EXAMINING HOW FIRE SERVICE SUPERVISORS

PERCEIVE THE EXISTENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL

AND INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS AND THEIR

EFFECT ON MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: This research examines how fire service supervisors, from the rank of
lieutenant through fire chief, perceive the existence and impact of bureaucratic politics.
For testing of the research hypothesis, bureaucratic politics is operationalized through the
theoretic lenses of organizational and institutional politics.

Regression analysis indicates there are statistically significant negative linear
relationships between perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and strategic planning,
budgeting and building social capital.

Augmenting these findings, regression analysis suggests there are negative linear
relationships between internal influencer groups (chief officers, rank and file personnel,
and other internal stakeholders) and respondents' perceptions of institutional politics
(PIP). That is, as respondents' perceived each group's influence increasing, there was a
corresponding decrease in POP scores.

Conversely, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between PIP and
local elected officials. There was also a statistically marginal positive relationship
between POP and business groups. That is, as respondents' perceived these groups
influence increasing, there was a corresponding increase in PIP scores.

Regression analysis also suggests that as the level of education increases or the higher the
rank, there are corresponding decreases in respondents' POP scores. Likewise, as the
population served increases there is a corresponding increase in respondents' PIP scores.

The results of the statistical analysis, while not as definitive or supportive of some of the
hypotheses advanced, did bring to light some interesting findings.

First, there is clearly support for the notion that employees at all levels perceive the
existence of internal and external politics.

Second, respondents perceived that certain groups affect specific management activities.
What is divergent between internal and external groups is that the former seemingly have
a positive affect reducing POP, while the later increases PIP.

Finally, there is evidence to suggest demographic characteristics, both individually and
organizationally, affect perceptions of one or both variants of bureaucratic politics.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An eternal quote from Plato contends, "One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors" (Petersen and Fusarelli, 2005, p. xii). While this may seem too Machiavellian for some, for many others it's a fact of their professional lives. That is, politics are real or, at the very least, they are a perceived reality. Lasswell (1950) succinctly defined politics as "who gets what, when and how." His definition, however, obscures the complex nature of the phenomenon – particularly with respect to public sector organizations. Unfortunately, the ubiquitous nature of politics makes developing strategies to deal with them difficult. This is particularly problematic for bureaucratic managers who must contend with these daily pressures to effectively carry out the missions of their respective organizations (Daft, 1986; Vigoda -Gadot and Drory, 2006).

Politics and Bureaucracies

Much of the literature pertaining to public sector politics centers on the interactions between various actors that use their respective preferences, goals, and discretion to shape policy outcomes. In this respect, models outlined in the literature help describe how various actors exist within or external to a given political ecology and how their systematic interplay affects bureaucratic organizations.

For instance, Lowi (1969; 1979) described these relationships as "Iron Triangles" where bureaucrats, legislators, and interest groups interact to influence federal policies, outcomes, and outputs (Figure 1).
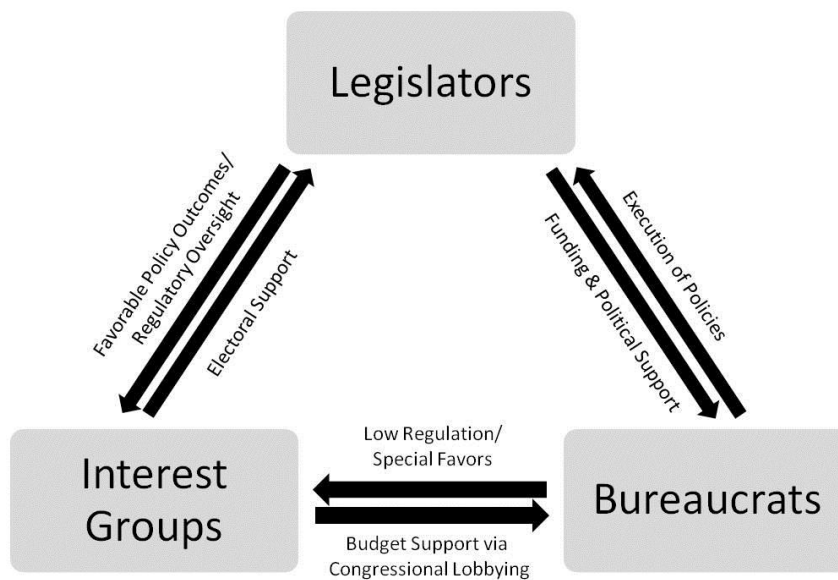
Figure 1: Adapted from Lowi's (1969) concept of the "Iron Triangle"

Lowi (1969; 1979) advanced the notion of "interest group liberalism," which he defined by its unique attributes:

- It is optimistic about government;

- expects government to be a positive force necessitating expansion;

- believes the best intentions for society motivates government action;

- and, holds an enduring belief that what is good for government is good for society.

To achieve these ends, this form of government activism relies on four forms of coercive power: regulatory, redistributive, distributive, and constituent (Lowi, 1969; 1979). As such, Lowi (1969; 1979) contended these relationships are codified through a process of bargaining and negotiation during the legislative and administrative rule-making process. Lowi (1969, 1979) was critical of these relationships as he believed they had evolved into incestuous associations that promote the interests of well-connected groups at the expense of the broader public interests. Inherent in his model is the notion that bureaucrats are key actors who directly influence policy outcomes within the sphere of their respective areas of responsibility.

Lowi's (1969; 1979) theory led to a broader interest in how politically motivated actions influence policy formulation and implementation, albeit, primarily at the federal level. His theoretic framework, however, is equally illustrative of the political policy process at all levels of government including those involving local bureaucracies (Clingermayer and Feiock, 1990; Weber, 1947). Fire departments are a type of bureaucracy that has received little scholarly attention with respect how politics influence policy development and application. The next section details how fire departments meet the standard definition of a bureaucracy. This, in turn, establishes the purpose for analyzing fire agencies as organizations that are as susceptible to political influences as other local governmental entities.

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Fire Departments as Bureaucracies

Although scholars have long argued the specific features that constitute a bureaucracy and, more specifically, what types of entities fit into this category, this research project treats fire departments as bureaucratic organizations. Three salient pieces of literature provide us with a useful description of the bureaucratic model, which can then be used to justifiably describe fire departments as bureaucracies: Weber (1947), Downs (1965), and Wilson (1989).[1]

In Weber's (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, the German sociologist identified what he called the "ideal-type" of public organization, which became synonymous with bureaucracies. He hypothesized that most fully developed bureaucratic organizations exhibit six distinct characteristics:

1. There are fixed jurisdictional areas each with clear spheres of competence and each governed by strict rules and regulations.

2. Organizations are hierarchically structured.

3. Management of an organization is based upon written documentation.

4. Office management requires specific expertise that necessitates hiring "qualified" personnel to fill these roles.

5. When the organization is operational, bureaucrats devote their entire time to their assigned administrative activities.

6. Organizations are governed by a set of stable and exhaustive rules.

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[1] Much of the literature referencing or focused on fire departments, such as Ahlbrandt's (1973) study of fire service delivery in Scottsdale, Arizona, accept the notion these organizations are inherently bureaucratic. To the knowledge of this author, there has been little attempt to empirically validate the use of the bureaucratic label to describe fire agencies. This is beyond the scope of this project; however, this section uses previous bureaucratic literature as a predicate for characterizing fire departments as bureaucratic organizations.

A second distinct aspect of bureaucratic organizations is the position of the official, which he asserted is itself a vocation requiring specialized training and competencies. Additionally, the official's position is regarded with esteem, is a lifetime appointed position achieved through career advancement, and for which the official receives financial compensation to fulfill the position.

Given the aforementioned descriptions, it is hard to dispute that most US fire departments (irrespective of type, size, and governance structure) exhibit all or most of Weber's bureaucratic characteristics. For example, virtually all fire departments require members to maintain some level of skill as evidenced by the defined roles of "firefighter," "engineer" (also referenced as chauffer or driver-operator), "company officer" (usually denoted by the rank of Lieutenant or Captain), and "chief officer" (typically defined as battalion, bureau, district, division, assistant, deputy or chief of the department) (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr and Eversole, 2003). As such, each rank has prescribed roles, responsibilities, and corresponding skills. Moreover, rank, by definition, is hierarchal and determines the level of authority and responsibility for each position, which are broadly recognized within the field itself (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr and Eversole, 2003). In other words, firefighters from one agency generally understand and respect the rank of Battalion Chief despite there being no real authority over those outside his or her agency (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr and Eversole, 2003; International Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC] and National Fire Protection Association [NFPA], 2009).

Although fire departments come in all sizes and types (volunteer/career/combination or city/county/special district), most rely on specially trained staff to carry out administrative functions such as finance, human resources, and dispatching. This allows operational

personnel to focus on core functions such as firefighting, emergency medical services, technical rescue operations, etc. Finally, fire departments codify rigid rules into written documentation such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Field Operating Guidelines (FOGs), or policies, which guide, govern, and provide organizational stability (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr, and Eversole, 2003; IAFC and NFPA, 2009).

The second scholar to lend credence to the idea that fire departments are bureaucracies is Downs (1965) who conceptualized a bureaucrat as

> …any person who works for a large organization; receives a money income from that organization which [*sic*] constitutes a major part of his total income; is hired, promoted or retained primarily on the basis of his role performance; and produces outputs which [*sic*] cannot be evaluated on a market. (p. 440)

It is the last point that sets Downs' conceptualization of a bureaucracy apart from Weber (1947). That is, fire departments provide a service that is largely ignored by the free market system, thus it is more precisely defined in the economic literature as a public good (Baumol and Blinder, 1999; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1998; Rhoads, 1985).

Baumol and Blinder (1999) succinctly describe a public good as:

> A commodity or service whose benefits are not depleted by an additional user and from which it is generally difficult or impossible to exclude people, even if people are unwilling to pay for the benefits. These are socially valuable commodities whose provision cannot be financed by private enterprise, or at least not at socially desirable prices. Thus, government must pay for public goods if they are to be provided at all. It may be difficult, costly or impossible to collect fees for the public goods provided.

In addition if the opportunity cost of serving an extra user is zero, then the good should be provided at no charge. (p. 256)

Many economists assert that establishing a market value for a pure public good is a near impossible task. Even if a price could be established, people might be discouraged from participating despite its broad benefit to society (Baumol and Blinder, 2000; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1998; Rhoads, 1985). Perhaps of greatest concern for policy-makers, without government intervention certain public goods would not be provided at all. It is for these reasons that services such as national defense, police, and fire protection are services provided almost exclusively by government (Baumol and Blinder, 1999; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1998; Rhoads, 1999). As such, these organizations exist in a political environment.

The final scholar that helps conceive of fire departments as bureaucracies is Wilson (1989). Wilson (1989) expanded on Weber's (1947) and Downs's (1965) work in his seminal book, *Bureaucracy*, where he categorized bureaucratic organizations based on the visibility of their processes and outcomes.

These processes, in turn, define bureaucratic firms in four categories:

- *Production* – have measurable processes and visible/understandable outcomes (e.g., Social Security Administration).

- *Procedural* – have measurable processes, but they have no visible or easily measurable outcomes (e.g., District Attorneys).

- *Craft* – have no measurable processes but have visible outcomes (e.g., the military).

- *Coping* – have neither measurable/controllable processes nor visible outcomes (e.g., fire departments).

Given these definitions, Wilson's (1989) taxonomy firmly places fire departments in the last category, *Coping*, as they frequently have immeasurable processes that yield no visible outcomes. That is to say, it is difficult to establish common processes by which all fire departments mitigate fires. Each of these incidents requires an assessment of numerous variables, which affect the specific strategies and tactics taken (Phillips, 2004). Adding to this complexity is the fact that outcomes for a given incident are not universal. For instance, a "successful" response for one incident may entail containing the fire to the room of origin. Conversely, a similar fire, with a different set of conditions, may be considered successful if the fire spread is contained to the building of origin. This necessitates assessing the success of any incident on a case-by-case basis (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995). This makes the process susceptible to subjective opinions for the purpose and importance of specific activities, which can drive politically motivated behavior. For instance, recent trends in the fire services have shifted toward focusing more resources on risk reduction activities. This emphasis, however, can come at a cost as it may expand educators to as opposed to adding additional response personnel or apparatus (Cline, 2011).

Despite the scarcity of bureaucratic literature focused on fire departments, the aforementioned scholarship clearly indicates these organizations fit the conventional notion of a bureaucratic organization. Moreover, as organizations with bureaucratic structures, fire departments are presumably as vulnerable to political pressures as any other bureaucratic organization.

Fire agencies, therefore, are a noteworthy bureaucratic type to study. Accordingly, the following sub-sections establish the foundational elements for this research study by:

1. Outlining the purpose of the study.

2. Advancing both the research questions and hypotheses that were empirically tested.

Purpose of the Study: Fire Departments and Politics

Understanding the political pressures external to and within a fire department is as important for the profession as it is for other industries (Grant and Hoover, 1994). Little research, however, focuses on politics affecting fire service organizations. The most in-depth study to date was conducted by Charles Phillips (2004), a former fire chief for Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, for his dissertation titled "*An assessment of the factors that affect the level of 'perceptions of office politics'*."

Phillips (2004) examined the degree and impact executive-level fire service administrators (fire chiefs) perceive "Organizational Politics" to exist.[2] He also examined how organizational politics helps establish a specific type of culture and climate within fire organizations.

Phillips (2004) used statistical regression to analyze survey data derived from 155 responses of large U.S. metropolitan fire department chiefs (those with at least 400 professional/career firefighters). He found that a significant percentage of respondents (36.9%) perceived organizational politics to be a real phenomenon. Although Phillips (2004) is careful to note that his findings are not generalizable to other groups, they were consistent

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[2] Phillips (2004) uses the term "office politics," which is interchangeably used with organizational politics in some of the literature and there is no discernable effort made to differentiate the two terms. What is evident in the literature, is that scholars use organizational politics more often than practitioners who prefer the use of office politics to describe the same phenomenon.

with previous research that had established that management perceives the existence of organizational politics (at a rate of 40%) less often than subordinates (at a rate of 70%) (Osborn, as cited in Phillips, 2004). That is not to say, however, that fire chiefs do not perceive politics to be real. Rather, the political pressures this group experiences may originate from outside the organization, which is one of the fundamental questions for this project.

A second finding of Phillips (2004) is that organizational politics are more pervasive in larger departments. He posits that the most likely cause for this correlation is that larger departments are more diverse, rigid, and impersonal. These features lead to more interpersonal conflict than in smaller departments. Again, given the limited distribution of Phillips's (2004) survey instrument, it is difficult to determine whether this finding is applicable to departments with fewer than 400 employees. Nor is it obvious that his findings are generalizable to departments that comprise either career and volunteer firefighters or an all-volunteer force. This project, by contrast, expanded the sample size to include a more diverse population than Phillips (2004) used, which is discussed in more depth in *Chapter III*. This will enable the researcher to better understand the impact institutional and organizational politics have on fire departments of all sizes, operating within different governance structures (city, county, special district) and for various ranks (lieutenant through fire chief).

Finally, Phillips (2004) found that while most participants acknowledged the influence of an active labor union, their involvement did not prove to be a factor in most participants' perception of organizational politics. This runs contrary to what practitioners normally believe to be true. If chiefs are to succeed, they must routinely contend with the

industry's oldest, most prominent, and powerful trade union – the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr and Eversole, 2003; IAFC and NFPA, 2009). In fact, the union's executive leadership openly and vigorously engages in national-level politics and advocates that its affiliates, likewise, actively participate in local and state politics. This synergistic effect makes the IAFF a formidable political group at all levels of government. As such, many local unions have enough political power to favorably influence local governance decisions such as salary, benefits, work conditions, and the selection of fire chiefs (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr, and Eversole, 2003; IAFC and NFPA, 2009). Therefore, the relationship a fire chief develops with a union is vital for determining his or her success up to and including continued employment. In spite of this, however, Phillips's (2004) research indicates fire chiefs do not generally perceive unions to be a source of internal political pressure. This is relevant for this project as fire chiefs may, instead, perceive unions to be an institutional or external pressure. The Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) survey instrument used by Phillips (2004), therefore, may not have accurately gauged the existence of this source of political pressure. This necessitates the use of an instrument that can capture the external dimension of politics fire chiefs perceive to be relevant for their success.

With this in mind, the following project examines the extent to which fire service supervisors perceive the existence of internal and external politics. Moreover, if they exist, do supervisors perceive them affecting management activities? The primary benefit of this study is that it expands upon Phillips's (2004) findings, which may provide deeper insight into the relationship between internal and external politics and fire service managers. In turn,

this awareness can assist fire service leaders develop the requisite skills needed to successfully manage these counterproductive forces.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The foundational question presented for this research project centers on understating how both dimensions of bureaucratic politics (organizational and institutional) impact fire service supervisors.[3] Specifically, the project's focus is on how supervisors at all levels of a fire department perceive institutional and organizational politics to exist and what their impact is on four management activities. Bureaucratic politics, in there simplest context, are those activities engaged in by individuals or groups intended to protect or promote their special interests (Allison, 1969). While not inclusive of all scholarly definitions, it is sufficient for a basic understanding of the concept; however, the next section provides a more in depth analysis of the bureaucratic politics literature.

Based on the literature, this quantitative, non-experimental research project explores four research questions:

1. To what extent do fire service personnel perceive the existence of both dimensions of bureaucratic politics (institutional and organizational)?

