for leniency and severity. For example, leniency may include goals to avoid negative consequences (Bernardin & Buckley, 1981), to appear successful (Greenberg, 1991), to insure rewards for employees (Longenecker et al., 1987), and to avoid negative employee reactions (Fried, Levi, Ben-David, & Tiegs, 1999). Severity has been used to group goals to punish a rebellious subordinate or to coax a subordinate out of the organization (Longenecker et al., 1987). It should be noted that these goals are linked to at least one of the beforementioned terms.

By looking at the conceptual and empirical evidence regarding rater motivation, it becomes clear that there is substantial overlap among rater motives, appraisal politics, rater goals, and to some extent impression management and leniency/severity. Hence, I suggest that *rater political motives* or the shortened *political motives* is the most optimal way to describe supervisor's rating goals. This term captures both the political and social nature of the performance appraisal context and covers a broad scope of objectives.

Types of Political Motives

There have been some attempts to label, define, and group goals into conceptually related categories, but the subject matter remains largely understudied and lacking in

empirical analysis (Murphy, 2008; Spence & Keeping, 2005, 2013; Tziner & Murphy, 2005).

To address this issue, I created a questionnaire that differentiates between negative and

positive political motives in performance appraisal. Relying on theory of negative and

positive politics (Davis & Gardner, 2004), I propose that employees will perceive

supervisor's rating motives as primarily self-serving (i.e., rater-serving motives) or other-

serving (i.e., employee-serving motives). The definitions and examples of each factor are

based on interviews with subject matter experts and a review of the literature.

Rater-Serving Motives

Rater-serving motives primarily serve self-interests thus may be perceived as

unacceptable by ratees. Supervisors with rater-serving motives are mainly concerned with

gaining or maintaining power, self-promotion, impression management, personal

achievement, or simply keeping the boss happy (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Harris, 1994;

Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Manor & Mead, 2010; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Rosen et al.,

2009). Specific goals may include the desire to create an image of oneself as a competent

leader, punish a least favorite employee, reduce uncomfortable feelings (e.g., guilt), or get on

an employee's "good side" (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2006; Inesi, 2010; Murphy &

Cleveland, 1995; Tziner et al., 1996).

The motivation to pursue self-interests is undoubtedly high. Individuals who engage

in these goal-directed behaviors tend to be viewed positively by their superiors and enjoy

great career success (Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). For example,

Kapoutsis, Papalexandris, Thanos, and Nikolopoulos (2012) determined that image building

predicted objective and subjective career success. Moreover, employees who engaged in self-

focused impression management tactics received higher performance ratings (Zivnuska et al.,

2004). It is no surprise then that employee evaluations are influenced by politics (Rosen et al., 2017).

Employee-Serving Motives

Employee-serving motives primarily serve the interests of others thus may be perceived as acceptable by ratees. Supervisors with employee-serving motives are mainly concerned with promoting benevolence, harmony, showing gratitude, cooperation, motivation, or making a positive difference in employees' lives (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Grant, 2007; Grant & Mayer, 2009; Rioux & Penner, 2001; Spence & Keeping, 2013; Wang et al., 2010). Specific goals may include maximizing a merit increase for an eligible subordinate, rewarding effort even when results were poor, avoiding hurt feelings, and protecting an employee from negative outcomes associated with lower scores (Cleveland & Murphy, 1992; Longenecker & Gioia, 2000; Longenecker & Ludwig, 1990).

The desire to help others may stem from an innate capacity for empathy (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009) and prosociality (Maner & Gailliot 2006). Or, supervisors (i.e., raters) may recognize the value in using the performance appraisal process to benefit employees. Showing gratitude, for example, is linked to increased initiation and maintenance of citizenship behaviors (Grant & Gino, 2010), a sense of corporate social responsibility (Andersson, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2007), and job satisfaction (Waters, 2012). As evidence indicates, raters tend to soften negative feedback or rate leniently to meet these types of goals (Kane, Bernardin, & Wiatrowski, 1996; Yariv, 2006).

In summary, rater-serving motives primarily focus on maintaining or furthering the rater's self-interests with little regard for the well-being of others. They describe a general desire for control; therefore, represent negative politics. Employee-serving motives primarily

focus on protecting or furthering others' interests. These motives describe a general desire to support or care for employee well-being; therefore, represent positive politics.

Attribution Theory

People are naturally curious and want to know, "Why?" (Kelley, 1971; Weiner, 1985; White, 1959)—*Why did this happen? Why was I treated that way?* By ascribing a cause to an outcome, one can reduce situational uncertainty and make a more informed decision about how to react to an event (Weiner, 2004). This link from perceived cause to reaction can be explained by Weiner's (1985, 1995) attribution theory. The theory describes a process whereby "thinking gives rise to feelings which guide action" (Weiner, 2010, p. 34). There are multiple ways to apply the attribution process (e.g., self-evaluation, social evaluation). For the sake of simplicity and relevancy to this study, I describe the attribution process regarding a social event between two individuals.

When an outcome or event occurs (especially an unexpected one), attribution theory says that a perceiver will question its cause, or the motives of its actor (i.e., the person who delivers the outcome or is a participant in the event). This desire to understand the cause of an event is especially strong when the perceiver is dependent on the actor in the event (Kelley & Michela, 1980); like an employee who depends on the supervisor to assess job performance. The attribution may directly influence the perceiver's reactions and/or elicit an emotional response that also influences reactions (Weiner, 2004). The types of *events* or *outcomes* that may occur, for example, include achievement failure, a need for help, compliance with request, or an aggressive act of another (Weiner, 2004). The *cause* can be an indication of perceived motives which may be tied to circumstantial factors including controllability/intentionality of the actor's behavior, stability of the behavior over time, or

locus of the behavior (i.e., cause is due to characteristics of the situation or actor) (Weiner, 1985, 1979). The *emotional response* may be negative (e.g., anger, frustration) or positive (e.g., happiness) depending on the perceived cause. Finally, the *behavioral reaction* might be prosocial (e.g., help), anti-social (e.g., aggression), or anything in between given the perceived cause and emotion (Weiner, 2004).

Using attribution theory as a framework, I propose a model of political motives and employee reactions to performance appraisal. The model illustrates that, when an employee receives his or her appraisal, the employee will be motivated to understand the cause of the appraisal outcome (i.e., rater-serving motive, employee-serving motive). The attribution will influence the employee's perception of the appraisal (i.e., procedural justice), which will lead to an emotional response (i.e., positive or negative), which will influence global perceptions of the appraisal (i.e., overall fairness). The circumstantial factors controllability/intentionally are implied: supervisors have considerable control over appraisal ratings and political motives describe intentional rating behavior (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Spence & Keeping, 2016). Imagine the following scenario for further explanation.

> *An employee receives a formal performance appraisal from her supervisor. It says her leadership skills last quarter were 'satisfactory', which is unexpectedly low. The employee is unsure why she got this rating so she thinks about her supervisor's reason for this decision. The employee thinks that her supervisor gave her this rating to motivate her to work on her management skills. She takes this as a sign that her supervisor cares about her career progression, thus the supervisor had good intentions for the rating. As a result, the employee thinks the process was acceptable, feels content, and generally has a positive impression of the process.*

From the employee's perspective, her appraisal was altered for a legitimate reason—
to motivate performance improvement. Indeed, many individuals would probably agree that
it is acceptable to use the performance appraisal process to motivate employees. But what if
the reason did not seem acceptable? How might an employee react? I rely on attribution
theory to answer these questions, focusing on a particularly important reaction to the
performance appraisal process: perceptions of overall fairness.

Overall Fairness

Employees care immensely about the fairness of their performance appraisal,
especially in highly political organizations (Harrington & Lee, 2015). *Fairness* is a global
impression of acceptability or appropriateness that includes, but is not limited to, perceptions
of justice (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015; Colquitt & Zipay, 2015; Cropanzano et al., 2015).
Meaning, perceptions of fairness are formed by evaluating justice information (e.g.,
procedural justice). People also use affect to form fairness perceptions. Emotions serve as
information that help shape one's global perception of an event (Weiss & Cropanzano,
1996). In this way, justice and emotion are two pieces of the fairness puzzle.

People care about fairness because it helps relieve uncertainty (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015).
Employee uncertainty can take many forms: uncertainty about trustworthiness (Lind, 2001;
Van den Bos, 2001), status (Tyler & Lind, 1992), morality (Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger,
2003; Folger & Cropanzano, 2001;), goal progress (Gillespie & Greenberg, 2005), or
basically anything. See Colquitt and Zipay (2015) for a comprehensive review of the topic.
Relevant to this study, employees may focus their attention on fairness because performance
appraisal and politics create uncertainty (which is discussed in the following sections) (Ferris
et al., 2002; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Similarly, motives can serve as information used to

reduce uncertainty, especially in social situations (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). People use perceived motives to help them understand why, how, when, and where another person will act (Dik & Aarts, 2007). With motive information, the perceiver can more easily decide how to react to an event and/or the people involved (Dik & Aarts, 2007).

In summary, people draw on justice and emotion information to form a global perception of acceptability, or perceptions overall fairness (Lind, 2001; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Perceptions of fairness are important because they can be used to reduce situational uncertainty (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Perceived motives also help reduce situational uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Dik & Aarts, 2007), thus, might be a key component in the formation of fairness perceptions. Accordingly, I hypothesize that employees use political motives to inform perceptions of procedural justice and emotion which are both used to form perceptions of fairness. This study focuses on *procedural justice* (i.e., the appropriateness of the processes used to arrive at an outcomes, Thibaut & Walker, 1974) instead of other forms of justice because motives are part of the decision-making process that lead to an outcome (i.e., motives lead to specific goals that dictate behavior; Beach & Mitchell, 1987).

Political Motives, Procedural Justice, and Fairness

While attribution theory explains *how* political motives influence fairness, justice theories explain *why* they influence these perceptions. In the sections below, I propose that the relationship between political motives and fairness is indirect, partly through procedural justice. I draw on process-control theory, the group-value model of procedural justice, and general cognitive approaches to fairness to support my hypotheses.

Process-Control Theory and the Group-Value Model

One of the most robust findings in the justice literature is that the opportunity to express one's opinion or concerns regarding decision-making procedures improves perceptions of the procedure (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). There are two theoretical perspectives that explain this "voice effect" (Folger, 1977). The *process-control perspective* holds that people care about voice because it indicates control over allocated outcomes either directly (i.e., choice to accept desirable outcomes and reject undesirable ones) or indirectly (i.e., opportunity to influence the decision-making process) (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). The more perceived control an individual has over a decision-making process (and thus the outcome), the more acceptable the procedure seems. Therefore, voice is important to the extent that it has positive implications for one's instrumental concerns (e.g., material gain) (Wu & Wang, 2013).

The *group-value model perspective* explains that people care about opportunity for voice because it shows that they are respected by authority and esteemed by their social group (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989; Tyler & Lind, 1992). When a person feels valued and included by authority in a decision-making process, the process seems more acceptable (Van den Bos, 2001). Unlike process-control theory, the group-value model says that people are less concerned with the outcomes they receive and more interested in validating their social standing in a group (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). Hence, voice is important for relational reasons instead of instrumental ones.

In summary, opportunity for voice can indicate (1) control over processes (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) or (2) value and inclusion by authority (Lind & Tyler, 1988). When

employees feel "heard" during decision-making processes conducted by an authority, they are more likely to judge the processes as acceptable (i.e., greater procedural justice). I apply this rationale to the performance appraisal process in the following sections.

Political Motives and Procedural Justice

    Rater-Serving Motives. Rater-serving motives aim to primarily benefit the self through attainment of control over decisions, procedures, or people (Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005). Therefore, they are inconsistent with employee control over the appraisal process. By using the performance appraisal to gain or maintain personal control, supervisors deny employees voice or meaningful influence over the process and outcome. Since opportunity for voice or influence over a decision-making process translates to lower procedural justice (Colquitt et al., 2001; Thibaut & Walker, 1975), the perception of control-based goals could decrease employees' perception of procedural justice in performance appraisal. Research on politics supports this logic: perceived negative politics is associated with less perceived opportunity to participate in decision-making processes (Atnic et al., 2010; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010).

    The relationship between rater-serving motives and procedural justice can also be explained by the group-value model perspective. Lind and Tyler (1988) said that perceived risk of exploitation and exclusion decreases perceptions of procedural justice. By definition, rater-serving motives are self-interest goals which can be achieved by exploiting or excluding others (Cislak, 2013). For instance, Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, and Galinsky (2008) found that leaders objectified people with high value by using them as a resource but distanced themselves from those with low value to achieve self-interest goals. Moreover, employees reported feeling excluded, isolated, and having damaged self-worth when leaders acted on

self-interest goals (Landells & Albrecht, 2017). Rater-serving motives, therefore, may indicate risk for exploitation or exclusion to employees, decreasing procedural justice.

Employee-Serving Motives. Employee-serving motives aim to primarily benefit the employee by supporting or caring for their interests. According to Colquitt and Rodel (2015), taking another person's interests into consideration enhances procedural justice. By considering employees' interests during the performance appraisal process, supervisors give employees voice, thus control, over their performance appraisal. Given that perceived control indicates greater procedural justice, employee-serving motives could increase perceptions of procedural justice.

Employee-serving motives also communicate that a person is appreciated, a respected member of the workgroup, and worthy of investment and protection. When a person feels that his or her leader (especially a leader who evaluates the person's work) values and cares about him or her, the person tends to react positively (e.g., job dedication, performance; Liu, Hui, Lee & Chen, 2013). Indeed, perceived value and inclusion may enhance perceptions of procedural justice (Van de Bos et al., 2001; Van den Bos, Wilke, Lind, & Vermunt, 1998). Employee-serving motives, therefore, could increase procedural justice.

Hypothesis 1: (a) Rater-serving motives will be negatively related to procedural justice. (b) Employee-serving motives will be positively related to procedural justice.

Cognitive Theories of Fairness

Many cognitive theories of fairness suggest that people use justice information to form fairness perceptions (e.g., Leventhal 1976; Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980). For example, fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, Lind, & Wilke, 2001) explains that people combine justice-relevant information (whether procedural, distributive,

interpersonal, or informational) to assess fairness. As a second example, the total fairness

model (Törnblom & Vermunt, 1999) argues that overall fairness is a function of one's

experience with distributive and procedural justice as well as outcome favorability.

Regardless of the differences, cognitive theories largely come to the same conclusion—that

fairness is "theoretically downstream" from justice (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt &

Rodell, 2015; Kim & Leung, 2007). Justice factors, then, are antecedents of fairness

(Colquitt, 2012) and should be studied in the context of fairness (Fassina, Jones, &

Uggerslev, 2008). The following hypotheses test this relationship between procedural justice

and fairness.

Procedural Justice and Fairness

Evidence shows that procedural justice in performance appraisal leads to positive

employee reactions (e.g., Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998; Greenberg, 1986; Heslin &

VandeWalle, 2011; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). However, scholars have hardly explored

the relationship between procedural justice and fairness (Ambrose & Arnaud, 2005; Colquitt

& Shaw, 2005; Hauenstein, McGonigle, & Flinder, 2001) and none in the performance

appraisal context. Although one might expect procedural justice to have a strong relationship

with fairness, that is not necessarily the case. Although Beugré and Baron (2001) found a

significant, positive relationship between procedural justice and overall fairness, Jones and

Martens (2009) found no significant relationship. Jones and Martens explained that it may be

difficult for employees to interpret procedural justice information depending on the situation.

Thus, more research is needed to understand how employees use procedural justice

information to form perceptions of overall fairness. Relying on theory that states that people

use justice information to form fairness perceptions (Lind, 2001), I offer the following

hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Procedural justice will be positively related to fairness.

Additionally, I expect political motives will have an indirect effect on fairness

through procedural justice. When an employee receives a seemingly politicized performance

appraisal, he or she will feel a sense of uncertainty. Performance appraisal can cause

uncertainty because employees often do not know what information supervisors use to

complete evaluations (Coens & Jenkins, 2002), how evaluations are used by the organization

(Williams & Levy, 2000), or whether non-performance related factors affected their rating in

general (Levy & Williams, 2004). Politics can also cause uncertainty because they reduce

employees' ability to predict relevant outcomes, given their unsanctioned and unregulated

nature (Ferris, Frink, Galang, Zhou, Kacmar, & Howard, 1996; Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt,

Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). To reduce uncertainty, employees may aim to determine the

fairness of the performance appraisal (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002).

To determine fairness, employees may draw on justice-laden information perceived from the

situation (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Lind, 2001). Hence, procedural justice may be more

proximal to rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives than fairness. Thus, I

propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: (a) Rater-serving motives will have an indirect effect on fairness

through procedural justice. (b) Employee-serving motives will have an indirect effect

on fairness through procedural justice.

Political Motives, Emotion, and Fairness

Affective Events Theory

Like process-control theory and the group-value model, affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) explains *why* political motives may influence fairness, except through emotion rather than procedural justice. Affective events theory says that workplace events can trigger changes in an employee's emotional state, which influences evaluations and behaviors (Weiss & Beal, 2005). The theory maintains that emotions vary within person across time (Weiss, 2002), so an employee can be happy at one moment then angry the next, due to some event. Once this emotion is realized, it is used to guide subsequent reactions (e.g., overall job satisfaction, Fisher, 2000). Indeed, feelings intermix with judgments serving as a shortcut for evaluating a target or event (Forgas & George, 2001). Applied to performance appraisal, political motives may influence fairness through emotion.

Political Motives and Emotion

Rater-Serving Motives. Rater-serving motives may trigger a negative emotional response from employees due to their negative political nature (Davis & Gardner, 2004). Support for this hypothesis is evidenced in the politics literature: perceived negative politics increased employee frustration and anxiety (Ferris et al., 1996; Rosen et al., 2009). Moreover, Halbesleben, Bowler, Bolino, and Turnley (2010) found that supervisors felt angry when they suspected employees' helping behavior was motivated by impression management motives (e.g., to avoid looking bad in front of others)—a tenant of rater-serving motives. Therefore, I expect rater-serving motives to influence employee emotion in a negative way.

Employee-Serving Motives. Employee-serving motives may trigger a positive emotional response from employees due to their positive political nature (Davis & Gardner, 2004). As of yet, there is no known empirical evidence on the relationship between positive politics and emotion. However, Halbesleben and colleagues (2010) did find that supervisors felt happy when they suspected employees' helping behavior was motivated by prosocial motives (e.g., to help those in need), which are similar to employee-serving motives. Additionally, Harris and Kacmar (2005) reported that supportive supervisor behaviors buffered against employee stress due to perceived negative politics (Harris & Kacmar, 2005). The buffering effect might be due to positive emotions caused by perceived intentions to support the employee. It is rational then to predict that employee-serving motives will lead to a positive emotional response.