2. When respondents perceive one or both dimensions of bureaucratic politics, how do the phenomena affect their ability to execute core management functions?

3. At what supervisory level or classification within fire organizations do supervisors perceive one or both dimensions of bureaucratic politics?

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[3] The use of terms "leaders" or "managers" have different connotations in organizational literature. For this project, however, the distinction between the two terms is not necessary. As such, the terms are interchangeably used throughout the paper and have no effect on the research question or methodology.

4. What additional individual and fire department demographic characteristics affect the perceived existence of one or both forms of bureaucratic politics (organizational and institutional)?

Additionally, this project advances three research hypotheses that center on demographic (individual and organizational) factors that may help predict the existence of institutional and organizational politics. Hypotheses #1 and #2 correlate respondents' demographic information with their perceptions of organizational politics (POP). Hypothesis #3 correlates a respondent's rank or managerial level within their respective department with their perceptions of institutional politics (PIP). A second set of hypotheses (H_4 and H_5) correlate the perceived impact of institutional and organizational politics on four management activities. The five hypotheses tested are stated more specifically as:[4]

Bureaucratic Politics and Demographic Characteristics

- H_1: The lower the rank, the more respondents will perceive organizational politics (POP). (pp. 42-44)

  POP (Dependent Variable [DV]) ~ Rank (Independent Variable [IV])

- H_2: Fire agencies with more personnel (both operational and staff), the more respondents will perceive organizational politics (POP). (p. 45)

  POP (DV) ~ Number of Personnel (IV)

- H_3: The higher the rank, the more respondents will perceive institutional politics (PIP). (pp. 30-31 and 37-38)

  PIP (DV) ~ Rank (IV)

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[4] The parenthesized page numbers at the end of each hypothesis references the location within this paper that provide the theoretic framework or previous research that support testing the selected hypotheses.

Bureaucratic Politics and Management Functions

- H$_4$: The higher the perception of organizational politics (POP), the more

  respondents will perceive the phenomenon affecting one or more management

  functions. (p. 40-45)

  MGT Tasks (DV) ~ Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) (IV)

- H$_5$: The higher the perception of institutional politics (PIP), the more respondents

  will perceive the phenomenon affecting one or more management functions.

  (pp. 30-33 and 37-45)

  MGT Tasks (DV) ~ Perceived Institutional Politics (PIP) (IV)

The aforementioned discussion should give the reader a basic understanding of the

foundational elements that comprise this research project. *Chapter II* delves deeper into the

concept of bureaucratic politics and its two distinct dimensions through an examination of

the relevant literature.

Definitions and Terms

- **Advanced Life Support (ALS):** A higher level of medical care provided by emergency response personnel such as licensed paramedics, nurses, physician assistants, or doctors. These life-saving measures and skill sets are determined by individual states but often include: advanced patient assessment, cardiac care (such as defibrillation and airway management), administering medications, fracture management, surgery, wound management, and obstetrics.

- **Aerial Ladder:** A specialized fire apparatus used to gain access to structures using an elevated ladder where conventional ladders might not reach. The name is derived from the fact that the large ladder is mounted on a turntable on the back or middle of a truck, allowing it to pivot around a stable base, which in turn allows a much greater ladder length to be achieved. In order to increase its length, the ladder is telescopic.

- **Apparatus:** A term usually used by firefighters describing a department vehicle (e.g., fire engine, ladder truck, medic unit)

- **Basic Life Support** (**BLS**)**:** Is a level of medical care given primarily outside of the hospital setting and is designed to treat immediate life-threatening illnesses or injuries until more advanced life saving measures are applied. These activities are provided by trained medical personnel, including emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and other persons who have received BLS training.

- **Battalion:** A group of four to five stations that are collectively supervised by a battalion chief.

- **Battalion Chief:** A mid-level fire department manager at the rank of chief officer who is in charge of several assigned stations.

- **Captain:** The rank above lieutenant and below chief.

- **Career Firefighter:** In the U.S., is a person whose primary occupation is as a firefighter thus deriving the majority of his/her earned income working in the fire service.

- **Company:** two or more firefighters organized as a team, led by a fire officer, and equipped to perform certain operational functions.

- **Company Officer:** A fire officer, typically a lieutenant or captain, who leads a team of two or more firefighters in a company.

- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** Those medical procedures and actions taken outside of a hospital setting to address immediate or potentially life-threatening injuries or illnesses through proscribed medical care and/or transporting of patients to hospitals or treatment centers.

- **Engine (**also referred to as **Pumper):** A fire suppression apparatus that has a water pump and carries fire hose and a limited supply of water.

  - **Engineer (**also referred to as **Chauffer or Pump Operator):** A firefighter responsible for driving the engine to the scene of the call and operation of the pumps on an engine, to provide sufficient water to the firefighters on the hose. The term may be either a position title or a rank; usage varies among departments.

- **Engine Company:** A group of fire personnel that includes one to two firefighters, an engineer and an officer that staff a specialized apparatus with a water pump and that is equipped with fire hose and other tools used to extinguish fires.

- **Fire Chief:** Typically, the highest rank within a fire agency.

- **Firefighter:** People who respond to fire alarms and other emergencies such as EMS, fire suppression, rescue, and other similar incidents.

- **Fireground:** The operational area at the scene of a fire incident where an incident commander is in control. Also used as name of radio frequency to be used by units operating within and area of operations.

- **HazMat:** Hazardous materials that includes solids, liquids, or gases that, if released or triggered, may cause injury, death, or damage.

- **Incident Commander:** The officer in charge of all activities at an incident.

- **Ladder Company:** A group of fire personnel that includes one to two firefighters, an engineer and an officer that staff a specialized fire apparatus with an attached large articulating ladder. The primary responsibilities of a Ladder Company are to supply ladders, conduct search and rescue operations, force entry and ventilate the hazardous gases from a structure.

- **Lieutenant:** The rank above firefighter and below captain responsible for managing a crew on an engine or ladder apparatus.

- **Officer:** A firefighter who has the rank of lieutenant, captain, or chief and is responsible for those personnel assigned to his/her command.

- **Paramedic:** A level of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) whose scope of practice, while varying from state to state, typically involves, but is not limited to, advanced patient assessment, cardiac care (such as defilation and airway management), administering medications, fracture management, and obstetrics.

- **Professional Firefighter:** Most states require certification of skills to be classified as a "professional" firefighter. This entails meeting standards such as training, skills

competency tests and performance of activities in specific hazardous environments (such as advancing hose in structure fires and extricating patients from automobile involved in an accident). There are two accepted categories of Professional Firefighters--Volunteer Firefighters who may or may not receive pay for services and Career Firefighters whose primary employment and source of earned income is in the fire service.

- **Rank:** A classification or level of firefighter, which normally starts with firefighter and progresses through lieutenant, captain, battalion chief up to fire chief.

- **Standard Operating Procedure/Guideline (SOP or SOG):** Rules for the operation of a fire department, such as how to respond to various types of emergencies, training requirements, use of protective equipment, radio procedures; often include local interpretations of regulations and standards. Generally, "procedures" are specific while "guidelines" are less detailed.

- **Structure Fire (**or **Structural Fire):** A fire in a residential or commercial building. Urban fire departments are primarily geared toward structural firefighting. The term is often used to distinguish them from wildland or other outside fires, and may also refer to the type of training and equipment such as "structure PPE" (personal protective equipment).

- **Sworn Personnel:** Uniformed fire service personnel who have taken a sworn oath to protect and serve the community in which they work.

- **Truck Company** (also referred to as **Ladder Company**): A group of firefighters assigned to an apparatus that carries ladders, forcible entry tools, possibly extrication

tools and salvage covers, and who are otherwise equipped to perform rescue, ventilation, overhaul and other specific functions at fires.

- **Volunteer Fire Department:** An organization of part-time firefighters who may or may not be paid for on-call time or firefighting duty time, but who in nearly all states are held to the same professional standards and take the same examinations to advance in rank as career firefighters.

- **Wildfire or Wildland Fire:** A fire in a forest, grasslands, prairies, or other natural areas that may also threaten structures.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before testing the hypotheses, it is first necessary to define and understand the term,

bureaucratic politics, which encompasses both internal (organizational) and external

(institutional) dimensions. These dimensions, once understood, allow for the identification and

operationalization of the dependent and independent variables.

Defining Bureaucratic Politics

While it is widely presumed that public policy making in the United States uses

democratic principles, a closer examination reveals a more complicated process. As noted in the

previous section, it consists of negotiations and interactions amongst multiple institutions,

agencies, groups, and individuals all vying for power, control, or influence (Johnson and Libecap,

1994; North, 1990; Rubin, 2000; Wilson, 1989; Vigoda-Gadot, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot and Drory,

2006). Since bureaucratic agencies implement policies in a political environment, it, therefore,

entails internal and external groups exerting influence over policy outcomes (Johnson and

Libecap, 1994; North, 1990; O'Leary, 2006; Wilson, 1989; Vigoda-Gadot, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot

and Drory, 2006). The concept of bureaucratic politics has been the source of numerous studies

since the 1950s, albeit primarily from a foreign policy perspective (Bendor and Moe, 1985). The

succeeding section details the most relevant studies for this project.

Graham Allison's study of the Kennedy administration's decision-making process during the Cuban Missile Crisis elevated the theory of bureaucratic politics as a mainstream academic concept (Brower and Abolafia, 1997). Allison theorized that if a nation chooses a given action, it was the result of bargaining amongst individuals and groups within government. One of Allison's explanatory models (#3) theorizes that a combination of channels, positions, players, preferences, and "pulling and hauling" ultimately yields policy decisions (Allison, 1969). When added to his idea of the "rules of the game" these elements constitute the core activities that constitute bureaucratic politics (Brower and Abolafia, 1997). While Allison's research focused on foreign policy, his theory is flexible enough that it is applicable to other levels of government.

Once Allison formulated the concept, it did not take long for scholars to recognize the complex nature of the interactions and relationships that exist between various internal and external actors (Bendor and Moe, 1985; Brower and Abolafia, 1997; Johnson, 2005).

These scholars subsequently simplified the concept of bureaucratic politics as theories that help explain how bureaucratic bodies make public policy decisions (Johnson, 2005). Inherent in bureaucratic political theory is the recognition that various groups protect or promote their own interests. These, in turn, often conflict with other competing interests (Johnson, 2005). These pressures can reside inside or outside the bureaucratic body and all, to one extent or another, help shape policy in a manner that protects or expands their respective spheres of power and influence (Johnson, 2005).

Halperin, Clapp, and Kanter (2006, pp. 104 - 111) expanded on the role organizational structures have on foreign affairs policy-making, which can, similarly, be applied to other policy-making entities.

Halperin, Clapp, and Kanter formulated six "rules of the game" that influence how organizational structures influence policymaking:

1. "Who has the action?"

2. "Who must sign off?"

3. "How high up must an issue go?"

4. "Through what channels does an issue move up to the President?"

5. "Can informal channels be used?"

6. "In what form does an issue come to the President?"

As Hammond (1986) notes, the limitation of Allison's (1969) and Halperin, Clapp, and Kanter's (2006) models is that neither analyzes how alternative channels (e.g., various politically motivated groups) influence the policy-making process. Other scholars, however, did study these potentially harmful relationships from various vantage points including "Iron Triangles" (Cater, 1964; Freeman, 1958; Truman as cited in Bendor and Moe, 1985), "regulatory capture" (Bernstein and Stigler as cited in Bendor and Moe, 1985) and "interest group liberalism" (Lowi, 1969; 1979). These perpetual interactions involve institutional structures, organizational cultures, interest groups, politicians, and bureaucratic actors (Bendor and Moe, 1985).

However, despite the expanding range of theoretic perspectives, the early analysis of bureaucratic politics was still narrowly focused. As Bendor and Moe (1985) note, no comprehensive model emerged that allowed for an analysis of the multi-level interactions most scholars acknowledged existed but failed to incorporate into their respective theoretic frameworks (Bendor and Moe, 1985).

That is not to say that these early models did not contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon. For example, Freeman (1958) and Truman (as cited in Bendor and Moe, 1985) examined the policy-making relationships between congressional committees, the executive branch, and interest groups. Similarly, Peltzman (as cited in Bendor and Moe, 1985) posited that

regulators often make policy decisions that significantly affect the transfer of resources between interest groups (e.g., business and consumers). Peltzman went on to define regulators as "bureaucrat-politicians" who utilize their unique access to privileged information to take administrative action that helps curry favor with politicians, interest groups, or the electorate.

A second significant contributor to the bureaucratic politics theory was Niskanen (1971) who hypothesized that budgeting is an inherently political process. He argued bureaucrats seek to expand their budgets to increase their power, authority, or security using their access to proprietary information unavailable to outside stakeholders. Since budget managers have in-depth knowledge about the true cost of their operations and are keenly aware of the demand for their agencies' services they control the budget process (Bendor and Moe, 1985). By using these intrinsic advantages, managers are able to affect funding allocations, which, according to Niskanen (1971), invariably leads to larger budgets.

Peltzman and Niskanen's primary contribution to the bureaucratic politics paradigm entails the concept of "winners and losers" (Bendor and Moe, 1985). Peltzman's input, for instance, centered on the relationship between "clients" and resource allocation by bureaucratic organizations. Niskanen, conversely, clarifies the relation between bureaucratic power and outcomes that benefit these organizations – specifically, with respect to budgeting.

As Bendor and Moe (1985) suggest, the conclusions made by many of the early researchers oversimplify the intricate relationships that influence bureaucratic behavior. This led to analytical frameworks that were one dimensional. According to Bendor and Moe (1985), few researchers seriously considered the discrete and interdependent roles of bureaucrats, politicians, interest groups, and other actors that influence bureaucratic behavior. Most bureaus, legislatures, and interest groups were analyzed as cohesive forces when, in fact, they act in more diffused and multifaceted ways. Therefore, while identifying the specific attributes, players, or dimensions of

bureaucratic politics is important, it is insufficient for creating a framework for researching the topic comprehensively.

Bendor and Moe's (1985) theoretic research framework, which they term an "*Adaptive Model of Politics*," more effectively examines the full scope of the phenomenon, which is essential for this project. Because Bendor and Moe's (1985) framework aggregates several models it allows for a multi-dimensional analysis of bureaucratic politics. It does so by integrating critical elements of preceding models, which allows for more in-depth explorations of the various actor interactions that influence behavior within bureaucratic organizations. More significantly, their model seeks to examine the outcomes of what they term "interest-governmental outputs, budgets, and bureaucratic efficienc[ies]" that are determined by the "interdependent decisions of bureaucratic, legislative, and interest group participants" (p. 776). By design, the focus is on the various roles participants within a political system – both internal and external – have on organizational behavior. Their adaptive behavioral model is meant to be dynamic and was developed based on the previous work conducted by earlier behavioral traditionalists including Simon (1946); March and Simon (1958); Cyert and March (1963); Cohen, March and Olsen (1972); Axelrod (1976); and, Padgett (1980). And just as important, their model reflects the limits of human decision-making, which reinforces the adaptive and dynamic nature of organizational behavior – both collectively and individually (North, 1990). Essential in this analysis is the idea that decision-makers adapt to their environments, which comports with earlier analysis by Barnard (1938), Selznick (1957), and Katz and Kahn (1966).

Bendor and Moe (1985) were also critical of the early models of bureaucratic politics that strictly defined the concept in terms of conflicting resource allocation needs, as they felt it is too methodologically limited. They believed the definitions advanced in previous research did not reflect the full range of motivations, actions, and tactics that encompass bureaucratic politics. These authors suggested that a more robust definition must include the politics that surround

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implementing policy, the influence of power and authority, behavior within organizations where individual motivation and behavior manifest strictly for personal gain (Bendor and Moe, 1985).

Bendor and Moe seemingly tapped into Mintzberg's (1983) earlier thesis, which links social influence to organizational behavior. In this regard, Mintzberg (1983) felt the best method for analyzing these relationships is through the lens of a power game. He asserted that internal and external stakeholders exert pressure over others within an organization by controlling or influencing decisions and actions to satisfy their specific needs. Therefore, to understand organizational behavior it is first necessary to identify the players that exert pressure, which is frequently perceived to be political in nature. Likewise, Mintzberg (1983) echoed Erving Goffman's seminal analysis of the dramaturgical perspective, which argued human actions are dependent upon time, place, and audience. In this way, Mintzberg (1983) identifies the cast of internal and external actors who use power to affect organizational behavior and action.