Hypothesis 4: (a) Rater-serving motives will be positively related to negative emotion. (b) Employee-serving motives will be positively related to positive emotion.

Emotion and Fairness

According to affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), emotion independently influences one's judgment of an event. Ergo, perceptions of fairness may, in part, be a function of employees' emotion. When it comes to negative and positive emotions, reactions consistently follow suit—negative feelings precede negative judgments and positive feelings precede positive judgments (Fisher, 2000; Gabriel, Diefendorff, Chandler, Moran, & Greguras, 2014; Mullen, 2016). Accordingly, I expect negative emotion to decrease fairness perceptions and positive emotion to increase fairness perceptions.

Moreover, both affective events theory and attribution theory state that emotion can change dramatically due to an outcome or event (Weiner, 1995; Weiss, 2002). I predict that

emotion will vary on account of realized political motives and color subsequent reactions. That is, an employee's emotional state will change once he or she decides on the primary political motive, which will spark and emotional response, which will affect fairness perceptions.

Hypothesis 5: (a) Negative emotion will be negatively related to fairness. (b) Positive emotion will be positively related to fairness.

Hypothesis 6: (a) Rater-serving motives will have an indirect effect on fairness through negative emotion. (b) Employee-serving motives will have an indirect effect on fairness through positive emotion.

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Procedural Justice, Emotion, and Fairness

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Emotions are deeply intertwined with justice events in the workplace (Barsky, Kaplan, & Beal, 2011). Unsurprisingly, negative emotions are associated with higher levels of procedural justice and positive emotions are associated lower levels of procedural justice (Cropanzano et al., 2000; Hegtvedt & Killian, 1999; Weiss et al.,1999). While some scholars say that emotion influences perceptions of justice (e.g., Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005; Barsky, Kaplan, & Beal, 2011), others maintain that perceptions of justice provoke emotion (e.g., Smith, Haynes, Lazarus, & Pope, 1993). For example, Murphy and Tyler (2008) found that procedural justice influenced employees' emotions when dealing with an authority. Moreover, Murphy and Tyler found that emotions mediated the relationship between procedural justice and compliance behavior. Thus, emotions may play a key role between procedural justice and employee reactions. In contrast, Krehbiel and Cropanzano (2000) found that emotions, like happiness and anger, impacted procedural justice. They argued that emotions are part of a primary appraisal process that influences a secondary appraisal process

regarding one's environment. Although these findings seem to disagree, they may both be correct (in a way). Emotion may be sandwiched between two forms of justice—a specific evaluation of justice rule adherence and a global evaluation of appropriateness. Since fairness is "theoretically downstream" from procedural justice (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt & Rodell, 2015; Kim & Leung, 2007), I propose that procedural justice directly influences emotion and indirectly influences fairness through emotion. To my knowledge, there is no evidence of a justice-to-emotion-to-fairness relationship. Exploring this association is an important opportunity to understand how emotion fits with the justice-fairness relationship.

Hypothesis 7: (a) Procedural justice will be negatively related to negative emotion. (b) Procedural justice will be positively related to positive emotion.

Hypothesis 8: (a) Procedural justice will have an indirect effect on fairness through negative emotion. (b) Procedural justice will have an indirect effect on fairness through positive emotion.

Political Motives, Procedural Justice, Emotion, and Fairness

Attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1995) explains that people sequentially process situational information which guides their reactions to an event. Given theory and empirical evidence provided in the previous sections, I propose a successive indirect relationship between political motives, procedural justice, emotion, and fairness (rater-serving/employee-serving motives → procedural justice → negative/positive emotion → fairness). I propose that an employee first determines whether his or her supervisor had rater-serving motives or employee-serving motives when evaluating the employee's job performance. If the employee perceives rater-serving motives, the employee will judge the process as less procedurally just, prompting a negative emotional response, which will decrease perceptions of fairness.

However, if the employee perceives employee-serving motives, the employee will judge the process as more procedurally just, prompting a positive emotional response, which will increase perceptions of fairness.

Hypothesis 9: (a) Rater-serving motives will have an indirect effect on fairness through procedural justice and negative emotion. (b) Employee-serving motives will have an indirect effect on fairness through procedural justice and positive emotion.

Outcome Favorability

Although political motives are expected to be an important predictor of employee reactions to performance appraisal, their influence may be limited depending on the favorability of an employee's rating. Imagine the typical performance appraisal scenario. A supervisor hands an employee a completed evaluation, eyes go straight to the rating, and the employee quickly decides if it is "good" or "bad". This quick judgment of favorability can influence the search for causal explanations (i.e., motives) and the saliency of that information (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). The question then becomes, *when* is fairness affected by political motives? Sensemaking theory suggests that political motives have a significant influence on fairness when outcomes are unfavorable rather than favorable. The following sections explain the proposed moderating role of outcome favorability in the attribution process.

Sensemaking Theory

Recall that attribution theory describes a process whereby people use motives as a springboard for judging an event. Sensemaking is a similar social process in which people attempt to understand their situation by interpreting cues from their environment and later use that information to guide reactions (Weick et al., 2005). One type of information

evaluated is outcome favorability. *Outcome favorability* is a perception that one obtained a positive result (i.e., favorable outcome) instead of a negative one (i.e., unfavorable outcome, Kulik & Ambrose, 1992; Skitka, Winquist, & Hutchinson, 2003). This perception of favorability part of the attribution process whereby people evaluate the "goodness" of an outcome along with other aspects of the situation (Wu & Wang, 2013). According to the literature, a negative result is especially important when evaluating an event (Rolland & Steiner, 2007).

Unfavorable outcomes are both adverse and unexpected, thus cause uncertainty (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). When faced with uncertainty, people engage in explicit sensemaking efforts to rationalize the situation (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). These sensemaking efforts typically involve a search for process-related information, or the cause of the unfavorable outcome (Van den Bos, 2015). Consequently, people become especially attentive to and easily influenced by their perceptions of the procedure when outcomes are unfavorable.

That is not to say that favorable outcomes do not prompt the search for causal explanations. People consider features of the process when outcomes are advantageous, too (Bowler, Halbesleben, & Paul, 2010). However, there may be less urgency to do so or less concern for the reasons behind a favorable outcome versus an unfavorable one. For example, an employee may spend little effort trying to understand why their performance was rated as 'exceptional' but may be very interested to know why their performance was 'unacceptable'. Favorable outcomes may reduce the need for process information because the outcomes are relatively unsurprising thus create less uncertainty. As a result, there should be less emphasis on process information when outcomes are favorable rather than unfavorable.

Outcome Favorability as a Moderator

Opportunity for voice and outcome favorability are closely related and can have combined effects on employee reactions (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2003; Niesiobedzka & Kolodziej, 2017; Rolland & Steiner, 2007; Skitka et al., 2003). Since rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives potentially specify employee voice, I expect the indirect effect of political motives on fairness to be moderated by the favorability of the performance appraisal rating (i.e., a conditional indirect effect, Hayes, 2009). When an employee receives an *unfavorable* performance appraisal rating, he or she will experience uncertainty. The employee will likely experience uncertainty because he or she expects a favorable rating—most employees consider themselves above average and have a highly inflated view of themselves and their job performance (Alicke, Klotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenburg, 1995; Halverson, Tonidandel, Barlow, & Dipboye, 2005; Robins & Beer, 2001). This uncertainty will motivate the employee to search for and scrutinize political motives (both rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives). Perceptions of the political motive will influence procedural justice, which will cause an emotional reaction, which will impact fairness perceptions. When an employee receives a *favorable* performance appraisal rating, he or she will be less concerned with supervisor's political motives. Accordingly, political motives might play a more dominate role when evaluating fairness when ratings are perceived unfavorable compared to favorable.

> **Hypotheses 10:** Outcome favorability will moderate the indirect effect between (a) rater-serving motives and fairness and (b) employee-serving motives and fairness. The magnitude of the relationship will be greater when the outcome is unfavorable (vs. favorable).

Methods

Participants and Procedure

People who received at least one formal performance appraisal from a supervisor in a work setting were recruited from a large southwestern university to complete this study ($N =$ 234). Participants responded to survey items regarding their most recent performance appraisal. Participants were predominantly female (73.1%), on average 28.05 years old ($SD =$ 11.60), and racially diverse (27.7% White, 12.5% African-American, 29.9% Hispanic, 15.6% Asian, 14.3% Other). Most participants were currently employed (79.0%) with 9.78 years of work experience ($SD = 10.32$). On average, participants received 7.57 performance appraisals in their lifetime ($SD = 8.88$) and 2.41 performance appraisals from their current supervisor ($SD = 3.14$).

Measures

Political Motives in Performance Appraisal (PMPA). A custom questionnaire was created to assess political motives in performance appraisal. I generated 10 items to assess rater-serving motives ($\alpha = .94$) and 10 items to assess employee-serving motives ($\alpha = .91$). The items were based on structured interviews with eight subject matter experts (i.e., experienced performance raters, industrial-organizational psychology graduates), existing questionnaires (e.g., Poon, 2004; Murphy et al., 2004; Tziner et al., 1996), and a review of relevant literature (e.g., organizational politics, rater motivation, rater goals). Employees reported on their experience with political motives in performance appraisal. For example, "My supervisor gives higher ratings to make him/herself look good" and "My supervisor gives lower ratings to show room for performance improvement". Responses were rated on a 5-point scale from (1) *To a Very Small Extent* to (5) *To a Very Great Extent*.

Procedural Justice. Colquitt's (2001) 6-item measure was used to evaluate employee perceptions of procedural justice ($\alpha = .89$). The items were reworded to fit the performance appraisal context. For example, "I was able to express my views and feelings during the performance appraisal". Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*.

Emotional Response. Employee emotion was assessed with an 8-item questionnaire from Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, and Probert (2015). Negative emotion was measured with 4-items ($\alpha = .90$) and positive emotion with 4-items ($\alpha = .91$). Examples included "disappointed" and "happy". Responses were rated on a 5-point scale from (1) *Not at All* to (5) *Very Much*.

Overall Fairness. A 3-item questionnaire was adapted from Ambrose and Schminke's (2009) measure of overall fairness to assess the general acceptability of one's performance appraisal ($\alpha = .95$). An example item included "Overall, my performance appraisal was fair". Responses were rated on a 5-point scale from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*.

Outcome Favorability. A 3-item questionnaire was adapted from Brockner's et al. (1997) measure of decision favorability to assess the favorability of one's performance appraisal rating ($\alpha = .91$). An example item included "How would you describe your performance appraisal rating?". Responses were rated on a 5-point scale from (1) *Very Unfavorable* to (5) *Very Favorable*.

Demographics and Experience. Participants reported their gender, age, race, work and performance appraisal experience. Example items included "How many years of work

experience do you have?" and "How many performance appraisal evaluations have you received in your lifetime?".

Results

Study means, standard deviations, correlations, and internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) for latent variables are reported in Table 1. M*plus* version 8.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) was used to conduct analyses. I first conducted a confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors to verify the factor structure of the proposed PMPA measure. I then tested a seven-factor model including all observed variables to evaluate the fit of the measurement model. Various alternative models were tested for comparison. Latent variables were scaled by fixing the loading of the first item to 1.0 per factor. Model fit was evaluated using chi-square (χ^2), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990), comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as recommended by Kline (2016). Interpretation of fit indices was based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) evaluation of criteria for adequate model fit: RMSEA values close to or below .06, CFI values close to or greater than .90, and SRMR values close to or below .08.

I then ran two separate analyses for each type of political motive to focus attention on the hypothesized effects rather than the interrelationship between political motives (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). See Figure 1a and 1b. Models were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors. Following guidelines from Klein and Moosbrugger (2000) and Sardeshmuhk and Vandenberg (2017), I used the latent moderated structural equation (LMS) procedure to estimate the models. LMS is an efficient and unbiased approach for testing combination moderation and mediation

hypotheses in the SEM framework (e.g., Maslowsky, Jager, & Hemken, 2015; Rodell,
Colquitt, & Baer, 2017). There are two steps for conducting an LMS procedure. The first step
is to estimate a "baseline" structural model which includes main effects of the moderator,
without the interaction term. I refer to the baseline model as the *unconditional model* in this
study (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). The χ^2, RMSEA, CFI, SRMR values of the
unconditional model provide preliminary evidence of model fit. The second step in LMS is to
add the latent interaction term to the unconditional model using the XWITH statement in
M*plus*. I refer to this model as the *conditional model*. The unconditional and conditional
models are then compared to determine whether the conditional model is a viable fit to the
data. Because the models are non-nested, "typical" fit indices are not appropriate for model
comparison (Kelava et al., 2011). Instead, researchers tend to use one of two approaches for
comparing models. Both approaches are used in this study. The first approach uses AIC and
BIC values to determine whether the conditional model represents a significant loss of
information relative to the unconditional model (Burnham & Anderson, 2002; Satorra &
Bentler, 2010). The conditional model is viable if its AIC and BIC values are lower than
those for the unconditional model (higher values indicate information loss, Raftery, 1995).
An approximate difference in AIC of 4-7 and BIC of 2-6 can indicate evidence in favor of
the model with lower AIC and BIC values (Burnham & Anderson, 2002; Raftery, 1995). The
second approach uses the log-likelihood ratio test to compare the relative fit of the
conditional model to the unconditional model (Klein & Moosbrugger, 2000). The log-
likelihood difference value, denoted as *D*, is approximately distributed as χ^2. It can be
interpreted using a χ^2 distribution with $df = 1$ (Malowsky et al., 2015). The following
sections describe the fit of the hypothesized models.

Fit of the PMPA and Model Comparison

The PMPA specified two latent factors: rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives. Items with a similar manipulation strategy (e.g., give higher ratings) were designed to correlate within their respective scales. The literature provides theoretical justification for this decision. According to Murphy and Cleveland (1995), employees can associate supervisors' goals by compatibility and manipulation strategy. Thus, goals are related because they serve a similar purpose (e.g., self-serving) and result in a similar rating behavior (e.g., score inflation). This presumption is reflected in the general organizational politics literature. Scholars note that peoples' perceptions of politics may be a function of perceived intent, behavior, or both   (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Landells & Albrecht 2017). While it is unknown how (or if) employees differentiate intention from behavior when judging politics, it is well accepted that the two perceptions are closely entwined (Dik & Aarts, 2007; Meltzoff, 1995). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that goals assessed with the PMPA will be associated by perceived primary motive (i.e., rater-serving motives, employee-serving motives) and manipulation strategy (i.e., give higher ratings, give lower ratings, alter ratings). Therefore, I allow residuals for items that share the same political motive and manipulation strategy to correlate. This approach has been applied to all models without modification (Cole, Ciesla, & Steiger, 2007).

The fit of the two-factor PMPA was adequate: χ^2 (144) = 308.98, $p < .01$, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .93, and SRMR = .06. An RMSEA greater than .06 may be a consequence of sample size. RMSEA tends to over reject true-population models when the sample size is small (i.e., $N \leq 250$, Hu & Bentler, 1999). For this reason, some researchers recommend a range of .05-.08 for RMSEA as an indicator of fair fit (e.g., Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Despite an unideal RMSEA, local fit indices provided evidence for adequate model fit: item factor loadings were all significantly related to their proposed latent factor at $p < .001$. This is consistent with theory and evidence that says perceived politics are multi-dimensional (Eldor, 2017; Vigoda, 2003). There was some indication of localized areas of strain within the model. Therefore, I tested an alternative model that combined all items onto a single latent factor. This alternative model was based on research by Tziner et al. (1996) who proposed that motives are best represented by one 'instrumentality' factor. The Satorra-Bentler (SB, Satorra & Bentler, 2001) scaled chi-square difference test was used to compare the models. It is the appropriate test when using maximum likelihood with robust standard errors estimation (Sardeshmuhk & Vandenberg, 2017). The test indicated that the two-factor PMPA fit the data significantly better than the one-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}(1) = 11.27$, $p < .001$. The superior fit the of two-factor PMPA provides initial evidence that rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives should be treated as separate constructs. See Table 2 for comparative fit statistics for the PMPA and Table 3 for item factor loadings.

Fit of the Measurement Model and Model Comparison

Next, I conducted a seven-factor CFA specifying the latent factors: rater-serving motives, employee-serving motives, procedural justice, negative emotion, positive emotion, outcome favorability, and fairness. Fit indices were adequate: $\chi^2(694) = 1127.13$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93, and SRMR = .07. I compared this model to two alternative models that could provide a viable fit to the data. The first alternative model combined items for procedural justice and overall fairness as these variables may reflect a generic 'justice' construct (i.e., six-factor model). Model fit was significantly better for the proposed seven-factor model compared to the six-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}(6) = 383.61$, $p < .001$. The second

alternative model combined items for procedural justice, negative/positive emotion, fairness, and outcome favorability to rule out the possibility that these items represent a common 'employee reactions' factor (i.e., three-factor model). Model fit was significantly better for the proposed seven-factor model compared to the three-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}(18) = 1261.86$, $p < .001$. Findings are consistent with claims that justice is unique from fairness (Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015) and employee reactions, like outcome favorability and procedural justice, are unique from one another (Skitka et al., 2003). See Table 4 for comparative fit statistics between the measurement models.

Fit of the Structural Model and Model Comparison

The unconditional model for rater-serving motives was adequate: $\chi^2(279) = 445.78$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .95, and SRMR = .05. Adding the latent interaction term (outcome favorability x rater-serving motives) did not result in dramatic information loss, ΔAIC = -4.00, ΔBIC = 0.38, $D = 5.24$, $p < .05$. Therefore, the conditional model for rater-serving motives was retained. The unconditional model for employee-serving motives was also adequate: $\chi^2(279) = 519.53$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .93, and SRMR = .08. Adding the latent interaction term (outcome favorability x employee-serving motives) did result in some information loss, ΔAIC = .93, ΔBIC = -5.96, $D = 3.46$, ns. Despite a lower BIC value for the conditional employee-serving motives model, the unconditional model was retained. Relying on BIC values alone may be unwise (Sardeshmukh & Vandenberg, 2017). Scholars warn that BIC over-penalizes models with more parameters and is not asymptotically optimal (Vandenberg & Grelle, 2009; Yang, 2005). Therefore, reported estimates for employee-serving motives were based on the unconditional model. See Table 5 for comparative fit statistics between the conditional and unconditional models.