The external coalition is comprised of the owners, associates, employee associations, public, and influencers. Conversely, the internal coalition encompasses the chief executive officer, operators (the workers), managers, technocrats (technical specialists), support staff, and what he terms the "ideology" of a firm. These relationships are conceptualized in his iconic illustration he dubbed "*The Essence of Organizational Structure*" (Figure 1).
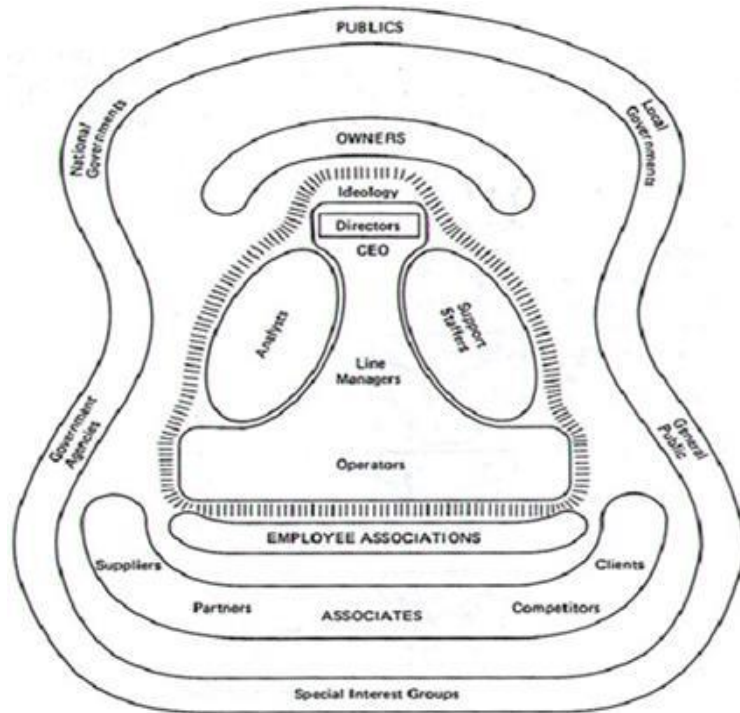
Figure 2: "The Essence of Organizational Structure" reproduced from Mintzberg (1983) extracted from http://glori.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/airspace/NUSarchive/SC2202/Institutions/Market/Firm7.jpg

Unfortunately, even Bendor and Moe's (1985) analysis falls short of providing a comprehensive research framework, given the theoretic advances in the specific dimensions of bureaucratic politics. As such, one must venture outside of the literature pertaining to bureaucratic politics and examine the research devoted to each of its dimensions – external and internal. In this respect, the literature related to institutional and organizational politics adequately addresses the full spectrum of bureaucratic politics.

Institutional Politics. Institutional politics, the external dimension of bureaucratic

politics, has been a source of scholarly inquiry for nearly as long as sociology, political science,

and public administration have existed (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott, 2008). Early

scholars, such as Wilson (1889) and Willoughby (1904), conceived of nations in terms of their

political structures and legal systems, which they termed "political institutions." From the 1930s

through the 1940s, scientists shifted their focus and began evaluating institutions and

organizations from a behavioral perspective (Scott, 2008). Simon's (1955) concept of "bounded

rationality," for instance, served as the basis for the neo-institutionalism movement, which made

this area of study a distinct theoretic perspective (Scott, 2008). Simon (1955) posited that

organizations adopt structures to cope with exogenous pressures and that people act rationally as

they are constrained by limited information and rules they must abide by within an organization.

Selznick (1957) expanded on Simon's concept as he asserted that organizations are a collection of

rational actors that infuse the entity with their respective values, many of which are formed

outside the organization.

In 1966, Katz and Kahn in their seminal book, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*,

formalized what many scholars had previously claimed, but not formally established, that

organizations are susceptible and react to their external environments. The author's theoretic

framework bridged the gap that had previously existed between the micro analytical approach and

the macro sociological perspective of organizational analysis. Prior to Katz and Kahn's (1966)

work, organizational analysis had largely been rooted in Taylor's scientific management or in

Weber's bureaucratic model (Scott, 2008). Neither of these models, according to Katz and Kahn

(1966), adequately dealt with the external forces of social change, which undeniably affect

organizations internally. Katz and Kahn's (1966) open-systems theory, by contrast, viewed

organizations as a system of behavioral patterns, which are interdependent, cyclical, and reliable.

Systems theory, then, is a framework of knowledge focused on interdependent relationships –

both internal and external – that can profoundly influence the way actors behave within an organization.

Katz and Kahn (1966) believed environmental influences are not problems needing eradication; rather, they are an integral part of a healthy open system. Therefore, it is vital to understand how these forces interact with one another and their external environment.

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) built on Katz and Kahn's (1966) systems theory by observing that no organization is entirely self-sufficient; therefore, they become dependent upon external sources for resources. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) later described this as a form of institutionalization. As such, organizations must engage in exchanges with their external environment to survive. Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) believed that understanding and evaluating the environment organizations operate within best explains the structures they choose and the actions they take.

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) also believed an organization's external environment influences their internal activities and outcomes. Given this relationship, they advanced the theory of resource dependence, which examines how external resources affect organizational behavior. Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) asserted that an organization's procurement process significantly influences its strategic and tactical decisions. These decisions, in turn, inspire the structure the organization adopts and influences it critical activities in, including personnel recruitment, production processes, and contractual arrangements.

Subsequent researchers took a more Weberian perspective by observing institutions include both formal structures, rules and procedures, which influence policy-makers and bureaucratic decision-makers (March and Olsen, 1984; Skocpol, 1986; Krasner, 1988). Conversely, other scholars, such as Moe (1984) and Shepsle (1989), viewed institutions as governance systems deliberately constructed by those wishing to promote or protect their own

interests (Scott, 2008). As such, they believed institutions contain positive inducements and negative rules to motivate individuals, groups, and organizations.

What has evolved, then, is a theory of institutions that today exhibits several characteristics that suggests the field has reached theoretic maturity (Scott, 2008):

1. It has moved from looser to tighter conceptualizations of institutions and their distinctive features.

2. It views relationships in determinative rather than interactive terms.

3. It relies less on assertions than on evidence-based conclusions.

4. Finally, it views institutions in terms of rational actions rather than of irrational behaviors.

This theoretic progress has led to greater reliance upon measurable indicators that strengthen methodological reliability (Scott, 2008). This, in turn, has allowed for more broad applications of its concepts to other academic fields (e.g., organizational ecology, law, social movements, and cultural sociology) as the field's theoretic clarity increases. As Shepsle and Bonchek (1997) observed, institutional analysis extends to "any political community," which "institutionalizes procedures to deal with recurring, important problems…" (1997, p. 300). What is enticing about Shepsle and Bonchek's supposition, and most relevant for this project, is that institutions affect organizational decision-making, behaviors, and outcomes (1997, pp. 299-311).

Unfortunately, despite the growing body of literature and converging theoretic framework, definitional consensus is still elusive, which leads to vigorous debates and disputes over what constitutes an "institution." The next section expands on the concept and provides a working definition useful for this research project.

Toward a Working Definition of Institutions. North advances one of the broadest definitions of institutions, which he asserts are the "rules of the game…where the humanly devised constraints…shape human interaction" (1990, p. 3). While expansive, North's definition

belies the concept's sophistication as it is highly malleable depending on the lens used to analyze the phenomenon – e.g., economic, public policy, political, organizational, etc. (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). As Powell and DiMaggio (1991) note, theorists diverge along two basic points of contention: do institutions reflect individual preferences, or are they the result of collective outcomes that defy individual choice and action? Many institutional economists and public choice theorists assume the former, as they contend individual actors construct institutions to influence organizational or policy outcomes. Sociologists, by contrast, reject this proposition. They argue individuals filter the myriad of choices and decisions they face daily through their social networks, education, principles, and existing social conventions (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991).

Scott (2008) contends that for a clear definition of institutions to materialize, it is first necessary to understand the concepts three distinct properties:

1. They resist change.

2. They persevere and reproduce through generational transmission.

3. They exhibit socially enduring features and provide stability across time and space.

Accordingly, Scott (2008) notes these properties manifest in three ways, which he describes as "institutional pillars:" *Regulative, Normative,* and *Cultural Cognitive*. In turn, these pillars use specific transference mechanisms, have explicit sources of legitimacy, and exhibit quantifiable transference indicators (Table 1).

	REGULATIVE	NORMATIVE	CULTURAL-COGNITIVE
TRANSFERENCE ELEMENTS			
• Mechanisms of transference	Coercive	Normative	Mimetic
• Source of legitimacy	Legally Sanctioned	Morally Governed	Culturally Supported
• Indicators	Rules, Laws, Sanctions	Accreditation	Shared logics of action, isomorphism (referenced as *"Taken-for-Grantedness"*)
CARRIERS			
• Symbolic Systems	Rules, Laws	Values, Expectations	Categories, typifications, schema
• Relational Systems	Governance and power systems	Regimes, authority systems	Structural isomorphism
• Routines	Protocols, standard operating procedures	Jobs, roles, obedience to duty	Scripts
• Artifacts	Objects complying with mandated specifications	Objects meeting conventions, standards	Objects possessing symbolic value

Table 1: "*Three Pillars of Institutions.*" Adapted from Scott (2008, pp. 51 and 79)

Each pillar transmits institutional values into organizations through four distinct

"carriers:" symbolic systems, relational systems, routines, and artifacts. The transference

mechanisms (coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphism) are important to expand upon, as

they serve as the foundation for building the survey instrument's measures of respondents'

perceptions of institutional politics.

Scott (1987) explains that most organizations adapt to their respective environment not

only rationally, but, more often, they react to social and cultural pressures. These institutional

pressures imprint their preferred organizational forms and actions through the three transference

mechanisms. Studying these mechanisms, therefore, allows researchers to develop a deeper

understanding how and why organizations, within an institutional ecology, become increasingly similar over time (Scott, 1987). The three institutional mechanisms used to influence organizations are coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Coercive Isomorphism. The first mechanism promoting institutionalization of organizations is called coercive isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism refers to the external pressures placed on an organization to conform to rules and practices considered important within an industry. Implicit in this mechanism is the threat of punishment or the use of force if an organization does not comply with standard practices. For example, government mandates require defined reporting methods in specific regulated industries. This, in turn, leads organizations to design systems to comply with these demands particularly when they are dependent upon government funding. For fire departments, the federal government has mandated the use of a national incident management system (NIMS) in the aftermath of 9/11 for all levels of government. Prior to this, fire agencies used a variety of systems that were not always compatible (Christen, Callsen, Miller, and Lord, 2011; International Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC] and National Fire Protection Association [NFPA], 2009). After years of using a coercive process, primarily through grant funding, NIMS is now the standard incident management system in use by most fire agencies throughout the country (IAFC and NFPA, 2009; Christen, Callsen, Miller, and Lord, 2011).

Normative Isomorphism. The second transmission mechanism is referred to as normative isomorphism and involves an intricate network of educational and professional institutions by which acceptable norms and practices are transmitted to actors and then integrated into individual organizations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott, 2008). One approach is to standardize the formal education an industry uses to convey a common body of knowledge, set of skills, techniques, methods, and processes. For example, in the last two and a half decades, the National Fire Academy's (NFA) Executive Fire Officer (EFO) program has become an increasingly

important normative process for educating chief officers. The program, which began in 1985, is the profession's unifying outlet for training and educating executive level officers to perform their jobs in a generally acceptable way within the industry. In turn, EFO students and graduates integrate the lessons learned from the program into their department to facilitate industry acceptable standards (USFA, 2010).

Mimetic Isomorphism. The third institutional transmission mechanism, mimetic, helps organizations reduce uncertainty, minimize risk, ensure survival, and gain legitimacy within an industry. Sources of uncertainty arise from rapidly evolving technology, ambiguous strategies, goals, and objectives, economic turmoil, and other dynamic environmental factors. Mimetic isomorphism is an organization's attempt to minimize these uncertainties by imitating the practices and procedures of other institutional organizations deemed to be influential or leaders (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott, 2008). Imitation also legitimizes and gives an organization credibility within their respective industry despite the prospect that adoption of institutionalized policies, procedures, or culture may be inefficient or ineffective.

Scott (2008) is careful to note that institutions are rarely homogeneous. More often, organizations are influenced by a nearly limitless combination of pillars, transference elements, and carriers from numerous institutional environments. He stresses, however, the more aligned an institution's pillars are with its respective transference elements and carriers the greater the capacity it has to influence organizational structures, decisions, or structures.

The one constant observed by most scholars is that institutions have significant influence over organizations including those in the public sphere (Gortner Nichols, and Ball, 2007; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008). As Marsden, Cook and Kalleberg (1994) maintain, powerful external actors have the ability to mandate or advocate strongly for adopting specific practices, processes or structural forms, which advance their specific needs and preferences. Institutional pressures channel through different organizational functions and actors, which influence how

managers receive and react to these demands. These differentiated reception points serve as the basis for the practices adopted by and behaviors exhibited within organizations (Delmas and Toffel, 2008). Institutional transmitter and receiving agents include nation-states, professionals, associations, marginal players, social movements, and rank and file organizational participants. The important take-away from Scott's (2008) and Marsden, Cook and Kalleberg's (1994) observations is that institutional actors are diverse, numerous, and different from industry to industry and organization to organization.

Before we can examine the impact institutional politics have on organizations, it is first necessary to define organizations so as to distinguish them from institutions.

Differentiating Organizations from Institutions. Distinguishing organizations from institutions is important as it allows researchers and policy-makers to focus on root problems rather than on the means by which a problem is transmitted. Failure to make this distinction may lead to a misappropriation of resources that do not address the structural issues (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; North, 1990). Unfortunately, finding a universal understanding of what constitutes an organization can be difficult.

Daft (2007, p 11) defines organizations as deliberately structured and coordinated social entities engaged in interdependent activities linked to their external environment for the attainment of explicit goals. He asserts that what makes organizations unique from other socially structured groups, including institutions, is that people interact to perform essential functions necessary for attaining stated goals. As such, managers purposely structure processes and coordinate resources to achieve the organization's mission (Daft , 2010). North (1990) augments Daft's definition by suggesting that organizations consist of groups of people collectively working toward shared goals.

Surprisingly, some scholars have suggested organizations do not matter. They assert, instead, that organizations are simply mechanisms for individual or group actions and behaviors,

therefore the focus should be on people (North, 1990). Wilson (1989), an expert on

bureaucracies, adamantly rejected this view. He asserted that an individual's organizational

accomplishments depend on "their having authority and resources with which to act" (p. 24).

Moreover, he profoundly believed that public organizations are inherently different, thus

individuals who occupy positions within these organizational types behave fundamentally

different than those in private sector firms. It therefore necessitates identifying the characteristics

and ways public sector firms and, by extension their employees, differ from their private sector

counterparts. It is through this awareness that a clear delineation of the specific institutional

influences can be understood and, potentially, measured.

Some scholars such as Gortner, Nichols, and Ball (2007) make a concerted effort to

distinguish between private and public firms.[5] These distinctions are necessary for better

understanding how politics are a constant source of conflict for public sector managers.

Gortner, Nichols, and Ball (2007) assert that the primary demarcation between public and

private organizations is their respective missions and accountability mechanisms. In short,

private firms exist within a free market system for the exclusive purpose of realizing a profit.

Ultimately, so long as the firm operates in a legal manner, its performance is only accountable to

its owners. Public sector organizations, by contrast, carry out a legal mandate and are

accountable to its citizenry. They supply a collective good or service that private sector

organizations are either incapable or unwilling to provide (Gortner, Nichols, and Ball, 2007).

Perhaps the greatest distinction between private and public organizations is the purpose

for their existence. Rainey, Backoff and Levine (as cited in Gortner, Nichols, and Ball, 2007, p.

24) provide the most complete understanding of these distinctions. They deduce organizational

types deviate along three lines: legal, economic, and political. Of these, the legal, which

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[5] The authors also distinguish non-profits from the other two organizational forms. From their vantage point, however, the differences between public sector and non-profit organizations are relatively minor whereas the distinction between public and private sector organizations is far more pronounced.

advances the concept of accountability, and politics are the two most defining features of public

sector organizations, which are also the most applicable concepts for this study.

Legal Accountability. The first legalistic difference between public and private entities is

to whom members are accountable and for what purpose. A public entity, particularly in a

democratic society, is ultimately accountable to its electorate – be it at the local, state, or national

level. The concept of accountability vacillates depending on the wishes and demands of the

public. Thus, what might be acceptable at a given point in time may be impermissible at some

later date. Moreover, because the framers of the Constitution were careful to separate powers

between branches and levels of government, what is acceptable at one level of government may

not be at another (e.g., a local government cannot establish its own standing army. Conversely,

under the 10 Amendment, the federal government cannot appoint the mayor of Denver, Colorado.

All of this suggests a governmental body has specific constituencies it must serve. Hyde (as cited

in Gortner, Nichols, and Ball, 2007, p. 29) stipulates there are three distinctive points of service:

customers (those whom the organization serves directly), clients (those with contractual

relationships), and captives (those whom have no choice but to "deal" with the entity).

Participation in Political Process. The second legalistic aspect of public sector

organizations politics is the direct participation of its constituents in the decision-making process.

This leads to public entities having to balance the competing interests of individuals, special

interest groups, and the collective electorate. Private firms, on the other hand, are mostly free of

these forms of external forces, which permit them to focus on their primary task of maximizing

profits.

Correspondingly, public organizations are constantly re-evaluating short- and long-range

goals to meet their changing political climates. In many instances, the environment changes after

elections, thus long-term goals can be frustratingly elusive. As a result, public managers develop

different strategies to deal with this reality that differ from those of their private sector

counterparts. For instance, managers achieve goals through a process of influence, negotiation, and compromise (Braybrooke and Lindblom, and Gawthrop as cited in Gortner, Nichols, and Ball, 2007).

The shifting political environment also leads to goal ambiguity. That is to say, politicians habitually write laws using obscure language, which permits public sector managers to exercise broad authority when executing an agency's mission. It is not until expectations change or the public perceives an abuse of power that it becomes problematic (Gortner, Nichols, and Ball, 2007).

Although rudimentary, the definitions and basic differentiations of organizational types advanced in the previous section are sufficiently explanatory for this project in so much as they provide an adequate basis for analyzing how institutions affect organizations. This is the focus of the next section.

Organizational Adaption to Institutional Environments. The salient question for this project is "do institutions affect public sector organizations?" In short, they most assuredly do. In fact, North (1990) states:

> [S]ocial scientists are just beginning to appreciate that the underlying institutional
> framework is the source of their current poor performance and are to grapple
> with ways to restructure the institutional framework to redirect incentives that
> will direct organizations along productivity-increasing paths. (p. 110)

North's (1990) observation presupposes that without a deeper understanding of institutions, effective policies cannot be developed to combat such societal ills as poverty and corruption, which traditional economic models deal with ineffectively.

North's (1990, pp. 111-112) research denotes the four ways institutions are vital for public administrative research:

- Institutional theory links the polity and economics.

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- Politics and economic performance are inexorably related.

- Ideas and ideologies matter.

- Lastly, but most relevant for this project, institutions affect individual and organizational behavior, which belies the traditional (outmoded) economic models of rational choice and market efficiencies.

This leads to examining how organizations fit into larger institutional environments. Institutionalized organizations operate in complicated, value-oriented environments. In order to survive, organizations turn their focus "outward'' to appease influential constituents (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Meyer and Scott (1983) suggest this influence leads to "institutionalized environments, [are] organizations are rewarded for establishing correct structures and processes'' (p. 149).

Most organizations adopt at least some level of collective behaviors and structures that reflect the values and expectations of their external stakeholders (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). This is more appropriately referred to as "organizational institutionalization," which manifests in two dominate ways: structural design and organizational behavior (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Stinchcombe as cited in Scott, 2008).

Organizational Structural Design. The first effect institutionalism has on organizations is the selection or evolution of structural designs and organizational cultures that mirror those of their institutional environment. As such, organizations tend to adopt the same level of structural and process complexity inherent within their institutional environments (Crank, 2003; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008). For example, fire departments are under pressure to hire in a manner that reflects the demographic makeup of their communities, and, in fact, may be legally mandated to do so (Crank, 2003; Hulett, 2007; Hulett, Bendick, Thomas, and Moccio, 2008). On the other hand, departments can be held legally accountable if they fail to use rational and

validated hiring processes. These institutional pressures force organizations to develop elaborate hiring policies, which may also conflict with their internal cultures (Crank, 2003).

Organizational Behavior. For this project, an equally significant issue is the influence intuitionalism has on organizational behavior – specifically with respect to politically oriented activities. In order to balance conflicting institutional pressures, organizations loosely couple formal practices with actual behavior (Crank, 2003). The intricacy of constituent relations is dealt with by loosely coupling an agency's formal positions or goals with their institution's. For example, fire departments are statutorily required to enforce fire codes that help save lives and minimize property damage. This runs contrary to the institutional culture that covets fire response as the profession's core service despite the statistical evidence demonstrating that code enforcement has significantly reduced deaths and property damage (USFA, 2009). This creates a dichotomy where rank and file firefighters may resist education programs or enforcement activities designed to reduce the frequency and consequence of fires (Rivero, 2004). Since institutionalized organizations respond to external stakeholder needs and expectations, some of which can conflict with other institutional and organizational cultural values, loose coupling enables rank and file employees to carry out the department's primary mission. Simultaneously, it allows administrators to attend to the needs of external constituents.

Finally, "good faith" pervades organizational practices, impeding critical evaluation and supervision. As observed in law enforcement, firefighters also regard the essentiality of their profession in such a way that it may also lead to less introspection of organizational practices that could lead to profound change (Crank, 2003). To illustrate, emergency service supervisors are less likely to perceive corruption as anything more than an aberration, when there is no evidence to suggest the potential for a corrupt firefighter is not as statistically likely as it is in other professions.

Institutional theory, then, can yield insight into why organizations adopt specific strategies, management practices, or cultures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1992). More importantly for this project are the political behaviors that manifest from external pressures. There are almost incalculable institutional groups that influence any given organization. Some only affect specific industries (e.g., industry-specific trade groups) while others influence virtually all industries (e.g., unions).

As Crank (2003) observed, emergency service agencies, such as police and fire departments, meet the operational definition of institutionalized organizations. Because fire departments have deeply embedded institutionalized cultures (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr and Eversole, 2003), it influences strategic and operational decisions (Meyer and Scott, 1983; North, 1990; Schein, 1993). To illustrate, although the primary focus is on public safety (e.g., emergency response, code enforcement, and education), fire departments integrate other values such as due process, hiring and promotional practices, and gender and racial equality. These are important issues for external groups. Fire departments, like other institutionalized organizations, selectively choose specific goals, strategies, and tactics to placate influential external stakeholders (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Hulett, Bendick, Thomas, and Moccio, 2008; Scott, 1992). With respect to the fire service, the literature points to five institutions that influence local fire agencies: elected officials, the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), civil service boards, employee unions, and business groups (Gortner, Nichols, and Ball, 2007; Marsdenm, Cook and Kalleberg, 1994).

The first external group that influences public sector agencies is elected officials who hold organizational managers accountable for their actions and decisions. Gortner, Nichols, and Ball (2007) note this type of accountability, however, is problematic on several levels. First, it requires citizen involvement that may have minimal knowledge of the issues. Second, not all

problems require passage of laws. Finally, many governmental agencies are removed from the direct influence of elected officials yet they can still affect organizations in profound ways.

Powell and DiMaggio (1991) assert that a second external group exerting pressures on public organization is accreditation bodies. They classify them as a form of normative isomorphism where organizations change through professionalization. This is a process where an occupation collectively defines and universally adopts work conditions and methods of operation. In the last decade and a half, the fire service has gradually embraced accreditation, which is slowly professionalizing the industry (Rivero, 2004). The purpose of fire service accreditation is to enable organizations to "examine past, current, and future service levels and internal performance and compare them to industry best practices" (found on the Commission on Fire Accreditation International [CFAI] *About Accreditation and CFAI* webpage, n.d.). Ostensibly, this independent assessment helps fire departments improve performance by adhering to industry standards and "professionalizing" specific job functions – particularly those in management (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). Fire departments, unlike organizations in other industries (e.g., hospitals) enter into accreditation voluntarily. As such, fire service accreditation is best evaluated as a form of normative isomorphism, which, despite its uneven acceptance, is slowly professionalizing the industry (Rivero, 2004; West and Wolf, 2006). Unfortunately, because so few fire agencies have gone through the accreditation process, using it as one of the groups for assessing influence over organizations is impractical.

The other institutional groups scholars identify as having influence over public sector organizations include unions (Johnson and Libecap, 1994; Kochan , Katz, and McKersie, 1986; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008), civil service boards (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008), and business groups such as homeowners, chamber of commerce, realtor, and builder associations (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008). These groups, excluding CFAI

and civil service boards, [6] are the three institutional groups that used in the survey that assessed respondents' perceptions how institutional politics influence management activities.

Organizational Politics. While impactful, institutional politics only explains bureaucratic politics from an external perspective. To comprehend the true impact of the phenomenon, it is also necessary to examine its internal dimension more precisely defined as *Organizational Politics*.

Organizational politics has been an area of research since the early 1960s with one of the earliest definitions originating from Burns (1961) who posited the phenomenon occurs when "others are made use of as resources in competitive situations" (p. 257). Mayes and Allen (1977) expanded on this rudimentary definition by adding that it entails "influence to obtain ends" in a way that is not sanctioned by the organization (p. 675). Like other sociological phenomena, organizational politics goes by many names, has numerous layers, and is perceived dissimilarly by different individuals (Vigoda, 2003).

As noted previously, practitioners and some scholars, use the terms "office" and "organizational" politics interchangeably (DuBrin, 1981; Clarke, 1999 as cited in Phillips, 2004). While it may not create methodological issues, it can produce confusion as to which term is more academically appropriate (Vigoda, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006). Many practitioners, for instance, consider "office politics" negatively, which conjures up images of manipulation, betrayal, and favoritism. Rarely do laypersons consider politics a beneficial force (Velasquez, 1982; Clarke, 1999 as cited in Phillips [dissertation], 2004). Yet, this over simplification limits the understanding of its pervasiveness and impact – good and bad – on organizations (Vigoda, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006). This has led scholars to use the more academically acceptable term, *organizational politics*, to describe the phenomenon.

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[6] Civil service boards are excluded from the Perceptions of Institutional Politics (PIP) survey instrument, as a significant number of fire departments are not governed by these oversight groups.

Regardless of the term used, however, most scholars have traditionally described the organizational politics ominously. Mintzberg (1983), for instance, gave rise to the notion that organizational politics are subversive and adversely affect organizations. He contended ''[organizational politics are]...typically divisive, and above all in a technical sense, illegitimate - sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise'' (p. 172).

It was not until Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989), in their groundbreaking research, discovered that organizational politics have both positive and negative attributes. They asserted ''[organizational politics] is a social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others' interests'' (p. 210).

Inherent in these definitions is the belief that organizations are political systems. They are composed of interdependent members using power, influence, and partisan maneuvering to achieve their goals. Given this, it is necessary to examine how political behaviors exist within organizations.

Political Behaviors within Organizations. As noted earlier, many scholars as well as most practitioners, regard organizational politics negatively as they broadly define it as the pursuit of self-interests at the expense of others. If this is accurate, leaders must develop techniques to skillfully minimize, manage, or eliminate organizational politics if they to be successful.

Unfortunately for many internal actors, politics are an unavoidable fact of organizational life. They manifest because people do not always agree on issues of consequence due to conflicting value systems, diverse ideas, and differing personalities. In turn, these frequently become the sources of internal tensions and conflict (Morgan, 1996). French and Raven (1959), early organizational theorists, identified these conflicts as social pressures.

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These researchers asserted that social pressure is one of the most influential aspects of power as it is inherent in every aspect of life (French and Raven, 1959). They believed that power and influence are best analyzed in the context of the relationship between two "agents," from two points of view: one agent exerting power and one receiving the behavior. The researchers felt these relationships explain the effects of social influence, which, in turn, affects members of an organization. Their theory focuses on change within a group due to social influence where an individual exerts power over others. What they determined was that there are five sources of social power: reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent.[7]

Reward power is the ability one person has to control the benefits of another individual in exchange for specific behaviors or actions. The second power base, coercive, is the ability or authority to exact punishment. Legitimate power, is the perceived authority a person has within an organization. The fourth, referent power, is when members identify with a specific group or individual. Lastly, expert power is the authority granted a person based upon his or her specialized knowledge or expertise (French and Raven, 1959).

Distinguishing the different power bases within organizations is important as it gives researchers and practitioners a better understanding how the phenomenon affects individual and group behavior (Fairholm, 1993).

Burns (1961) also pointed out that most organizations either deliberately or inadvertently promote political strife as they encourage competition while simultaneously demanding collaboration. People must work cooperatively in pursuit of an organization's core mission yet often compete for limited resources, status, and advancement opportunities. The hierarchical structure most organizations adopt, which is a rational subdivision of labor, also exacerbates conflict by limiting positions of power and control. It is worth noting that individuals do not have to be overtly deceptive to end up engaging in organizational politics. Political behavior is a

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[7] The authors also discussed a sixth type of influence, informational, but did not classify it as one of the primary bases of power.

natural response to the tensions created between individuals and their organizations. Establishing

budgets, determining work standards, day-to-day supervision, control of work, as well as the

pursuit of opportunity and career advancement, all characterize the sophisticated forms of

organizational politics. Within the fire service, politics can result from the limited opportunities

for career advancement to the highest levels within an organization (e.g., Battalion Chief,

Assistant Chief, or Chief of the Department). In fact, one might easily conclude that the larger

the organization, the greater the potential for career-oriented politics to manifest as there are few

opportunities for top rung positions such as Fire Chief (i.e., every fire department irrespective of

size has only one Fire Chief), yet there are more members who may aspire to these positions.

DuBrin (2001) extends the notion of political behavior by identifying six individual and

organizational factors that contribute to its existence:

1. Organizations with pyramid-shaped structures concentrate power at the top thus

    experience higher levels of internal politics. As noted previously, hierarchical

    organizations have limited power positions to distribute amongst numerous

    subordinates; therefore, as personnel progress up the organizational structure, the

    competition for managerial positions becomes more intense, which causes additional

    internal conflict.

2. The subjective application of performance standards leads employees to resort to

    politics as they perceive their accomplishments and suitability for promotion

    constrained by subjective or unfair evaluations. Similarly, for managers who have no

    objective process for differentiating the effectiveness of subordinates, there is

    increased opportunity for favoritism.

3. Uncertainty and turbulence that create an unstable and unpredictable environment,

    can also lead to politically motivated behavior. For instance, corporate mergers or

downsizing cultivate insecurity that can contribute to internal infighting as employees

maneuver to preserve jobs or power.

4. Emotional insecurity or a lack confidence in one's abilities can lead to political

   maneuvering as employees attempt to ingratiate themselves with superiors.

5. Certain individuals are predisposed to having manipulative personalities that

   contribute to a politically oriented environment.

6. When key members disagree on the organization's strategic approach or specific

   goals it can lead to political infighting as factions vie for support for their respective

   preference.

Given the above discussion, it does not take long to understand that the potential for

organizational politics is virtually endless. More importantly for organizational leaders are the

responses to organizational politics.

Responses to Organizational Politics. The research clearly illustrates that various

individuals and groups within an organization have an interest in influencing initiatives and

policy outcomes. It is the purpose of this research project, then, to determine to what extent

organizational politics (an independent variable) influence management activities (a dependent

variable). The next section examines how organizational politics make managing public entities

challenging. Inherent in this locus of inquiry, is the reality that, while politics can have a

detrimental effect on a variety of stakeholders, the emphasis of this research is on fire service

supervisors. Additionally, as noted previously, most research pertaining to bureaucratic politics,

principally the organizational variant, has largely examined the phenomenon from a perspective

that these forces are undesirable (Lowi, 1969; Vigoda, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006).

This project follows this line of research despite the recognition that beneficial political behavior

exists but will leave this for future research.

Researchers have linked internal politics to a number of organizational outcomes that include:

- Affecting organizational structures (Zahra, 1991)

- Constraining promotional opportunities (Vigoda, 2003)

- Influencing managers, subordinates, and peers (Scandura, Graen, and Novak, 1986; Vigoda, 2003)

- Exacerbating self-serving behavior (Biberman, 1985)

- Lastly, inducing work-related stress, job anxiety, dissatisfaction, decreased organizational commitment, and diminished job performance (Kacmar and Baron, 1999)

While the aforementioned outcomes are important, the two most relevant for this project are inefficient resource allocation through the budget process and ineffectual leadership leading to diminished social capital.

Inefficient Resource Allocation. Early research into the phenomenon focused on the behaviors that manifest because of organizational politics. One such behavioral outcome centers on conflict that arises from organizational resource sharing and allocation through budgeting (Bendor and Moe, 1977; Niskanen, 1971). According to several scholars, organizational budgeting is the outcome of political bargaining amongst numerous actors and organizational units (Cyert and March, 1962; Pettigrew, 1977; Wildavsky and Swedlow, 2001). These scholars determined that political processes are driven by such activities as coalition building, controlling critical information, bargaining, and empire building (Jones as cited in Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006, p. 219). Bendor and Moe (1985) note, however, it is critical to distinguish between political and non-political claims against organizational resources. An employee seeking a pay raise, for example, may not be overtly political, whereas a group of employees threatening to unionize to obtain similar raises is political. Thus, the circumstances surrounding resource

demands are necessary for determining whether a specific action is implicitly political. In this respect, it is useful to examine the literature that evolved from Niskanen's (1971) budget maximizing framework, which illustrates expands on this facet of self-serving behavior.

Niskanan (1971) argued that most budget maximizing behavior relates to specific benefits a manager receives by continually expanding his or her budget.[8] These can include larger salaries, more power and prestige, stakeholder support, an enhanced reputation, and superior output. He posited that if such rewards are tied to an agency's culture, a bureaucrat will rationally strive to make their respective budget as robust as possible.

Niskanen (1971) acknowledged that not all bureaucrats are driven by self-serving motives as some are truly desirous of serving the public's interest. He felt, however, that "It is impossible for anyone bureaucrat to act in the public interest, because of the limits on his information and the conflicting interests of others, regardless of his personal motivations" (Niskanen, 1971, p. 39).

Certainly, budget maximization is but one manifestation of politically motivated behavior but is seemingly the most relevant for an increasingly weary public. There are, however, less concrete, albeit equally destructive, variations that include over-inflated self-perceptions, taking credit for underserved success, and deflections of responsibility for failures (Johns as cited in Sutton and Straw, 1999). The one not mentioned but is perhaps the most difficult to assess and quantify is dysfunctional leadership arising from an overtly political environment.

Dysfunctional Leadership. Understanding the effects leadership has on organizational performance is important, because many researchers regard this skill as one of the key forces for successful organizational performance (Avolio, Bass, and Jung, 1999; Lado , Boyd and Wright, 1992; Rowe, 2001).

Bass and Stogdill (1990) define leadership as:

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[8] It should be noted, Niskanen's research centered on federal budgeting, thus a manager was influenced by external groups who could, then, influence legislatures in manner that benefits the manager

…an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves structuring

or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the member.

Supervisors are agents of change – persons whose acts affect other people more than the

people's affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the

motivation or competencies of others in the group. (pp. 19-20)

Bass and Stogdill (1990) also identified two dominate types of leadership styles:

transformational and transactional.