Test of Hypotheses

Results for hypotheses 1-9 for the model of rater-serving motives are displayed in

Table 6 and employee-serving motives in Table 7. Hypotheses were tested using maximum

likelihood estimation with robust standard errors, the MODEL CONSTRAINT function, and

bias-corrected confidence intervals were requested (e.g., Rodell et al., 2017). Hypothesis 1

proposed that (a) rater-serving motives would be negatively related to procedural justice and

(b) employee-serving motives would be positively related to procedural justice. Results were

mixed. Rater-serving motives had a significant negative relationship with procedural justice

($B = -.24$, $p < .01$). However, the relationship between employee-serving motives and

procedural justice was not significant ($B = -.01$, *ns*).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that procedural justice would be positively related to fairness.

Indeed, higher levels of procedural justice were associated with higher levels of fairness in

both the model of rater-serving motives ($B = 1.05$, $p < .01$) and employee-serving motives (B

$= 1.00$, $p < .01$). This finding is consistent with research which says justice is an antecedent

of overall fairness (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt, 2012).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that (a) rater-serving motives and (b) employee-serving

motives would have an indirect effect on fairness through procedural justice. Results

indicated partial support for hypothesis 3. The indirect effect of rater-serving motives on

fairness through procedural justice was significant (*effect* $= -.25$, 95% CI $= -.43$, $-.07$). Yet,

the indirect effect of employee-serving motives on fairness through procedural justice was

not significant (*effect* $= .01$, 95% CI $= -.11$, .09).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that (a) rater-serving motives would be positively related to

negative emotion and (b) employee-serving motives would be positively related to positive

emotion. The hypothesis was partially supported. There was a significant positive relationship between rater-serving motives and negative emotion ($B = .28$, $p < .01$) but a nonsignificant relationship between employee-serving motives and positive emotion ($B = .08$, *ns*).

Hypotheses 5 predicted that (a) negative emotion would be negatively related to fairness while (b) positive emotion would be positively related to fairness. The hypothesis was supported. There was a significant negative relationship between negative emotion and fairness ($B = -.22$, $p < .01$) and a significant positive relationship between positive emotion and fairness ($B = .21$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 6 proposed that (a) rater-serving motives would have an indirect effect on fairness through negative emotion and (b) employee-serving motives would have an indirect effect on fairness through positive emotion. The indirect effect of rater-serving motives on fairness through negative emotion was significant (*effect* = -.06, 95% CI = -.13, -.01). However, the indirect effect of employee-serving motives on fairness through positive emotion was not significant (*effect* = .02, 95% CI = -.01, .04).

Hypothesis 7 predicted that procedural justice would be (a) negatively related to negative emotion and (b) positively related to positive emotion. The hypothesis was supported. There was a significant negative relationship between procedural justice and negative emotion ($B = -.67$, $p < .01$) and a significant positive relationship between procedural justice and positive emotion ($B = 1.13$, $p < .01$).

Hypotheses 8 proposed that procedural justice would have an indirect effect on fairness through (a) negative emotion and (b) positive emotion. The hypothesis was supported. Procedural justice had a significant indirect effect on fairness through negative

emotion (*effect* = .14, 95% CI = .04, .25) and through positive emotion (*effect* = .23, 95% CI = .06, .40).

Hypothesis 9 stated that (a) rater-serving motives would have an indirect effect on fairness through procedural justice and negative emotion and that (b) employee-serving motives would have an indirect effect of fairness through procedural justice and positive emotion. The hypothesis was partially supported. Rater-serving motives had a significant indirect effect on fairness through procedural justice and negative emotion (*effect* = -.04, 95% CI = .-07, -.01). However, the indirect effect was not significant from employee-serving motives to fairness through procedural justice and positive emotion (*effect* = -.01, 95% CI = -.03, .02).

Results for hypothesis 10 are displayed in Table 8. Hypothesis 10 predicted that outcome favorability would moderate the indirect effect of (a) rater-serving motives on fairness and (b) employee-serving motives on fairness, such that the indirect effect holds when outcomes are unfavorable rather than favorable. Given model fit indices, conditional indirect effects were only tested for rater-serving motives. As predicted, the conditional indirect effect was statistically significant at lower levels of outcome favorability (*effect $_{low(-1SD)}$* = -.05, 95% CI = -.55, -.14) but not at higher levels of outcome favorability (*effect $_{high(+1SD)}$* = -.02, 95% CI = -.33, .03). See Figure 2 for a graphical representation of the indirect effect of rater-serving motives on overall fairness at ±1*SD* of outcome favorability. See Figure 3 for the magnitude of the moderating effect of outcome favorability with corresponding confidence bands.

Discussion

Supervisors (i.e., raters) have personal goals that drive them to purposely distort performance appraisal ratings (e.g., Wang et al., 2010)—collectively called political motives. Although there is preliminary evidence indicating that political motives affect ratings, the literature lacks an understanding of how political motives impact employees (i.e., ratee). This study proposed that employees attribute performance appraisal ratings to supervisor's political motives. That is to say, employees believe that their performance appraisal was partly based on their supervisor's personal goals (e.g., to make an employee like the supervisor). Depending on the goals perceived, employees classify the supervisor's objectives as either rater-serving motives or employee-serving motives. This judgment then influences the employees' perception of procedural justice, which leads to an emotional reaction, and ultimately affects their perception of overall fairness. The results of this study partly supported this idea.

Consistent with the beforementioned theories, when an employee thought his or her supervisor manipulated performance ratings to primarily enhance self-interests, the employee judged the rating procedure as less just. Lower levels of procedural justice led to a negative emotional response, which led to the perception that the overall appraisal was less fair (rater-serving motive > procedural justice > negative emotion > fairness). However, the same relationship did not hold when an employee thought his or her supervisor manipulated ratings to primarily benefit the employee (employee-serving motive > procedural justice > positive emotion > fairness). Specifically, there was not a significant relationship between perceived employee-serving motives and procedural justice or positive emotion. This finding is consistent with Poon's (2004) research whereby personal bias/punish motives had a negative

effect on employee reactions but motivational motives had no significant effect. There are a couple of possible explanations for these results.

One, a negativity bias might explain why rater-serving motives (i.e., negative politics), but not employee-serving motives (i.e., positive politics), were particularly salient when forming perceptions of fairness. Negativity bias describes the tendency for negative stimuli to have a greater impact on reactions than positive stimuli of the same intensity or behavior (Lewick, Czapinski, & Peeters, 1992). This tendency to focus on negative stimuli is often apparent when recalling, reporting, and globally evaluating an event (Dasborough, 2006; Kanouse & Hanson, 1987). Employees who perceived rater-serving motives may have been especially curious about, aware of, and affected by their supervisor's self-serving goals because the goals seem unacceptable and negative. However, those who perceived employee-serving motives may not have been as concerned with the supervisor's other-serving goals because the goals are more acceptable and positive. Future studies might consider the potential role of negativity bias in recognizing and evaluating political motives in performance appraisal.

Two, failure to find a significant indirect path from employee-serving motives to fairness might be because employees do not associate any form of motivated rating manipulation with positivity. Others' intentions can be "good", but not acceptable and can be personally beneficial, but not feel "right". For example, research suggests that people feel guilty (rather than happy) when they benefit from a procedure that violates a moral standard, like justice (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000). Employee-serving motives may be viewed as a supervisor's attempt to use the rating process to help the employee. However, because the "help" results from dishonest means, the employee may

feel guilty rather than happy. It would be interesting to test a link between employee-serving motives and guilt, particularly when the manipulation strategy is rating inflation (i.e., benefit to employee).

This study also proposed that the indirect relationship between political motives and fairness would be moderated by outcome favorability. The model of rater-serving motives supported this hypothesis. The more unfavorable an employee's rating, the more political motives mattered for evaluating the fairness of their performance appraisal. Thus, an unfavorable rating may initiate the search for and scrutiny of raters' self-serving goals. The following sections describe the theoretical and practical contributions of these findings and the more specific direct effects in the model.

Theoretical Contributions

Results of this study advance our understanding of organizational politics and fairness in three key ways. First, the findings reveal that some perceived politics in performance appraisal are distinctly negative, whereas others are not (Davis & Gardner, 2004; Fedor et al., 2008). For decades, scholars defined all politics as selfish, unacceptable intentions and/or behaviors that undermine organizational functioning (e.g., Farrell & Peterson, 1982; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Rosen et al., 2009). However, the results of this study challenge that idea. While perceived rater-serving motives clearly led to negative reactions, employee-serving motives did not. This suggests that employees do not think all politics in appraisals are inherently "bad". Therefore, it would be wise for future studies of perceived politics in performance appraisal to differentiate between negative politics and other forms of politics.

Second, this study provides support for attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1995), demonstrating that motives matter when forming impressions of an event. Particularly when

the nature of the event is negative. Even when political behavior was the same (i.e., manipulating ratings), employees still discerned between rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives. And, the political motives had different effects on employee reactions. The key message is that employees considered the reason for their supervisor's political behavior, not just the political behavior itself. Accordingly, employee reactions may be driven by perceptions of *why* something happened, not just what happened (Hill, 2017; Kurchner-Hawkins & Miller, 2006). Researchers, therefore, should carefully consider perceived motives when assessing employee reactions to politicking and perhaps other forms of organizational behavior.

Third, I extend theories of fairness by providing an uncommon explanation for what it means to be "fair". Conventional research equates fairness with justice so that a fair situation is one in which the rules of procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice are satisfied (Colquitt et al., 2001). The results of this study support this notion: procedural justice predicted overall fairness. However, findings also revealed that fairness was predicted by emotion. That is, employees used both justice information and their emotions to gauge the fairness of their performance appraisal. What is particularly interesting is the finding that emotion mediated the relationship between procedural justice and fairness. It is unclear from existing research whether emotion is "upstream" or "downstream" from justice and fairness (Rodell et al., 2017). This study provides insight about that relationship. The findings indicate that emotion might sit in between these perceptions. For instance, judgment that a procedure was biased could make someone feel angry, which leads to a global perception that the entire system or event was less fair (justice > emotion > fairness). It would be

interesting to extend findings further by testing the indirect relationship with other forms of justice and global perceptions.

Practical Contributions

The findings also provide useful information for organizations and practitioners. I provide three recommendations based on the research results. I first recommend that supervisors do not distort performance appraisals, even if they mean well by the employee. Despite no clear evidence that the strategy is effective (Scott et al., 2014), supervisors say that they distort performance ratings to improve employee reactions and well-being (Longenecker et al., 1987). According to the current results, supervisors are wrong. The perception that one's supervisor had employee-serving motives did not have a significant positive effect on employees' perception of procedural justice or emotion. Because procedural justice is such an important component of performance appraisal (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991), supervisors who want to help employees may be better off focusing their attention on enhancing the perceived acceptability of the procedure instead of attempting to further the employees' interests by manipulating ratings.

Second, I recommend that supervisors find opportunities other than performance appraisal to pursue self-serving goals. By politicizing performance appraisals, supervisors could cause distal consequences that ultimately undermine their objectives. Results of this study show that employees can and do recognize rater-serving motives. The perception of these motives can have a direct negative impact on employees' perception of procedural justice and emotion. These negative effects could lead to negative behavioral reactions (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001) that prevent supervisors from achieving the goals they sought in the first place. For example, a supervisor who seemingly alters ratings to make a

senior leader happy may simultaneously anger his or her employees. An angry workgroup could lead to an unproductive workgroup (Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman, & Haynes, 2009), which could lead to an unhappy senior leader. In the short term, distorting performance appraisals may enhance self-interests. But, if employees perceive rater-serving motives, there could be future consequences that prevent goal achievement. Thus, it would behoove supervisors to find another way to pursue their personal agenda.

Last, I recommend that organizations assess politics in performance appraisal—even if employee perceptions of the process are not overtly negative. Results indicated that outcome favorability is a conditional element that tempers the effect of rater-serving motives on employee reactions. Meaning, as long as their rating was favorable, employees cared little about rater-serving motives. With this knowledge, it would be easy for a supervisor to use the performance appraisal for personal gain without threat of negative reactions by ensuring employees have a favorable impression of their rating (e.g., giving higher ratings than deserved). Accordingly, organizations may want to be vigilant about politics in performance appraisal and not wait for negative reactions to arise before diagnosing issues with the process.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are a few limitations of the present study that should be considered. First, the proposed model does not explore possible relationships between perceived causal dimensions (i.e., locus, controllability, stability) and political motives, even though the relationships appear in attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1986). In the context of performance appraisal, attribution theory says that employees ascribe motives to an event by first examining (a) whether perceived rating distortion reflected the supervisor's character or situation (locus),

(b) whether the supervisor had control over rating distortion (controllability), and (c) whether rating distortion was a reoccurring or one-time incident (stability). While causal dimensions can help determine which political motive an employee might perceive (e.g., Halbesleben et al., 2010), they do little to explain the effect of perceived political motives on employee reactions. Thus, it was not a central feature of this study. Still, future researchers should examine these factors to test a larger portion of attribution theory.

This research was also limited to negative and positive politics and does not include the possibility of neutral politics. Although not clearly defined, neutral politics may include intentions or behaviors that are common or necessary for organizational functioning (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Longenecker et al., 1987). In performance appraisal, perceived neutral politics may represent organization-laden goals that primarily benefit performance appraisal stakeholders who are not directly affected by its outcome (e.g., Human Resources, HR). For example, supervisors may manipulate ratings to fit employees into a predetermined forced rank system because HR instructed them to do so (Grote, 2002). In this scenario, the goal is not clearly rater-serving or employee-serving, but rather organization-serving. Since organizational goals are a likely source of rater motivation (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995), it is probable that there is a third type of political motives in performance appraisal not addressed in this study. Future research is needed to clarify the nature of neutral politics and determine whether organization-serving motives exist in performance appraisal.

Additionally, this study does not consider the role of perceived dispositional factors (e.g., supervisor's personality) when evaluating fairness. According to the fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977), people tend to overestimate the impact of dispositional factors and underestimate the impact of situational factors when judging behaviors or an event.

Accordingly, dispositional factors may play a key role in the attribution process. For instance, dispositional factors might be a determinant of political motives. An employee may perceive political motives, attribute the motives to supervisor's untrustworthiness, decide the performance appraisal was unacceptable, become angry, then perceive the process as less fair. Or, perceived dispositional factors could be an antecedent of perceived political motives. Because an employee thinks his or her supervisor is untrustworthy, the employee assumes the supervisor was motivated by self-serving goals, thus, the employee thinks the procedure was unacceptable, feels angry, and perceives the process as less fair. Both explanations are possible, so it would be beneficial to explore the role of dispositional factors in future research.

Last, the sample size limited my ability to test the effects of rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives within the same model. Although mixed motives were not the focus of this study and participants were asked to report on their supervisor's *primary* goals, a larger sample size would have allowed me to test a more complex model that may have provided more insight about political motives in performance appraisal. According to scholars, positive and negative politics can occur simultaneously as one political type is neither the opposite nor the absence of the other (Maslyn et al., 2008; Ferris et al., 2002). A significant positive correlation between rater-serving motives and employee-serving motives alludes to the possibility that employees perceive both types of political motives in their performance appraisal. Effects might have been different had political motives been considered concurrently. Future research would benefit from exploring this idea further.

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Table 1

Intercorrelation Matrix, Descriptive Statistics, and Reliability Estimates for Latent Variables

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rater-Serving Motives	1.93	.91	(.94)						
Employee-Serving Motives	2.11	.85	.74**	(.91)					
Procedural Justice	3.60	.85	-.61**	-.28**	(.89)				
Negative Emotion	1.64	.89	.51**	.24**	-.59**	(.90)			
Positive Emotion	3.72	1.00	-.40**	-.14*	.71**	-.60**	(.91)		
Overall Fairness	4.00	.94	-.54**	-.23**	.87**	-.68**	.76**	(.95)	
Outcome Favorability	4.03	.88	-.55**	-.34**	.71**	-.61**	.65**	.79**	(.91)

Note. $N = 234$. *M* = Mean, *SD* = standard deviation. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha) are provided in parentheses on the diagonals.

** $p < .01$,* $p < .05$.

Table 2

Fit Indices for Nested Models for Measure of Political Motives in Performance Appraisal

Model	H₀ Value	H₀ Scaling Factor	χ^2	df	χ^2 Scaling Factor	$\Delta\chi^2$ SB	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Two-Factor PMPA	-5715.83	1.43	308.98**	144	1.34		.07	.93	.06
One-Factor PMPA	-5799.81	1.50	446.85**	145	1.30	11.27**	.10	.86	.08

Note. N = 234. PMPA= Political Motives in Performance Appraisal. χ^2 = chi-square, *df* = degrees of freedom, SB = Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual. Results computed using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors.

** *p* < .01.

Table 3

Factor Loadings for Measure of Political Motives in Performance Appraisal

Factor	Pattern Coefficients	
Rater-Serving Motives	β	SE_β
1. My supervisor gives lower ratings to an employee he/she does not like.	.71	.05
2. My supervisor gives higher ratings to make himself/herself look good.	.85	.03
3. My supervisor alters ratings to make senior leaders happy.	.70	.05
4. My supervisor gives lower ratings to punish an employee for questioning his/her decisions.	.72	.05
5. My supervisor gives higher ratings to make an employee like him/her.	.77	.04
6. My supervisor alters ratings to get ahead in the organization.	.79	.04
7. My supervisor gives lower ratings to remind an employee he/she is in charge.	.78	.04
8. My supervisor gives higher ratings to avoid an uncomfortable conversation.	.76	.05
9. My supervisor alters ratings to influence administrative decisions (e.g., pay raise, layoff).	.73	.04
10. My supervisor alters ratings to gain power in the organization.	.84	.03
Employee-Serving Motives		
1. My supervisor gives higher ratings to protect an employee's reputation.	.75	.05
2. My supervisor gives lower ratings to show room for performance improvement.	.37	.07
3. My supervisor alters ratings to create a cooperative work environment for employees.	.73	.05
4. My supervisor gives higher ratings to thank an employee.	.67	.05
5. My supervisor gives lower ratings to motivate an employee to perform better.	.46	.08
6. My supervisor alters ratings to make an employee look like a good performer.	.87	.03
7. My supervisor gives ratings to help an employee do well in the organization.	.83	.03
8. My supervisor gives higher ratings to avoid hurting an employee's feelings.	.79	.04
9. My supervisor alters ratings to strengthen an employee's confidence.	.73	.05
10. My supervisor alters ratings to boost employee engagement.	.69	.06

Note. $N = 234$. *SE* = standard error. Results computed using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors for which the standardized solution is STDYX. All factor loadings were significant at $p < .001$.