The transformational leader is someone who effectively inspires a common and shared

vision throughout the organization. Transformational supervisors are unafraid of change and, in

fact, seek innovative ways to evolve the organization. They look for opportunities despite real or

perceived risks and prefer effectiveness over efficiency. Transformational supervisors do not

merely react to their environment, they attempt to create or shape it to their advantage (Avolio,

Bass and Jung, 1999).

The transactional leader, by contrast, operates within the existing system with little

inclination to change the organization or its culture. This type of leader avoids risk, seeks

efficiency, and prefers process over substance (Bass and Stogdill, 1990). The transactional leader

rewards subordinates for a desired behavior (Lowe, Galen, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Thus,

as Bass, and Graen and Cashman (as cited in Lowe, Galen, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996) pointed

out, a skillful transactional leader is likely to be effective in stable, predictable environments

where measurable performance indicators exist.

Although transformational supervisors may use transactional methods to accomplish a

specific task, they do so cautiously. Instead, they focus on value-oriented outcomes and

individual needs that align with organizational goals and values (Bass, 1985, p. 20).

As might be expected, much of the leadership research has fixated on its causal effects on

individuals and organizations (House and Aditya, 1997). One finding scholars have consistently

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discovered is the positive correlation between transformational styles and organizational performance (Lowe, Galen, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Although studies have found uneven correlations between transactional leadership and performance there is still enough evidence to suggest it adversely impacts organizational outcomes (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This may be due to a transactional leader's focus on short-term goals and objectives designed to create a compliant workforce or produce an expressed outcome.

Researchers have also observed that effective leadership, primarily transformational, help organizations achieve their stated objectives more effectively by linking job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring employees have the resources needed to "get the job done" (Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Zhu, Chew and Spengler, 2005). Successful leadership creates a unifying vision that effectively frames the organization's strategic direction, adopts practices consistent with this vision, and builds consensus and commitment toward the vision (Avolio, Bass and Jung, 1999; McShane and Von Glinow, 2000). Some scholars such as Zhu, Chew and Spengler (2005) suggest that visionary leaders create organizational environments that have higher levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, and motivation, which, in turn, increase organizational performance. What is less studied, thus less understood, is the effect subordinate behavior has on the leadership styles managers adopt. What limited literature that does exist on this topic suggests that subordinate behavior can determine the leadership style used by managers (Manz and Sims, 1984; Yukl as cited in Deluga, 1988). As Deluga (1988) notes

…most behavior-based explorations of leadership such as the task-people dichotomy fail to specify how a subordinate's behavior might be associated with a superior's leadership style. An understanding of these influencing systems [is] an important area needing systematic investigation…which might provide the concepts and tools necessary for effective leadership political analysis. (p. 360)

Yates (as cited in Deluga, 1988) argues that studying subordinates' roles in dictating the type of leadership style chosen may also help explain an organization's political environment. Vigoda-Gadot and Drory (2006) have noted that increased perceptions of organizational politics cause managers to adopt a more transactional style of leadership.

Conversely, House (1995) asserted good leadership, transformational, leads to positive organizational behavior including a heightened awareness of organizational values, increased effort, and a belief in the collective good over self-interest. It seems clear, given the research, that "good" leadership styles (e.g., transformational) facilitate organizational behavior conducive to lower POP. Poor leadership, regardless of its origins (e.g., the leadership style managers choose independently or because of the actions subordinates engage in) can lead to distrust, low morale, and diminished positive perceptions of the organization by its members and the public (Vigoda, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006). This, by contrast, leads to higher level of POP.

The last point, diminished perceptions of an organization by the public, is especially relevant as it pertains to the creation or destruction of "social capital" (Zhengdong, 2011). Thus, examining how organizational politics, through ineffectual leadership, can lead to dwindling social capital warrants additional attention.

Although no consensus exists amongst scholars for defining social capital, generally it is "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes, 1998, p. 6). Wilson (1997, p. 753-754) advances the idea that five distinct skill sets are necessary for building social capital:

1   Communication skills - the ability to "hear" and transmit information.

2   Relationship skills - build mutual respect, understanding, trust, and empathy.

3   Group process skills - allow for effective conflict resolution; group facilitation; collaborative problem-solving and decision-making; team-building; and, celebration, ritual and appreciation.

4   Networking skills - create linkages and networks within and outside a community.

5   Supervisorship skills - focus on supervisors as coaches, change agents; visionaries; and empowers others.[9]

Social capital, like other resources, can be created, expanded, contracted, or destroyed (Beaman, 2002). Few, organizations, public or private, are immune from the influences organizational politics has on either creating or destroying social capital. In large part, this is due to the networked nature of the phenomenon, which links internal and external stakeholders (Willem and Scarbrough, 2006; Brass, and Burkhardt, 1993).

As Kouzes (as cited in Beaman, 2002) notes,

The new currency won't be intellectual capital. It will be social capital-the collective value of whom we know and what we'll do for each other. When social connections are strong and numerous, there is more trust, reciprocity, information flow, collective action, happiness, and, by the way, greater wealth. (p. 253)

Given the untapped potential of social capital, it is no wonder researchers are increasingly devoting attention to the study of this concept (Castiglione, Von Deth, and Wolleb, 2008). Moreover, leadership plays a particularly important role in building effective social capital, which, in turn, influences how the public views a public organization (Brass in Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001).

As Stam and Elfring (2008) point out, social capital is embedded through executive leaders' external networks. Moreover, proper cultivation of social capital helps facilitate innovation and forward-thinking action. This makes the resource unique to each organization thus can be difficult to quantify and equally problematic to replicate by other organizations (Stam and Elfring, 2008). What is most obvious, however, is that political obstacles and maneuvering can undermine an organization's ability to build social capital (Stam and Elfring, 2008). Failure

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[9] In no way are these definitions meant to be inclusive. Wilson effectively summarizes these five skills, but provides an exhaustive list other scholars have advanced.

to recognize this connection can cause organizational leaders to underutilize or misallocate human capital necessary for building social capital (Wilson, 1997).

Measuring Bureaucratic Politics

It should be obvious to the reader by now that both dimensions of bureaucratic politics, institutional and organizational, can, and often do, affect both organizational and individual actions, behaviors, and outcomes. The challenge for researchers is how best to measure these effects. The scope of this project, though, is not to measure each of these effects; rather, it focuses on only two measures of bureaucratic politics: fire supervisors' awareness of its existence and their perceived effect on select management functions. The following sections detail the two measures that have been used in previous studies to measure the perceived existence of external (institutional) and internal (organizational) politics.[10]

Measures of Institutional Politics. As was the case with defining institutions, measuring this form of politics is equally challenging. Scott (2008) asserts there are two methodological bases for analyzing institutional politics: naturalistic and agent-based.

The naturalistic approach examines how spontaneous and uncoordinated social interactions embed institutional processes into organizations. This normalization occurs throughout an institution's ecology as a collective network of shared beliefs that legitimize organizations that adopt practices and processes deemed "acceptable" (Scott, 2008).

The second approach, agent-based, is rooted in the interests of various stakeholders, which stresses the intentionality of political actors who use their power and authority to influence organizational actions, and decisions (DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008). The latter approach is the basis used for this project to measure the institutional pressures fire service supervisors perceive to exist and believe affect their managerial activities.

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[10] The methodology section details how this study operationalizes management activities so that it captures the effect bureaucratic politics haves on each of them.

Further complicating the analysis of institutions, Scott (2008) identifies six levels a researcher can choose to focus on: transnational levels, societal, organizational field, organizational population, individual organizations, and organizational subsystem.

- Transnational- Level –focuses on governance mechanisms of international politics and economics. It is a multi-level and multi-layered process characterized by a complex set of competing and, often, conflicting actors and logics (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, Ramirez, Francisco , 1997).

- Societal- Level – focuses on the historical and path-dependent conditions that lead to institutions created to regulate economic activity (North, 1991).

- Organizational Field-Level – specific organizational field with gradual development that defines players, boundaries, and rules for dispute resolution, agencies and interests more apparent during creation of an institution than during routine operation of existing field (DiMaggio, 1991).

- Organizational Population- Level – creation of new organizational forms of same type in particular historical periods, organizational "genetics" (Stinchcombe and Suchman as cited in Scott, 2008).

- Individual Organization-level – analyzes an institution's ecology, with a variety of inter-related and dependent organizations including suppliers, consumers, regulatory agencies, and competitors (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

- Organizational Subsystem-level – the last level of analysis focuses on the subsystems that exist within an organization, which are susceptible to institutional pressures. In turn, actors within these subsystems act as receptors for their respective institutions (e.g., human resources, finance, emergency management) (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983)

Despite broad consensus amongst institutional scholars regarding the sources and impact of institutional politics, there are few well-developed quantitative instruments used to measure their existence and influence on organizations. In fact, an exhaustive review of the literature uncovered only two survey instruments that explicitly measure institutional pressures on organizations: the *Level of Institutionalization (LoIn)* and *Union Pressure* scales.

Goodman, McLeroy, Steckler, and Hoyle (1993) developed and used the *Level of Institutionalization* or *LoIn* scale to assess the extent to which national health promotion programs integrate into individual health care organizations. In their study, Goodman et al. (1993) used the LoIn scale to assess how institutionalized national diabetes programs had become in 102 general hospitals and 30 home health agencies in Maryland and Pennsylvania. The instrument attempted to measure the degree to which four organizational subsystems (production, maintenance, supportive, and managerial) achieve what the authors described as "passage," "routinization," and "niche saturation."

According to the authors, passage reflects the first step towards institutionalizing a program. It entails formalizing and implementing program plans (production), providing financial resources (support), and developing an organizational structure to maintain the program (managerial). Routines, the second step toward institutionalization, involve processes that engrain programs internally. For instance, a program reaches "routinization" when it receives annual budgets and remains intact after an organizational restructuring.

Lastly, niche saturation, the third and final institutional step, is achieved when the program achieves its optimal state within the organization. For instance, this state is achieved when a program has adequate funding, staffing, and is internally perceived as essential.

From these constructs, the researchers developed a 15-item survey, which tested their eight-factor model. These factors were:

1. Factor I: Routinization of program production;

2. Factor II: Niche saturation of program production;

3. Factor III: Routinization of program maintenance;

4. Factor IV: Niche saturation of program maintenance;

5. Factor V: Routinization of program support;

6. Factor VI: Niche saturation of program support;

7. Factor VII: Routinization of program management;

8. Factor VIII: Niche saturation of program management.

The researchers assumed that if a program had developed policies and received initial funding it had achieved the first step toward institutionalizing the program within the organization. Therefore, according to the researcher, answering the survey questions pertaining to the second step indicated step one had been achieved.

The researcher found a high degree of incremental fit and internal consistency indicating their hypothesis for their eight-factor model and their links to niche saturation and routines are consistent with institutionalization. They are careful to note, however, that the model requires further testing and is not generalizable to a larger population or other industries (Goodman et al., 1993)

The second institutional pressure measurement, the Union Pressure Scale, is a narrower assessment of institutional pressure than the LoIn. The Union Pressure Scale was utilized as part of the National Science Foundation's 1991 comprehensive National Organizations Study (NOS). The NOS was conducted as a multipurpose, multi-investigator project that produced a data-base of survey information that social researchers have subsequently used to answer an assortment of organization behavioral questions (Marsden, Cook, and Knoke, 1996). Because the scale did not specifically ask informants to estimate the degree to which their respective workforce was organized by a union, the researchers had to rely upon a series of questions to determine their

existence. Specifically, the instrument asked three questions, which presumably allowed the researchers to determine the presence of a union:

1. Is formal training is offered because of union contracts?

2. Are union negations are somewhat/very important for determining wages?

3. Will union relations be perceived to be a problem in the next three years?

Kalleberg, Cook and Knoke (Kalleberg as cited in 1996, pp. 45-67) found a 0.62 correlation (or, $R^2 = 0.38$) with respondents' self-reporting unionization, which indicated the Union Pressure Scale, may be a weak reflection of the presence of unions in public sector organizations. Unfortunately, the questions utilized for the NOS survey are inadequate for this research project. Respondents for this project were asked directly how they perceive unions impact four management activities (Appendix A).

Woodruff (2006) argues the reason institutional politics are so difficult to measure is that they manifest diffusely and in nearly incalculable ways. It, therefore, may require an assessment tool that can evaluate a specific facet of institutional pressures as they are perceived to exist. As such, this research project uses a survey instrument that assesses fire service supervisors' perceived existence of institutional politics and their perceived impact on select management activities (Appendix). The next section details the internal measures of organizational politics.

Measures of Organizational Politics. The most widely recognized method for evaluating organizational politics is through perceptual analyses, defined more precisely as Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP). Most studies of organizational politics today are almost entirely based on Ferris, Russ, and Fandt's theoretical framework first advanced in 1989 (Brubaker, 2012; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). The model developed by Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) expanded on earlier organizational theory by suggesting there are causal relationships between perceptions of organizational politics and outcomes.

To test this theory, Kacmar and Ferris (1991) developed an early survey using a 31-item scale. Through a series of subsequent studies they eventually condensed the instrument to a 15-item, three-factor scale that measures general political behavior, "go along to get ahead" attitudes, and political rewards in the form of pay and promotions. Overall, they found the reliability of the final scale was 0.87, which makes it the most reliable and validated POP survey in use today (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006; Brubaker, 2012). This makes it an appropriate survey to measure fire supervisors' internal perceptions of bureaucratic politics.

Variable Selection

Selecting the variables used in statistical analysis, particularly those that facilitate predictive modeling, is crucial. In practice, it is common for a researcher to have scrutinized a large number of prospective predictive variables for final selection in a model (Forsberg, 2011). As Wu and Liu (2009) point out, it is essential to eliminate irrelevant predictors in the final model as it makes interpreting its validity difficult, and, worse still, can decrease its predictive ability. This requires a researcher to carefully review the literature in order to find variables that have high predictive capability. Accordingly, the previous section identified the numerous variables that affect the perceptions of institutional and organizational politics as well as the outcome these phenomena produce through a comprehensive literature review. The following section details the specific independent and dependent variables used for this project.

Independent Variables.   The independent variables used for the survey instrument stemmed from an analysis of the various groups that have a vested interest in policy outputs or outcomes. This analysis took into consideration the various interest groups that are frequently found within and external to bureaucratic organizations. Scholars such as Johnson and Libecap (1994), North (1990), Powell and DiMaggio, 1991, Rubin (2000), Vigoda, 2003, Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006, and Wilson (1989) each detail the various internal or external interest groups that influence policy decisions. Accordingly, the literature supports using the following six

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institutional and organizational groups to help survey respondents perceive to impact four

management activities (Figure 3):

- Institutional Groups

    o Local elected officials (also referenced as politicians)

    o Unions or collective bargaining units

    o Local business groups or organizations (e.g., homeowners, chamber of

      commerce, realtor, builder associations, etc.)

- Organizational Groups

    o Chief Officers (Battalion Chief or higher)

    o Rank and File Operational Personnel (Captain or lower)

    o Other internal stakeholder group excluding those listed above (support staff,

      standing committees, special workgroups, task forces, etc.).

This project also tested the effect PIP and POP scores (the independent variables) have on

four management activities (the dependent variables) (Figure 3):

- Budgeting

- Social Capital

- Personnel Management

- Strategic Planning
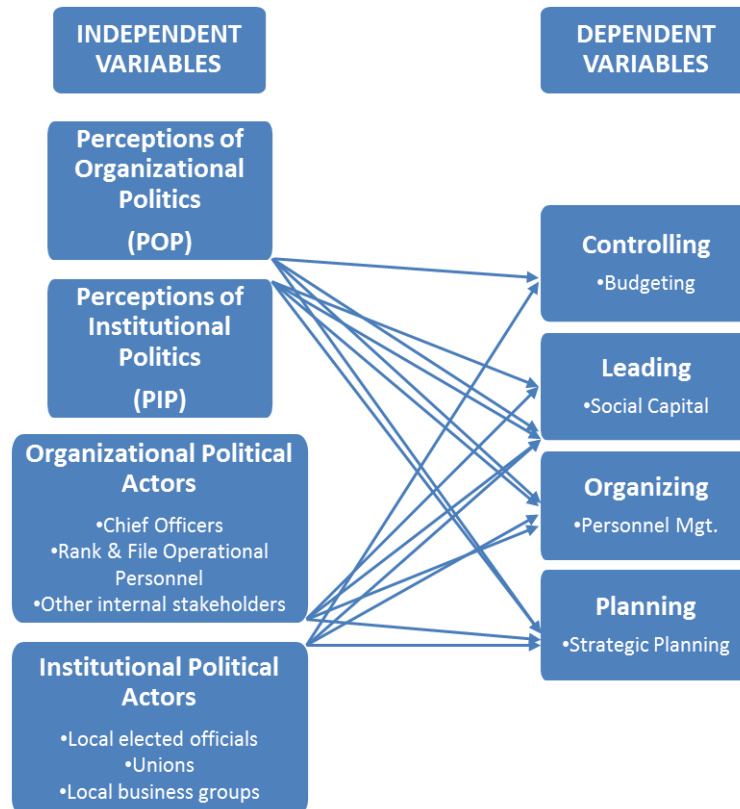
Figure 3: The first set of independent and dependent research variables selected for the study.

Dependent Variables. Defining the core responsibilities of fire department supervisors is essential for establishing one set of dependent variables that studied for this research project.