Table 4

Fit Indices for Nested Models of Proposed Seven-Factor Measurement Model

Model	H_0 Value	H_0 Scaling Factor	χ^2	df	χ^2 Scaling Factor	$\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Seven-factor Model [a]	-10493.07	1.51	1127.13**	694	1.18		.05	.93	.07
Six-factor Model [b]	-10560.61	1.50	1237.66**	700	1.18	383.61**	.06	.91	.07
Three-factor Model [c]	-10947.19	1.49	1849.00**	712	1.21	1261.86**	.08	.81	.08

Note. $N = 234$. χ^2 = chi-square, df = degrees of freedom, SB = Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual. [a] Proposed measurement model. [b] Procedural justice and fairness items combined onto a common latent 'justice' factor. [c] Procedural justice, negative emotion, positive emotion, overall fairness, and outcome favorability combined onto a common latent 'employee reactions' factor.

** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Fit Indices for the Unconditional and Conditional Models for Rater-Serving Motives and Employee-Serving Motives

Model	H$_0$ log-likelihood	*D*	AIC	ΔAIC	BIC	ΔBIC	χ^2	*df*	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Rater-Serving Motives											
Unconditional Model	-6592.99		13382.00		13720.44		445.78**	279	.05	.95	.05
Conditional Model	-6590.37	5.24*	13378.00	-4.00	13720.82	0.38					
Employee-Serving Motives											
Unconditional Model	-6895.56		13987.12		14325.74		519.53**	279	.06	.93	.08
Conditional Model	-6893.10	3.46	13986.19	.93	14331.72	-5.98					

Note. $N = 234$. D = log-likelihood difference value, AIC = Akaike Information Criterion, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion, χ^2 = chi-square, df = degrees of freedom, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual. Results calculated using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors.

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 6

Direct and Indirect Effects for the Model of Rater-Serving Motives

Predictors	Procedural Justice				Negative Emotion				Overall Fairness			
Direct Effects	*B*	*SE_B*	*β*	*SE_β*	*B*	*SE_B*	*β*	*SE_β*	*B*	*SE_B*	*β*	*SE_β*
Rater-Serving Motives	-.24**	.08	-0.28**	.08	.28*	.15	.23*	.11	.04	.08	.03	.07
Procedural Justice					-.67**	.19	-.46**	.11	1.05**	.18	.77**	.08
Negative Emotion									-.22**	.07	-.23**	.07
Mediators												

Indirect Effects					*Effect*		*SE*		LLCI		ULCI	
Rater-Serving Motives through Procedural Justice					-.25**		.09		-.43		-.07	
Rater-Serving Motives through Negative Emotion					-.06*		.03		-.13		-.01	
Procedural Justice through Negative Emotion					.14**		.06		.04		.25	
Rater-Serving Motives through Procedural Justice and Negative Emotion					-.04*		.02		-.07		-.01	

Note. $N = 234$. *SE* = standard error. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval. ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. The 95% confidence intervals for the unconditional indirect effects were calculated using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors. Indirect effects are unstandardized solutions.

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 7

Direct and Indirect Effects for the Model of Employee-Serving Motives

Predictors	Procedural Justice				Positive Emotion				Overall Fairness			
Direct Effects	B	SE_B	β	SE_β	B	SE_B	β	SE_β	B	SE_B	β	SE_β
Employee- Serving Motives	-.01	.05	-.03	.06	.08	.07	.06	.05	.01	.06	.01	.04
Procedural Justice					1.13**	.14	.75**	.05	1.00**	.18	.73**	.05
Positive Emotion									.21**	.08	.23**	.08
Mediators												

Indirect Effects	*Effect*	*SE*	LLCI	ULCI
Employee-Serving Motives through Procedural Justice	-.01	.05	-.11	.09
Employee-Serving Motives through Positive Emotion	.02	.01	-.01	.04
Procedural Justice through Positive Emotion	.23**	.09	.06	.40
Employee-Serving Motives through Procedural Justice and Positive Emotion	-.01	.01	-.03	.02

Note. $N = 234$. *SE* = standard error. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval. ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. The 95% confidence intervals for the unconditional indirect effects were calculated using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors. Indirect effects are unstandardized solutions.
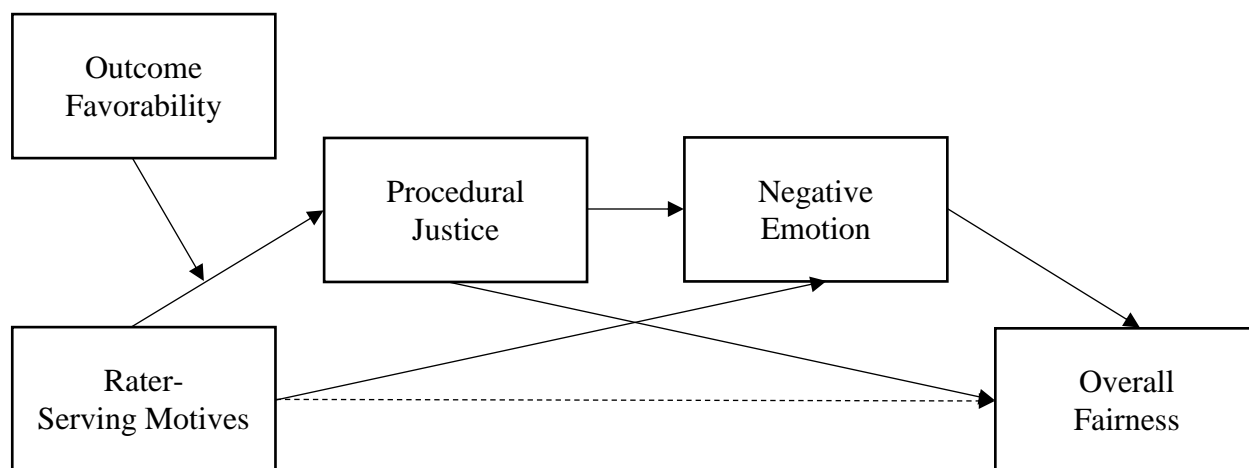** $p < .01$,* $p < .05$.

Table 8

Simple Slopes Estimates for the Conditional Indirect Effects for Rater-Serving Motives on Overall Fairness at ±1 Standard Deviation of Outcome Favorability

	Procedural Justice				Overall Fairness							
	First Stage				Indirect Effect				Total Effect			
Moderator												
Outcome Favorability	*Effect*	*SE*	LLCI	ULCI	*Effect*	*SE*	LLCI	ULCI	*Effect*	*SE*	LLCI	ULCI
Low (-1 *SD*)	-.35**	.11	-.55	-.14	-.05*	.02	-.09	-.01	-.42**	.09	-.60	-.22
Mean	-.25**	.09	-.43	-.07	-.03*	.02	-.07	-.01	-.31**	.09	-.48	-.13
High (+1 *SD*)	-.15	.09	-.33	.03	-.02	.02	-.05	.01	-.19	.11	-.40	.01

Note. $N = 234$. *SD* = standard deviation. *SE* = standard error. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval. ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. The 95% confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effects were calculated using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors.

** $p < .01$,* $p < .05$.

(a) Rater-serving motives to overall fairness

```
┌─────────────┐
│   Outcome   │
│ Favorability│
└─────────────┘
       ┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐
       │  Procedural │      │   Negative  │
       │   Justice   │─────▶│   Emotion   │
       └─────────────┘      └─────────────┘
┌─────────────┐                              ┌─────────────┐
│   Rater-    │                              │   Overall   │
│Serving Motives│- - - - - - - - - - - - - - │   Fairness  │
└─────────────┘                              └─────────────┘
```