These dependent variables were derived from numerous scholarly sources and prominent fire service management textbooks (Barr and Eversole, 2003; Daft, 1995, 2005; Hunt , Osborn and Schermerhorn, 1997; Starling, 2002). An organization's capacity to fulfill its mission relies on the collective ability of its supervisors to execute their prescribed management responsibilities (Barr and Eversole, 2003; Daft, 1995, 2005; Hunt , Osborn and Schermerhorn, 1997; Starling, 2002). These authors identify four core management functions managers regularly engage in: planning, organizing, controlling, and leading (Barr and Eversole, 2003; Daft, 1995, 2005; Hunt , Osborn and Schermerhorn, 1997; Starling, 2002). As outlined in the preceding section, the existence and influence of bureaucratic politics can profoundly affect a supervisor's ability to manage his or her prescribed duties. In order to measure the perceived impact bureaucratic

politics have on a supervisor's ability to manage day-to-day operations, make decisions, and implement change initiatives, the researcher identified one activity for each management function:

- Strategic planning (planning);

- Budgeting (controlling);

- Personnel management (organizing);

- Social capital management (leading).

The following section details each management function and the four activities chosen for the survey instrument.

Planning. Planning occurs in different ways and at all levels of an organization. At its highest echelon, planning involves establishing the organization's mission, vision, and goals. As a part of this process, CEOs develop strategies for achieving organizational goals and objectives, which are typically detailed in a comprehensive strategic plan (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001; Starling, 2002). An additional planning activity is policy development, which helps standardize critical processes or procedures (Daft, 2009). From a fire department perspective, these can include Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), Field Operating Guidelines (FOGs), Directives or policies and procedures, (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Barr, and Eversole, 2003; IAFC, 2006).

Controlling. Once the necessary resources are identified, they must be acquired and adequate controls established so managers can effectively use them to carry out their assigned responsibilities (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001; Starling, 2002). As such, the process of controlling involves evaluating whether the organizational goals and objectives are being met and correcting them when they are not. One method of control is through budget development and monitoring. Budget formulation is an activity that falls directly under the domain of the fire manager and is typically considered a way of allocating and controlling limited resources (Daft,

1995; Daft and Marcic, 2010; Starling, 2002). A second method of control is establishing

performance standards that help managers determine whether allocated resources are meeting

organizational goals and objectives resources (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001). The most

common performance measure in the fire service is the use of response times (Flynn , 2009). The

NFPA defines response time as the time it takes to receive an initial call for assistance to the first

fire apparatus's arrival on scene (Flynn, 2009).   The NFPA sets standards for each phase of the

response time process (Flynn, 2009).

 Organizing. Once vital resources are acquired, they must be organized in ways that

support organizational strategic goals and objectives. One critical resource is human capital

(Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001; Starling, 2002). This process involves recruiting, hiring,

making assignments, assisting workers carry out assignments, creating and interpreting policies,

and managing work performance (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001; Starling, 2002). A second

aspect of organizing is the ability of leaders to implement and manage change, which is essential

for organizations to adequately adapt to their evolving environments (Daft , 2009).

 Leading. The last management function centers on leading organizations. This process

includes effectively motivating, communicating, and managing teams (Daft, 1995; Daft and

Marcic, 2001; Starling, 2002). An essential aspect of leading, only recently recognized is the

creation of social capital, which was earlier defined as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by

virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes, 1998, p. 6). This

project operationalizes social capital as creating positive or negative images of the department. A

second function of leading is the ability to effectively communicate both within and external to

the organization (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001). This entails a complicated set of formal

and informal skills that enable leaders to communicate their specific goals, objectives, and

directions to subordinates and other stakeholders (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001; Starling,

2002).

Certainly, organization development scholars have identified more than these four management activities (Daft, 1995; Daft and Marcic, 2001; Starling, 2002).[11]   However, to facilitate development of a useful and manageable survey instrument only one activity per core function was evaluated. Later studies should expand on this list and add activities from each management function to provide a more inclusive analysis.

The second set of dependent variables tested for this project assessed the effect respondent demographic information (the independent variables) has on PIP and POP scores (the dependent variables) (Figure 4).
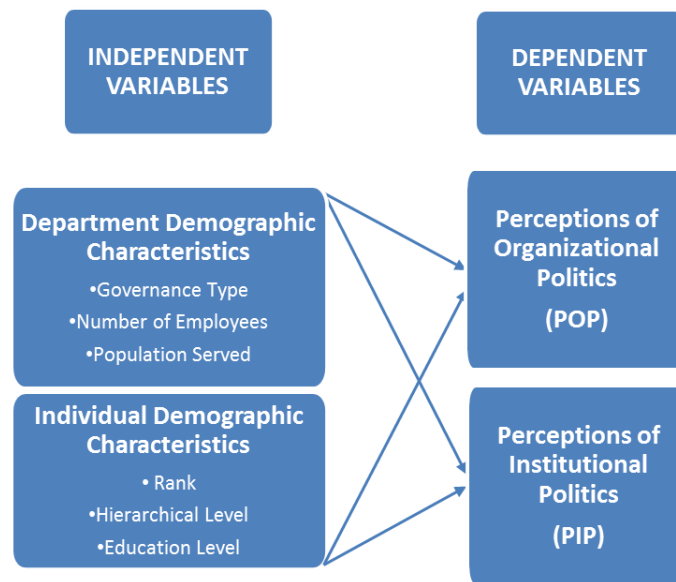
Figure 4: The second set of independent and dependent research
variables selected for the study.

With a comprehensive review of the literature complete, it is time to turn attention to the research methodology used to study fire service supervisors' perceived existence and impact of both dimensions of bureaucratic politics (institutional and organizational).

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[11] Other scholars expand on these management functions to include such activities as directing or staffing. Others use several of the aforementioned terms interchangeably. For instance, some use the term directing in place of leading. For the purpose of this project, the four core management functions and resultant activities are consistent with those of prominent management scholars referenced in the text.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As noted several times, the underlying research questions for this project center on understanding the extent to which fire service supervisors perceive the existence bureaucratic politics (internal and external) and how they perceive their impact on managing specific activities. Accordingly, the author advances five hypotheses that benefit from using statistical testing procedures. These techniques attempted to first determine cause-effect relationships between respondents' demographic characteristics and perceived existence of institutional and organizational politics. Next, the statistical analysis attempted to ascertain the perceived impact bureaucratic politics have on supervisors' abilities to execute the aforementioned management activities.

Non-Experimental Research Design

This project uses non-experimental research where the researcher, as Kerlinger (as cited in Black, 1999) states,

> …does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they cannot be manipulated. Inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention, from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (p. 70).

This form of research investigates cause and effect relationships by "observing existing consequences and searching back through the data to identify probable causal factors" (Isaac and Michael, 1997, p. 54). Since this project examines fire service supervisors' perceptions and outcomes, a non-experimental research design is appropriate, because the researcher cannot control the independent variables.

Unit of Analysis

Fire service supervisors are the unit of analysis for this project as they are in the unique position of having to deal with the cumulative effects of both internal and external political pressures (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Grant and Hoover, 1994; Fleming, 2010). These forces stem from unions, internal power struggles, politicians, business groups, and community activists, to name but a few. Fire supervisors, in turn, must contend with these politicized influences in a way that still permits them to successfully manage their respective area of responsibility. Additionally, fire supervisors, like managers in other industries, must carry out their organization's mission in an effective and fiscally efficient manner (Bachtler and Brennan, 1995; Grant and Hoover, 1994; Fleming, 2010). They accomplish this by executing the four primary management functions (planning, organizing, directing, and controlling), which were detailed in the dependent variable discussion.

Survey Instrument Overview

       To answer the research questions, this study used a survey instrument that collected data necessary for answering the research questions and test the hypotheses. Surveys are one of the most common designs in social science research as they are an expedient method for collecting data from a large and dispersed population. Babbie (as cited in Brownrigg-Innes, 2004) states that survey-based research is "probably the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly" (p. 82). For these reasons, a survey instrument was an appropriate data collection tool for this research project.

       The survey instrument allowed for the collection of data that cumulated scores based on a respondent's perceptions of institutional and organizational politics. Individual and departmental demographics constitute the other independent variables used for analysis and mirror their use by several scholars including Brownrigg-Innes (2004), Tararka (2009), and Crank (2003).

      In total, the survey consisted of 60 analytical questions segmented into two sections (Appendix):[12]

- Section I: *Perceptions and Impact of Politics*

- Section II: *Demographic Characteristics*

Section I consists of 60 questions, each using a standard five point Likert scale.[13] The selection of a Likert scale was deliberate as it allows for measuring both dimensions of bureaucratic politics and their impact on the four management activities. Likert scales permit respondents to exercise some relative level of individual subjectivity in their responses. These responses, then, fall within a continuum of choices that presumably capture the extreme ends

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[12] A fourth section is provided for respondent feedback and, as such, provides no analytical benefit for this project. Its purpose is strictly to provide information that will help improve the survey instrument for future use.

[13] Several questions (#1, 2, and 33-40) ask one question that a respondent applies to each of the eight sub-questions.

(Dawis , 1987). The Likert scale's convenience and ease of use, however, must be tempered with the reality that validity of the measurement scale and the reliability of responses must be rigorously evaluated (Dawis, 1987). Subsequent sections of this paper explicitly address these issues.

From a respondent's perspective, the survey instrument does not distinguish between the three subsections that constitute Section I: perceptions of organizational politics (POP), perceptions of institutional politics (PIP) and their impact on management activities. To determine a respondent's POP, Question #3 summates the responses to 15 sub-questions yielding scores ranging from 15-75. Likewise, question #4 18-32 summates the responses to 15 sub-questions yielding scores ranging from 15-75. Finally, questions #5-8 measure how a respondent perceives the impact both dimensions have on the four management tasks. All three scales in Section I summate the responses so that the larger the score for each scale the higher the level of POP, PIP or their perceived influence on each of the management activities.

The use of summated scoring enables a researcher to ask a series of questions designed to better gauge a respondent's perceptions of politics, which helps reduce bias and increase the instrument's reliability (Fink and Kosecoff, 1998). Section II asks respondents to reveal demographic information centered on individual and their home agency's characteristics. These questions are forced choice responses, which permit the researcher to capture information that is consistent between respondents as well as other survey instruments. This allows for cross analysis of data so that trends might emerge along specific demographic lines. For example, it might be instructive to know whether certain political activities are more prevalent in municipal-based fire departments relative to fire districts. Alternatively, does the rank influence a respondent's perspective on bureaucratic politics and their impact? These are all useful questions researchers might build upon in future studies to advance the understanding of bureaucratic institutions.

Current practitioners, likewise, might use the information harvested from the study to help formulate strategies to deal with particular types of bureaucratic politics.

Sample Population

Selecting an adequate sample is a challenge for any quantitative research project (Leedy, 1993). In fact, Leedy (1993, p. 93) emphasizes "the sample should be so carefully chosen that…the researcher is able to see all the characteristics of the total population…that he would see them were he actually to inspect the totality of the universe of data." This is particularly critical when conducting multivariate analysis and was the technique used for this project (Leedy, 1993). The rationale being that the appropriate sample size allows for more accurate statistical inferences of the larger population (Cresswell, 2008; Fink and Kosecoff, 1998; Leedy, 1993). To achieve a statistically relevant sample size this study used a stratified sampling strategy using fire agencies throughout the United States.[14]

A stratified sampling procedure divides the population into groups based on specific characteristics such as gender, age, organizational type, governance structure, etc. Then, a random or systematic sampling technique is used to pull data from each of these strata.

For this project, the most accessible and expansive database of U.S. fire departments is the United States Fire Administration's (USFA) fire department census. The USFA maintains a database of demographic information of fire departments where officials of each agency self-registers and enters data about their respective agencies. According to the "*National Fire Department Census Quick Facts*," webpage, last updated January of 2012, the USFA compiles and maintains rudimentary information on approximately 26,482 (i.e., primarily department name, city and state located). In 2010 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) estimated there were U.S. 30,125 fire departments, which means roughly 3,600 fire departments are not

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[14] To achieve stratification, the sample population included different fire department governance types: municipal, county, and special district departments and consisted of agencies from rural, suburban, and urban locations.

registered in the USFA census database. Of those fire agencies that contributed more detailed

information in USFA's database (26,359 agencies) reported having an aggregate population of

1,190,000 personnel. This included career, volunteer, and paid per call firefighters as well as

civilian staff and non-firefighting personnel. For strictly firefighting personnel, the census

reported there were 1,044,300 active career, volunteer, and paid per call firefighters, which

represented nearly eighty-eight percent of the registered departments' personnel for 2012.

The USFA census also captured the types of department that exist within the registry.

For this information the USFA uses the NFPA four fire department classifications:

- Career - 100 percent of a department's firefighters are career;

- Mostly Career - 51-99 percent of a department's firefighters are career;

- Mostly Volunteer - 1-50 percent of a department's firefighters are career;

- Volunteer - 100 percent of a department's firefighters are volunteer.

Accordingly, Table 2 delineates USFA registered fire departments by both type and

region.

	All Fire Department Types		Volunteer		Mostly Volunteer		Mostly Career		Career	
	Total No. of Registered Depts.	% of All Regions Total	% Per Region	No. of Fire Depts.	% Per Region	No. of Fire Depts.	% Per Region	No. of Fire Depts.	% Per Region	No. of Fire Depts.
All Regions	26,359	N/A	71%	18,715	16%	4,217	5%	1,318	8%	2,109
North-East	5,008	19%	71%	18,715	17%	4,481	4%	1,054	8%	2,109
South	8,962	34%	63%	16,606	18%	4,745	7%	1,845	12%	3,163
Mid-West	8,171	31%	80%	21,087	11%	2,899	3%	791	6%	1,582
West	3,427	13%	52%	13,707	29%	7,644	7%	1,845	12%	3,163

Table 2: USFA census of self-registered U.S. fire departments.

Unfortunately, there is no empirical data indicating what the total population of fire

supervisors is in the U.S. Therefore, to calculate an estimate of the entire population of U.S. fire

supervisors it required extrapolating data from three sources: the USFA census (noted above), the International City Managers Association's (ICMA), and the NFPA.

The second empirical data set used to extrapolate the estimated fire supervisor population originated from the International City Managers Association's (ICMA) 2011 "*Police and Fire Personnel, Salaries, and Expenditures*" survey findings. This annual survey queries cities for demographic information relating to their police and fire departments, which is then complied into a comprehensive report. The 2011 report was sent to 3,286 cities with populations over 9,999. ICMA reported a response rate of 38% and noted that not all respondents answered every question; therefore, this response rate is based on those cities that answered the survey in its entirety. The survey indicated that 66% of the reporting fire departments have policies that specify a minimum staffing level required for a given type of apparatus. According to ICMA's findings, the average staffing level for the two dominant fire response apparatus (fire engines and ladder trucks) was three personnel.

The last document used to estimate the population of fire service supervisors was the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710 (Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments). This standard recommends that all career fire departments minimally staff their fire engines and ladder trucks with one fire supervisor, a driver/operator and a basic level firefighter. Using the data from the USFA census database and the ICMA survey combined with the NFPA recommended standards allowed the researcher to estimate the total population of fire department supervisors throughout the U.S.

It is important to reiterate that the number derived from estimating the fire service supervisor population is not precise due to several limiting factors. First, many fire agencies provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) service that require specially trained personnel who have a para-medicine certification (their specific title is paramedic). Furthermore, these paramedics are

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assigned to ambulance or rescue units, which normally are staffed with two personnel (either two paramedics or one paramedic and one firefighter). Therefore, not all of the personnel listed in the USFA database are assigned to only an engine or ladder truck.

A second obstacle for accurately gauging the number of fire service officers is the lack of information on the number of chief officers each agency employs. This has the effect of underrepresenting these positions in estimating the total number of supervisors.

Unfortunately, because the USFA database does not differentiate between agencies that provide ALS service (those with paramedics) and those that do not, this has the potential to overestimate the number of fire supervisors. Conversely, the inability to capture the number of chief officers who are not assigned to front line apparatus (i.e., engines or ladder trucks) has the effect of underestimating the number of these types of fire supervisors. Unfortunately, there is no effective way to adjust for either of these deviations. For this project, however, the estimates that are described in the following section was adequate for determining the sample size needed for statistically significant analysis. The specific steps taken to estimate the sample population are detailed in following three paragraphs.

The first step for calculating the fire supervisor sample population was to extract the total number of career fire departments from USFA's 2012 census (1,819), which accounted for 200,541 total sworn personnel including chief officers.

Next, intuiting that each of the reporting departments has only one fire chief, this number (1,819) was subtracted from the total number of firefighters, which leaves a total of 198,722 fire response personnel who are either firefighters, engineers (apparatus driver/operators), paramedics, or fire officers.

Then, based on the information gleaned from the ICMA 2012 survey the recommended NFPA 1710 or 1720 standards on staffing, yielded an estimated total fire supervisor population of 68,060 (198,722 divided by three plus the 1,819 fire chiefs).

The researcher then utilized the formula below to determine the sample size using a 5% margin of error or precision level and a 95% confidence level.[15]

$$n = \frac{Nz^2 * 0.25}{(d^2 * [N-1]) + (z^2 * 0.25)}$$

This yielded a total sample size of 382, which was subsequently approximated to 400. Unfortunately, the inability to access the population of randomly selected fire supervisors presented a structurally insurmountable obstacle. Because no master contact list of fire supervisors is available from which to randomly select the sample population, it required assessment of various sampling alternatives – none of which were ideal.