(b) Employee-serving motives to overall fairness

```
┌─────────────┐
│   Outcome   │
│ Favorability│
└─────────────┘
       ┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐
       │  Procedural │      │   Positive  │
       │   Justice   │─────▶│   Emotion   │
       └─────────────┘      └─────────────┘
┌─────────────┐                              ┌─────────────┐
│  Employee-  │                              │   Overall   │
│Serving Motives│- - - - - - - - - - - - - - │   Fairness  │
└─────────────┘                              └─────────────┘
```
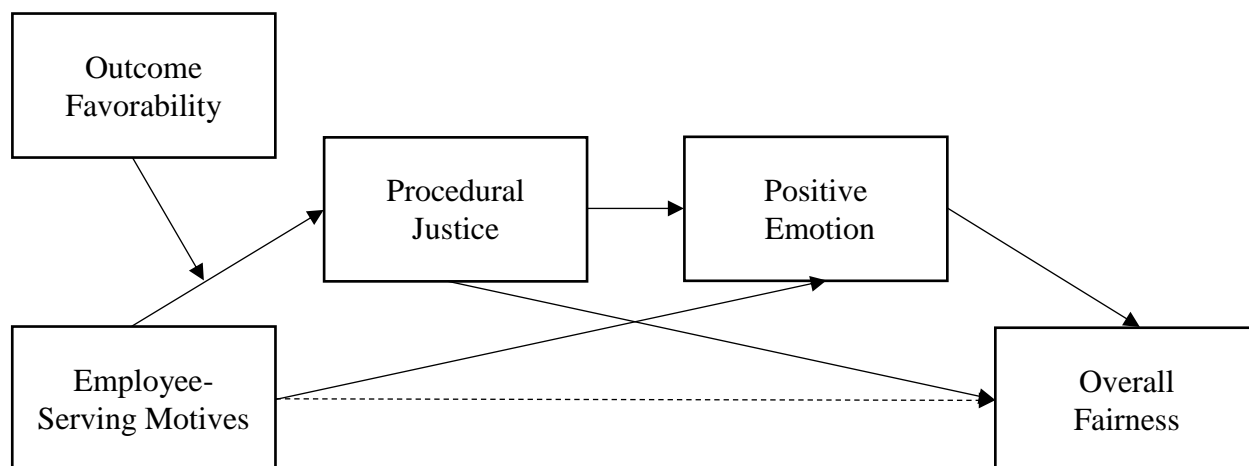
Figure 1. Conceptual model of perceived political motives in performance appraisal. Dashed paths were not hypothesized.
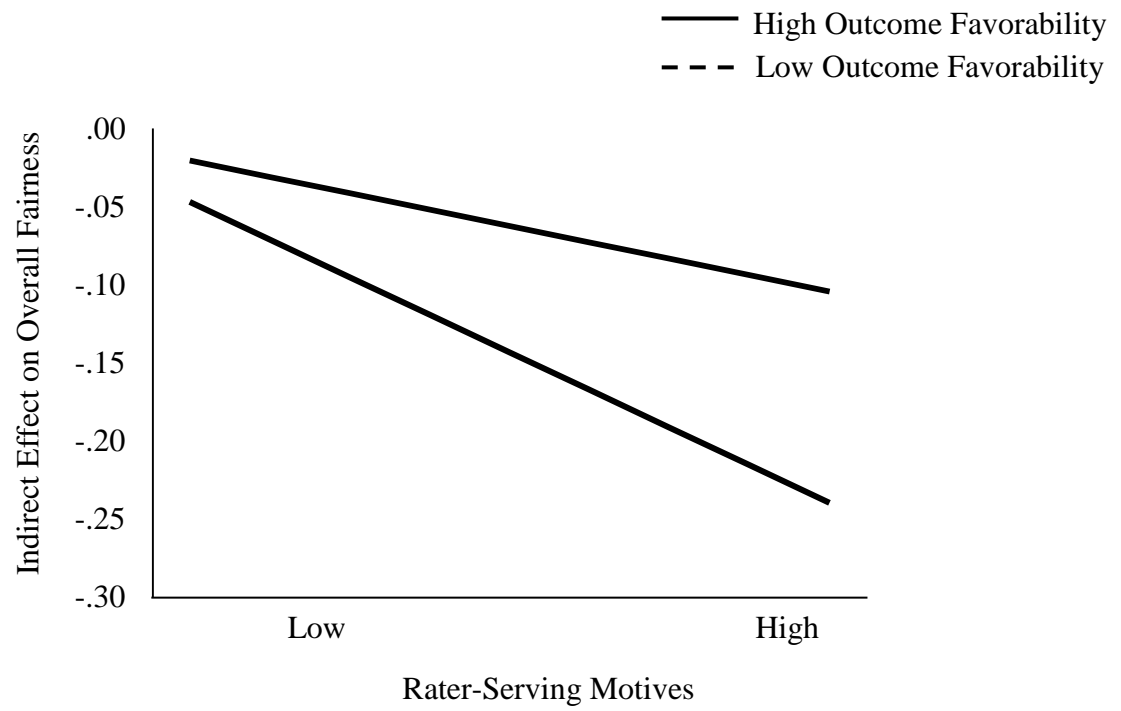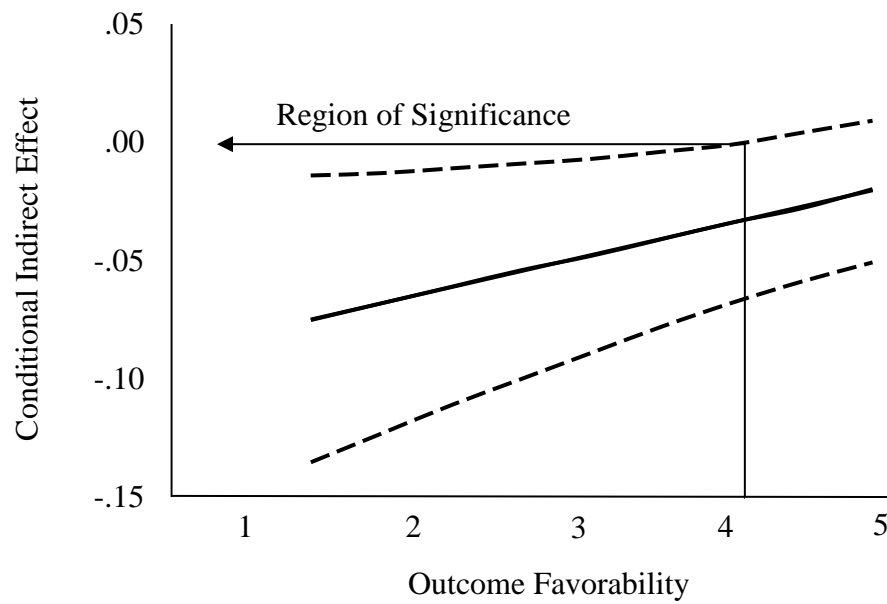
Figure 2. Conditional indirect effect of rater-serving motives on overall fairness at ± 1*SD* of outcome favorability.

Figure 3. Plot illustrating that the indirect effect of rater-serving motives on fairness via procedural justice and negative emotion is significantly different from zero at values of outcome favorability less than or equal to 4.03. Dashed lines represent 95% confidence bands. Horizontal and vertical lines represent the boundary of the region of significance with an indirect effect of zero.

Appendix

Measures

I. **Political Motives in Performance Appraisal (adapted for context)**

The following items concern your experience with performance appraisal. Think

about the *primary* motives of the supervisor who completed your most recent

performance appraisal.

To what extent was your most recent supervisor *primarily* motivated to do the

following when completing performance appraisals?

1	2	3	4	5
To a Very Small Extent	To a Small Extent	To Some Extent	To a Great Extent	To a Very Great Extent

Rater-Serving Motives

1. My supervisor gives lower ratings to an employee he/she does not like

2. My supervisor gives higher ratings to make himself/herself look good

3. My supervisor alters ratings to make senior leaders happy

4. My supervisor gives lower ratings to punish an employee for questioning his/her decisions

5. My supervisor gives higher ratings to make an employee like him/her

6. My supervisor alters ratings to get ahead in the organization

7. My supervisor gives lower ratings to remind an employee he/she is in charge

8. My supervisor gives higher ratings to avoid an uncomfortable conversation

9. My supervisor alters ratings to influence administrative decisions (e.g., pay raise, layoff)

10. My supervisor alters ratings to gain power in the organization

Employee-Serving Motives

1. My supervisor gives higher ratings to protect an employee's reputation

2. My supervisor gives lower ratings to show room for performance improvement

3. My supervisor alters ratings to create a cooperative work environment for employees

4. My supervisor gives higher ratings to thank an employee

5. My supervisor gives lower ratings to motivate an employee to perform better

6. My supervisor alters ratings to make an employee look like a good performer

7. My supervisor gives higher ratings to help an employee do well in the organization

8. My supervisor gives higher ratings to avoid hurting an employee's feelings

9. My supervisor alters ratings to strengthen an employee's confidence

10. My supervisor alters ratings to boost employee engagement

II. Procedural Justice

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

1. I was able to express my views and feelings during the performance appraisal.

2. I had influence over the outcome of the performance appraisal.

3. The performance appraisal procedure was applied consistently.

4. The performance appraisal procedure was free from bias.

5. The performance appraisal procedure was based on accurate information.

6. The performance appraisal procedure upheld ethical and moral standards.

III. Emotion

Please rate the extent you felt the following emotions after receiving your most recent performance appraisal.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at All	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Very Much

1. Happy

2. Pleased

3. Excited

4. Content

5. Annoyed

6. Disappointed

7. Angry

8. Frustrated

IV. Overall Fairness

Think about the fairness of your most recent performance appraisal. Please rate the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

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

1. Overall, my rating was fair.

2. In general, my supervisor treats me fairly when evaluating my performance.

3. In general, I can count on my performance appraisal to be fair.

V. Outcome Favorability

Think about the outcome of your most recent performance appraisal. Please rate the

extent to which the appraisal was favorable or unfavorable.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unfavorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Neutral	Somewhat Favorable	Very Favorable

1. How would you describe your performance appraisal rating?

2. In general, how favorable was your rating from the performance appraisal?

3. Overall, how would you rate the feedback you received?

VI.   Demographics

1. What is your gender?

> Male   Female

2. What is your age in years?

> Numeric Response

3. What is your race?

White, Caucasian	Black or African American	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Pacific Islander	Other

VII.   Work Experience

1. How many years of work experience do you have?

> Numeric Response

2. Are you currently employed?

> No   Yes, Part-time   Yes, Full-time

3. In which industry do you (did you) work?

Accommodation or food services	Manufacturing
Admin., support, waste management, or remediation services	Mining
Arts, entertainment, or recreation	Professional, scientific, or technical services
Construction	Real estate or rental and leasing
Educational services	Retail
Finance or insurance	Transportation or warehousing
Forestry, fishing, hunting, or agriculture support	Utilities
Health care or social assistance	Wholesale trade
Information	Other
Management of companies or enterprises	I have never had a job

VIII. Performance Appraisal Experience

1. Have you ever received a formal performance appraisal from a supervisor while

    employed?

    No   Yes

2. How many performance appraisal evaluations have you received (did you receive)

    from your most recent supervisor?

    Numeric Response

3. How many performance appraisal evaluations have you received in your lifetime?

    Numeric Response

4. What is your working relationship with the supervisor who last rated your job

    performance?

    Current supervisor of mine   Past supervisor or mine