The first option explored entailed utilizing the serve lists of several trade organizations to send out notices to their respective members thus allowing respondents to self-select. This choice was deemed undesirable as it did not allow for a truly randomized selection and would have potentially skewed the data.

The second alternative evaluated was even less feasible than the first. It would have required the researcher to directly contact a randomly selected group of fire departments and request access to their lists of personnel that would allowed for further randomization. This approach was eliminated for two reasons: time and legal constraints. The first issue, time, would have required an inordinate investment in time contacting 383 individual fire departments. The second, and more problematic issue, was related to legal constraints. Fire agencies, as with most organizations, are reluctant to provide contact information of its members fearing legal repercussions. These two obstacles quickly made this option unworkable.

The choice, while not optimal, did allow for high level of randomization while being practical to accomplish than the first two options. Utilizing this procedure, the researcher sent engagement letters to the fire chiefs of 400 fire departments randomly selected from the USFA

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[15] Where: n = minimum sample size; N = estimated population size; d = precision level (0.05); z = z value (1.96 for a 95% confidence level).

database. Collectively these fire departments have 52,566 sworn personnel. Interestingly, once this number was adjusted to reflect the total number of fire service supervisors in the sample population (17,789),[16] the calculated sample size was roughly equal to that of the larger population (383). The last challenge that became evident was still existed, however, and that was the issue of fire chiefs acting as gatekeepers for broader distribution to their respective supervisors. In order to achieve the statistically significant threshold of 400 responses, it was necessary to attain a 15% response rate, which is the norm in organizational research (Lievens, Schollaert and Choragwicka, 2010; Baruch and Holtom, 2008).

Reliability and Validity

The ultimate goal of a quantitative research project is to elicit data from which theory can be objectively tested and relationships between variables discerned (Cresswell, 2008). This necessitates a process for analyzing the data in a way that ensures reliability and validity. This type of analysis is appropriate when several independent variables may influence one or more dependent variables (Cresswell, 2008; Leedy, 1993). If the model is predictive as previous studies suggest, than the hypothesized relationships should materialize (Brownrigg-Innes, 2004; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Before we get to this point, however, it is first necessary to address the survey instrument's validity and reliability and the basic assumptions necessary for selecting the appropriate statistical analysis tools (Forsberg, 2011).

Reliability and Validity are important steps for authenticating analysis of quantitative research (Cresswell, 2008). The following sections discuss how the researcher tested for validity and reliability.

Reliability. Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool, in this case the survey instrument, produces stable and consistent results (Cresswell, 2008; Fink and Kosecoff, 1998;

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[16] The 17,789 was calculated by subtracting the 400 fire chiefs that head up those agencies from 52,566, which yields a remaining sample population of 52,166 that are firefighters, engineers (apparatus driver/operators), paramedics, or fire officers. This number was then divided by three and the 400 fire chiefs were added back in.

Leedy, 1993). The measure of reliability used for this project was the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Results from a Cronbach alpha coefficient test ranges from zero to one. Scores nearer to one have greater internal consistency of the survey items.

George and Mallery (2003, p. 231) went further to provide rules of thumb that enable a researcher to more definitely gauge a survey's reliability and graduate as follows:

> 0.9 – Excellent

> 0.8 – Good

> 0.7 – Acceptable

> 0.6 – Questionable

> 0.5 – Poor

< 0.5 – Unacceptable

In previous studies, the POP scale has shown consistently strong reliability (Kacmar and Ferris, 1991 [$\alpha = 0.93$]; Ferris , Frink, Bhawuk, Zhou, and Gilmore, 1996 [$\alpha = 0.90$], and Andrews and Kacmar, 2001 [$\alpha = 0.87$]). In this study, the 15-item POP scale measure alpha coefficient was 0.84, which was within the acceptable range of reliability and close to the scores previously reported. Additionally, the PIP scale's alpha coefficient was 0.76, which places the scale in the acceptable range, though not as high as had been hoped for yet still useful for this study. While reliability is an important measure for ensuring the accuracy of a survey instrument, it is also necessary for it to be valid, which is addressed in the next section.

Validity. Measures of validity determine how well an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Cresswell, 2008). In other words, are researchers measuring what they think they are measuring? There are two dimensions of validity a researcher must consider: external and internal.

External Validity. External validity is achieved if the data is generalizable to a different or a larger population as well as over different time periods. Tests for external validity examine

whether there is biased sampling; is a large enough sample size to properly represent the larger population; the survey is applicable for different populations; and, can produce similar results over time.

Studies of organizational behavior rely on the accuracy of empirical data. Yet, quantitative studies in organizational behavior have been criticized for their measurement limitations (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002). One of the primary reasons for this critique is the field's reliance on data collected from respondents who self-select. These types of data gathering instruments are common, because they are easy to use. They also allow for access to a large or remote population. However, they are also highly susceptible to response bias (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002; Leedy, 1993). Researchers, in turn, must be cognizant of bias that can affect survey results, which leads to data distortion. Leedy (1993) asserts it is "inexcusable" for a researcher to fail to address the potential for corruption of the data (p. 108). Cresswell (2008) advises using two techniques to detect the existence of data bias: wave analysis or a respondent-non-respondent check. The method most appropriate for this project, given the anonymity of respondents, is the use of wave analysis where returns were regularly examined for changes in average rates of return. Wave analysis gauges non-response bias by comparing those who respond with those who respond after follow-up measures are taken (Rainey, Pandey and Bozeman, 1995). Ostensibly, if the responses appreciably change with follow-up this might indicate potential data bias. The second strategy is to contact a "few" non-respondents to determine if their responses differ substantially from respondents. To address bias for this project, the researcher conducted wave analyses to find anomalies that suggested data corruption.

The first entrée email was sent on February 21, 2014. From that date to March 5th, 20 respondents completed the survey. A second email was sent on March 6th and between that date and March 23rd, another 75 completed the survey. A final reminder email was sent on March 24th and between then and March 31st the last 39 respondents completed the survey. The summary

data from the three waves were virtually identical (reference *Chapter IV* for final results of the combined data sets). This suggests there was no discernable bias in the responses.

As importantly, a full accounting of the precise nature and extent of all bias that may have affected the research results were analyzed and none were discovered.

Internal Validity. Internal validity pertains to the legitimacy of the research variables and is categorized in a number of ways (e.g., content, criterion, construct, face, formative, and sampling). The most relevant for this project is construct validity.

Construct validity is the extent to which a survey instrument and its associated scales accurately evaluate what they are designed to measure. Simply put, do the measures behave as the theory suggests they should? Use of "experts" within the field and familiar with the construct is one method researchers can use to assess the construct validity of the instrument (Bleijenbergh, Korzilius, and Verschuren, 2011). Select experts examine the survey questions and determine whether the specific questions measure what they were designed to assess.

To address this issue, the researcher first relied on the input of eleven fire service experts with academic experience developing research designs to provide face validity of the survey instrument. The experts took an early version of the survey instrument and provided feedback necessary for improving its quality for the full research project. As might be expected, some of the feedback centered on grammatical or stylistic issues (e.g., spelling, spacing between paragraphs, use of specific words, etc.). The substantive comments, however, were most useful for improving the survey instrument.

The most consistent comment centered on confusion over the term *Bureaucratic Politics*. All of the respondents felt the term was either ambiguous or imprecisely used as it combined two different concepts – politics and bureaucracy. Furthermore, they felt the term was not uniformly applied as the individual questions only referenced *politics* and not *bureaucratic politics* as had been articulated early in the survey.

As stated previously, *bureaucratic politics*, as defined by political scientists, has a precise meaning. It was evident the survey's introduction should explain "politics" in a general context, which seems to align with most respondents' awareness of the term from their training, education, or experience.

A second issue raised by respondents involved Section I, questions 33–40. Several respondents felt the early likert scale did not accurately represent the range of actions an interest group might take. Specifically, they suggested that an interest group might not be content to simply be unhelpful, but could actively undermine a specific management task. This was an astute point and one that could, if left unchanged, alter the survey results. Consequently, this section of survey now uses a likert range of "*No Impact*" to "*Extreme Impact*" (Appendix).

The last critique offered was the need to analyze the specific activities for each management function so they are appropriately categorized. For example, the early survey instrument operationalized social capital as either a positive or a negative force. Consequently, respondents interpreted this question differently, which scored the influence of politics on this management task either positive or negative. The researcher altered the wording so respondents only assessed it as the positive creation of social capital.

Ethical Considerations and Action Steps

Coghlan and Brannick summarize the ethical imperative related to the use of human subjects in research, "...ethics are taken to refer to not doing harm, not breaching confidentiality not distorting the data..." (2005, p. 77). It is clear researchers have an exceptionally high ethical responsibility toward their subjects, even those who complete surveys. This is necessary so respondents are treated with respect, humanly, and in a manner that it does not violate their inherent rights. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) suggest two fundamental questions need to be contemplated by researchers in order to ascertain whether potential ethical issues might exist.

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First, the researcher must ask "should this group be studied at all?" (Trull, 2004, p. 107) Next, "should I be the one to study this group?" (Leicester and Taylor, 1992, p. 194)

Addressing the first question, this group provides important information that may help future researchers and practitioners develop effective strategies to manage these frequently disruptive forces. Supervisors, in particular, are potentially in the most advantageous position to moderate these pressures so that an organization can achieve its core mission. In determining the efficacy of utilizing surveys as a data gathering tool a researcher must also pay particular attention to whether the subjects belong to a disenfranchised or oppressed group, which includes minors, women, the incarcerated, and the disabled. It has been determined the individual members of this group do not belong to a disadvantaged or oppressed group. It should be noted, that while these groups are the most obvious, the researcher remained cognizant of others that might have surfaced that were not apparent to the researcher but are, nonetheless, vulnerable. To address this issue, the researcher constructed the survey instrument so that no identifying information was collected that would classify respondents as one of the identified disenfranchised or oppressed groups. Therefore, no special provisions were made to address this potential ethical issue.

Addressing the second issue, there were no identified problems that precluded the researcher from studying this population as described in the research overview. Moreover, there were no conflicts of interests including financial or other personal gains identified through the IRB process or by the researcher's faculty advisor.

Ethical Mitigation Action Steps

The following mitigation strategies were used to address the ethical considerations outlined above:

- *Confidentiality* – No information collected identified the survey taker as they remained anonymous throughout the process.

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- *Data Security* – the following measures were used to ensure confidentiality of the data obtained from the surveys:

  - Data Storage – all survey data is stored in two password encrypted protected hard drives on the principal researcher's personal computer located at his home residence.

  - The researcher's personal computer and the associated hard drives are only accessible to the principal researcher.

  - This data will be kept for five years after publication. If no inquiries are made requesting specific information about the data it will be deleted from the hard drives.

  - The data will be reported as part of the principal researcher's dissertation requirements and an academic journal as an article.

There are no foreseeable risks to maintaining confidentiality as the completed surveys and all related data is only be accessible to the research author and reported as a summary in the final dissertation paper. The records from this study will be kept private.

These procedures were reviewed and approved through Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board (*IRB*).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis of the data collected from the survey instrument. A link to the survey was e-mailed to 400 fire chiefs throughout the U.S. who collectively manage a total of 52,566 career line personnel. As discussed in the *Sample Population* section, extrapolation yielded an estimated 17,789 fire supervisors from these 400 fire agencies needed to generalize the results to the population of all fire service supervisors (68,060)**.** Unfortunately, of the 400 entrée emails sent containing the survey instrument link, 177 surveys were initiated but only 134 respondents completed the survey. This represents less than a 1% response rate of the estimated 17,789 supervisors within those 400 fire agencies. The response rate for fire chiefs was much higher at 19.25%. While the response rate does not allowing for generalization to the larger population, it does increase the probability that the findings more accurately reflect those of the larger population (Baruch and Holtom, 2008). Despite the small sample size amongst fire supervisors, other than fire chiefs, analysis of the data yielded some interesting findings that will be instructive for future research. The succeeding paragraphs details the summary results, testing of assumptions, and presents the statistical results testing the five research hypotheses.

Summary Results

Before the more in-depth discussion of the summary data is presented, it is informative to first examine the demographic information of the 134 respondents (Table 3).

Most respondents indicated having an undergraduate or graduate degree (85 total or 63% of all respondents). An overwhelming number are employed in a city fire department. Finally, of the 134 surveys returned, fire chiefs completed 77 surveys (or nearly 58% of all respondents). This suggests fire chiefs either withheld the survey for wider distribution to his or her supervisors, or, if distributed, there was not enough interest to warrant a higher response rate for those below the rank of fire chief.

Category	No. of Respondents
Education	
• High School (8th -12th Grades)	4
• Some College or an Associate's Degree	45
• Undergraduate Degree	51
• Graduate Degree (Masters, PhD, JD)	34
Employees	
• Fewer than 50	32
• 50-99	32
• More than 99	70
Governance Type	
• Special District	10
• County	9
• City	112
• Other	3
Population	
• Less than 50,000	44
• 50,000-149,999	43
• 150,000 – 299,999	34
• 300,000 – 449,999	7
• 450,000 or more	6
Rank	
• Other	1
• Lieutenant	8
• Captain	28
• Battalion Chief	11
• Deputy Chief	5
• Assistant Chief	4
• Fire Chief	77

Category	No. of Respondents
Organizational Level	
• Six or More Levels Down from Fire Chief	1
• Five Levels Down from Fire Chief	8
• Four Levels Down from Fire Chief	18
• Three Levels Down from Fire Chief	9
• Two Levels Down from Fire Chief	8
• One Level Down from Fire Chief	12
• Top Level (Fire Chief)	78

Table 3 (cont.): Unaltered/Raw demographic data

To achieve more statistically relevant information using the demographic information, it necessitated collapsing several sub-categories into broader subsets (Table 4). For instance, since so few respondents held a high school level of education, this sub-category was merged with those respondents that had "Some College or an Associate's Degree." Similarly, in the category of "Organizational Level" it was necessary to reduce from six to three sub-categories: "Top Level (Fire Chief)," "One to Three Levels Down from Fire Chief Four," or "More Levels Down from Fire Chief."

Category	No. of Respondents
Education	
• HS or Some College or Assoc. Degree	49
• Undergraduate Degree	50
• Graduate Degree (Masters, PhD, JD)	34
Number of Employees	
• Fewer than 50	32
• 50-99	31
• More than 99	70
Governance Type	
• Other than City	21
• City	112
Population	
• Less than 50,000	47
• 50,000-149,999	43
• Over 150,000	43

Table 4: Collapsed demographic data

Category	No. of Respondents
Rank	
• Company Officer	36
• Chief Officer other than Fire Chief	20
• Fire Chief	77
Organizational Level	
• Four or More Levels Down from Fire Chief	27
• One to Three Levels Down from Fire Chief	28
• Top Level (Fire Chief)	78

Table 4 (cont.): Unaltered/Raw demographic data

The summary results provide some fascinating findings, the first of which are the median

values for both POP and PIP (39.0 and 55.0 respectively) as the survey average for both score is

30. This is an early indication that most respondents perceive both forms of politics existing

within and external to their respective agencies.

	Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP)	Perceptions of Institutional Politics (PIP)
Survey Scale (Min-Max)	15-75	15-75
Survey Scale Average	30	30
Minimum	18.0	33.0
1st Quarter	34.0	51.0
Median	**39.0**	**55.0**
3rd Quarter	43.0	61.0
Maximum	60.0	71.0
Standard Deviation	±10.135	±8.153

Table 5: Summary Data – Perceptions of Organizational and Institutional Politics

What the data does not indicate is the perceived impact these two phenomena have on

management activities, which is more apparent in Table 6. It is clear from the summary data that

respondents perceived internal politics as influencing strategic planning (SPI) and social capital

(SPI), which all having median and mean values much higher than each task's survey scale

average (Table 6). To illustrate, SPI has a median value of 10.0. Yet, the task's survey scale

average is 6.0.

	Strategic Planning Internal (SPI)	Budgeting Internal (BI)	Personnel Mgt. Internal (PI)	Social Capital Internal (SCI)
Survey Scale (Min-Max)	3-15	3-15	3-15	3-15
Survey Scale Average	6	6	6	6
Minimum	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
1st Quarter	8.0	7.0	6.0	9.0
Median	**10.0**	8.0	8.0	**11.0**
3rd Quarter	11.0	10.0	9.0	13.0
Maximum	15.0	15.0	13.0	15.0
Standard Deviation	± 2.284	± 2.419	± 2.390	± 2.574

Table 6: Summary Data – Perceived Impact of Organizational Politics on Management Tasks

Finally, the median and mean scores for the perceived external influencers on Strategic Planning (SPE), Budgeting (BE) and Social Capital (SCE) all had median and mean scores significantly high then the average of the survey scale (Table 7).

	Strategic Planning External (SPE)	Budgeting External (BE)	Personnel Mgt. External (PE)	Social Capital External (SCE)
Survey Scale (Min-Max)	3-15	3-15	3-15	3-15
Survey Scale Average	6	6	6	6
Minimum	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0
1st Quarter	7.0	7.0	4.0	8.0
Median	**9.0**	**9.0**	5.0	**10.0**
3rd Quarter	10.0	10.0	7.0	12.0
Maximum	14.0	15.0	13.0	15.0
Standard Deviation	±2.286	±1.951	±2.118	±2.462

Table 7: Summary Data – Perceived Impact of Institutional Politics on Management Tasks

Correlations

Another useful analysis is examining correlations that exist between independent and dependent variables. Unlike the median and mean analysis, the only correlation that exists is a negative one: between POP and the internal groups that influence Strategic Planning (SPI) (Table 8). That is to say, as respondents' perceptions of organizational politics increase, there is a corresponding decrease in their perceptions that internal groups influence strategic planning.

This runs contrary to the literature and hypotheses advanced earlier but are examined in more depth in *Chapter V*.

	POP	PIP
Strategic Planning - External Influencers (SPE)	---	0.016
Strategic Planning - Internal Influencers (SPI)	**-0.51**	---
Budgeting - External Influencers (BE)	---	0.090
Budgeting - Internal Influencers (BI)	-0.220	---
Personnel Management - External Influencers (PE)	---	-0.025
Personnel Management - Internal Influencers (PI)	-0.067	---
Social Capital - External Influencers (SCE)	---	-0.136
Social Capital - Internal Influencers (SCI)	-0.332	---
Governance (GOV)	-0.069	0.034
Employees (EMP)	0.086	0.115
Population (POPUL)	0.091	0.203
Rank (RNK)	-0.167	0.079
Org Level (OL)	-0.400	-0.119
Education (EDU)	-0.021	-0.048

Table 8: All Correlation between Management Tasks POP and PIP Scales

Testing Assumptions

Prior to testing the hypotheses, it is first necessary to test the various assumptions needed to determine the appropriate statistical procedure to apply (Forsberg, 2011). These assumptions include normality and variability of the dependent variables and multicollinearity of the independent variables.

Testing for Normality. The first assumption that must be examined is the normality of the dependent variables. Assessing the normality of data is an important step for assessing the statistical strength of the results and their generalizability to the larger population. Moreover, the results of normality tests allow for the selection of the appropriate test given the nature of the data (Forsberg, 2011). There are two primary methods for assessing normality: graphical and statistical.

The first approach for assessing normality is to visually evaluate the data using the most common graphical tool: Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) plots. If the data are normally distributed, the data points closely align with the diagonal line. If data points systematically drift from the line it may indicate the data are not normally distributed.

The graphical tests for the dependent variables (Management activities and POP and PIP) are represented in Figures 5, 6 and 7. Figure 5 and 6 present the Q-Q plots for each of the four management activities as respondents perceived them to have been impacted by internal and external influencers. Similarly, the Q-Q plots for POP and PIP (Figure 7) do not indicate any systematic deviation along the diagonal line. Although none of the Q-Q plots indicate perfect normality of the variables, there does not appear to be any orderly deviation from the diagonal line. However, it required the use of a statistical test to validate the visual assumptions.
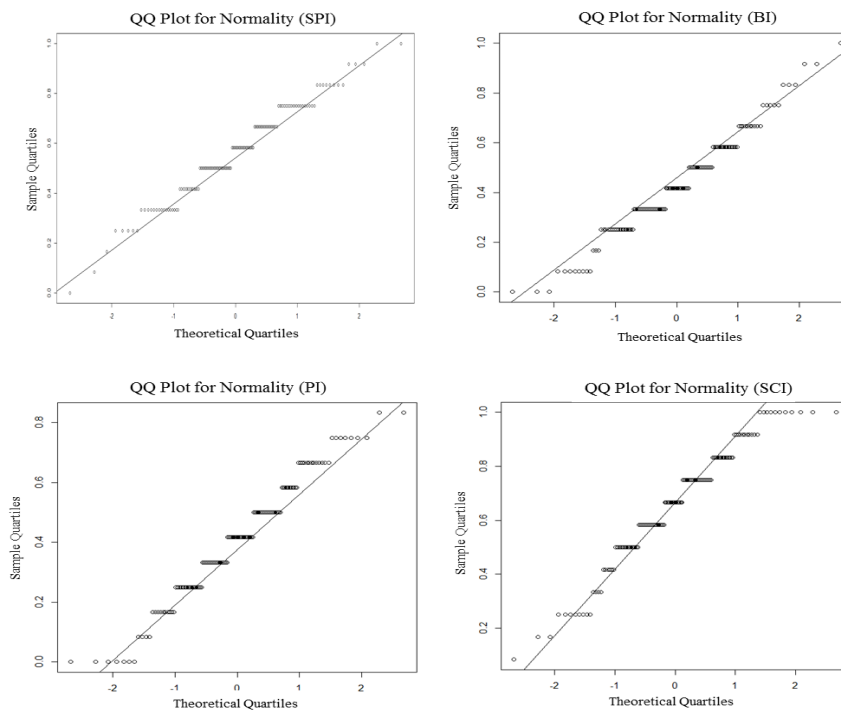

Figure 5: Quantile-Quantile plots of the internal influencers on the four management functions.
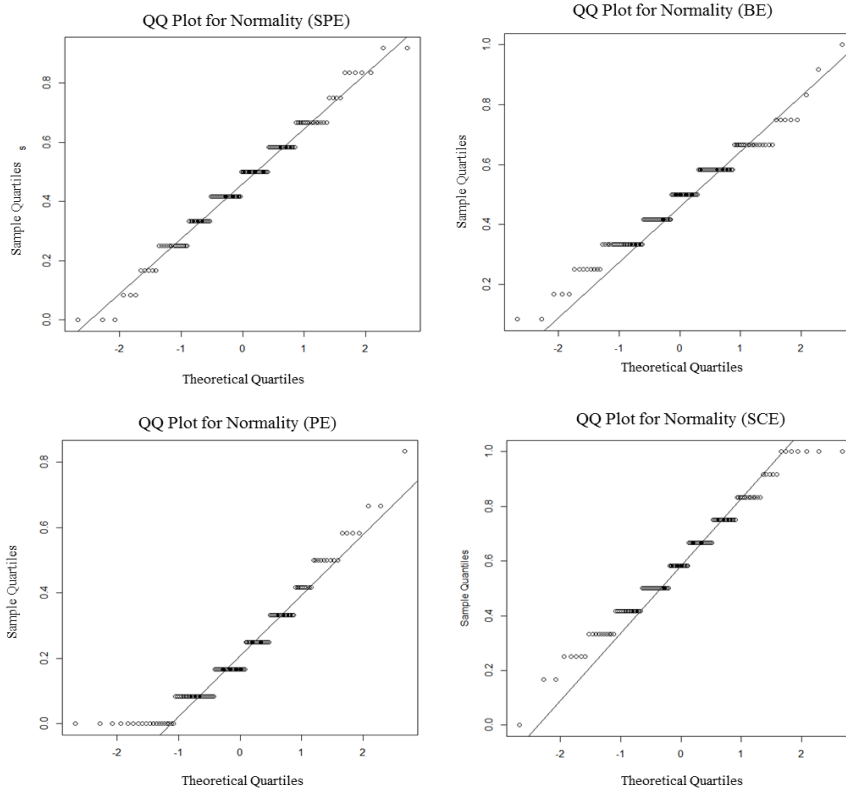
Figure 6: Quantile-Quantile plots of the external influencers on the four management functions.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics   Perceptions of Institutional Politics
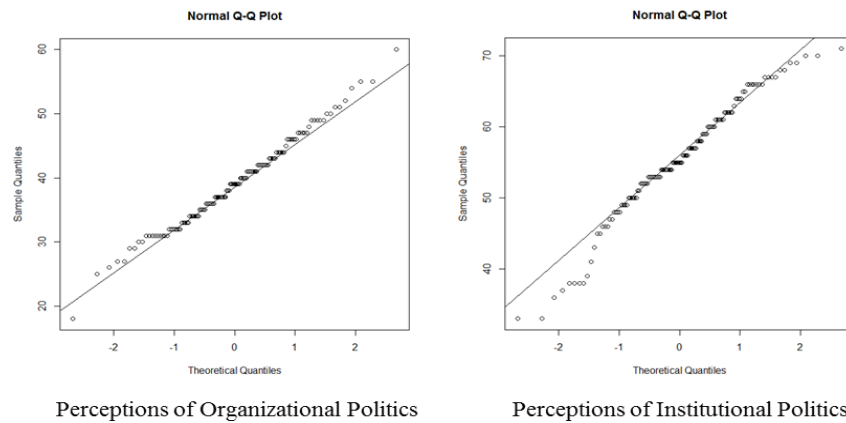
Figure 7: Quantile-Quantile plots of POP and PIP.

Statistical testing for normality uses the null hypothesis (H_0) that the randomly selected sample data has a normal distribution. Therefore, statistical tests center on the symmetry of the distribution. While numerous tests are available, the most commonly used is the Shapiro-Wilk, because of its statistical power and its tendency to be less sensitive to outliers compared to other tests (Forsberg, 2011)

For this project, the researcher elected to use an alpha level (α) equal to 0.05 and a null hypothesis that the data are normally distributed (i.e., H_0 is rejected when p-values are less than α =0.05). Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis is not rejected; hence, the data is normally distributed. When the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied to all the dependent variables, the results showed all were not normally distributed (Table 8).

When multiple hypothesis tests are performed on a single data set there is an increased chance of obtaining false-positive results (Type I errors). Put more simply, there is an increased probability of identifying at least one significant result due as more hypotheses are tested (Forsberg, 2011). To adjust for this problem, an adjustment using the Bonferroni correction procedure can be used.

The Bonferroni correction procedure is predicated on the premise that if a researcher tests *n* dependent or independent hypotheses on a set of data, the probability of Type I error is offset by testing each hypothesis at a statistical significance level *1/n*. To perform a Bonferroni correction, divide the selected p-value by the number of comparisons being made. For instance, if ten hypotheses are tested, the original p-value threshold (in political and social sciences the p-value most frequently selected is $\alpha = 0.05$ [Johnson , 2013; Gill, 1999]) is divided by ten (new p-value = 0.05/10 = 0.005). Then, the resultant p-values are evaluated against the new p-value ($\alpha = 0.005$) accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis.

Once the Bonferroni correction procedure was applied, it indicated that only two of eight variables groups are sufficiently non-Normal to cause concern (comparing the p-values to $\alpha = 0.006$) (Table 9).[17] Conversely, both POP and PIP variables are non-Gaussian, which required the use of non-parametric statistical tests.

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[17] The eight variables were derived from measuring the impact of politics by both internal and external groups on each management task.

	W	P-Value	Normally Distributed Uncorrected (α=0.05)	Normally Distributed Corrected (α=0.006)
SPI	0.978	0.029	NO	YES
BI	0.976	0.017	NO	YES
PI	0.973	0.009	NO	YES
SCI	0.962	0.001	NO	NO
SPE	0.979	0.033	NO	YES
BE	0.972	0.007	NO	YES
PE	0.926	1.665×10^{-6}	NO	NO
SCE	0.978	0.027	NO	YES
	W	P-Value	Normally Distributed Uncorrected (α=0.05)	Normally Distributed Corrected (α=0.025)
POP	0.951	0.001	NO	NO
PIP	0.971	0.006	NO	NO

Table 9: Shapiro-Wilk test results using uncorrected and Bonferroni corrected p-values

These findings inform the decision as to which statistical method to use when testing the hypotheses, which is discussed in more detail in the *Testing the Hypotheses* section.

Testing for Equal-Variance. The second assumption in need of testing is that of equal variances across the dependent variables. As with the Normality tests, there are both graphical and numerical tests. The graphical test of choice is the boxplot (Figures 8, 9 and 10).

The boxplots in Figure 8 and 9 indicate the variances between the internal and external management functions relative to one another. Despite the appearance of relative symmetry, several functions (SPI, BI, BE, and PE) have at least one outlier, which could indicate an abnormal distribution, as well as unequal variances. A numerical test, Fligner-Killeen, was used to identify the variables that violated the equal-variance assumption.

Figure 8: The boxplots of the perceived internal influencers on the four management functions: strategic planning, budgeting, personal management, and social capital.
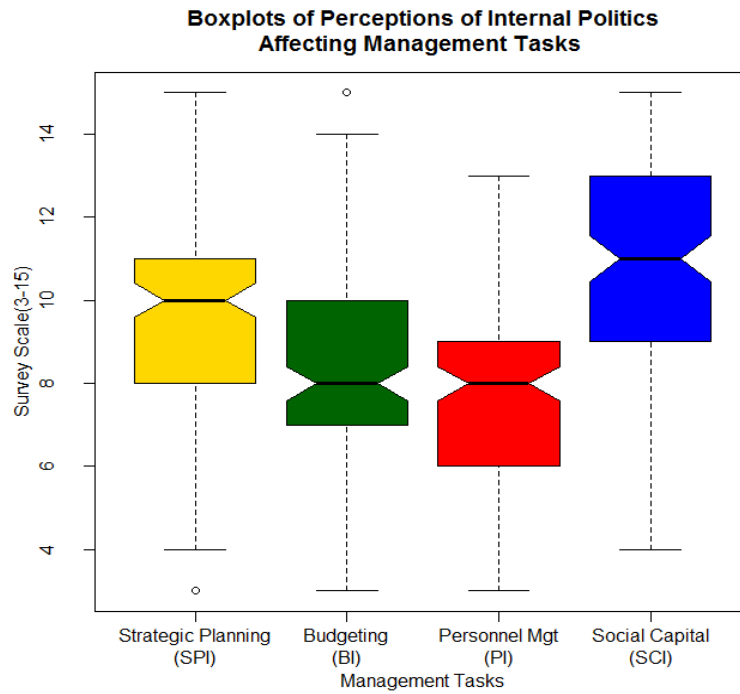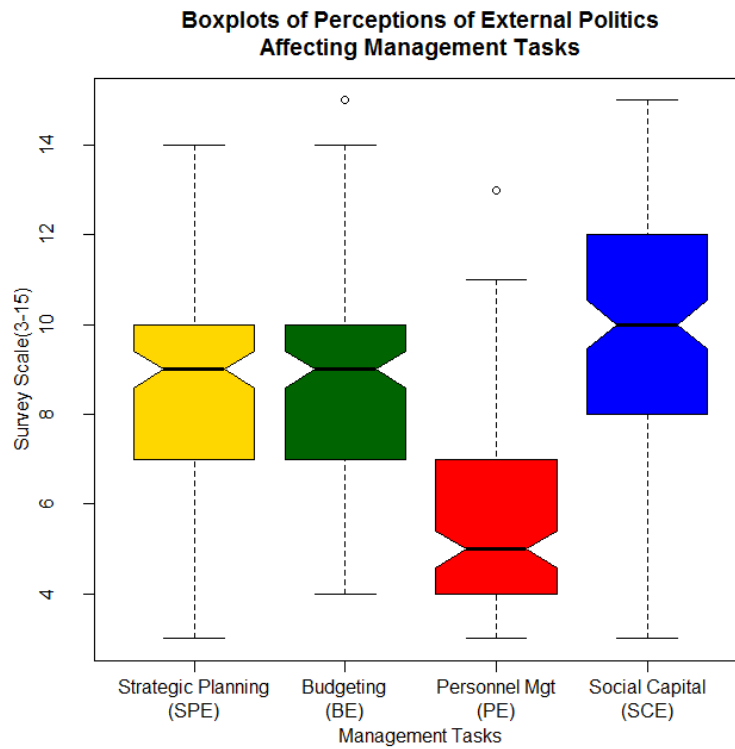

Figure 9: The boxplots of the perceived external influencers on the four management functions: strategic planning, budgeting, personal management, and social capital.
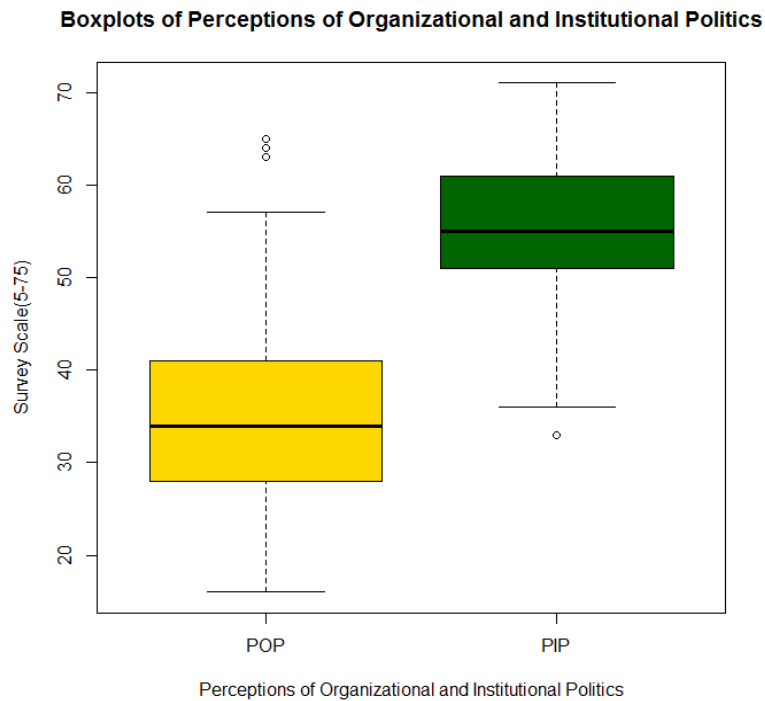
Figure 10: The boxplots of the perceptions of Organizational and
Institutional Politics.

Running the Fligner-Killeen test, there was only one variable that failed to produce p-values less than the selected alpha value (0.05). That was internal influences on building social capital (SCI) given rank and file (RKFL) (X^2 =13.351, df = 4, p-value = 0.01). However, using the Bonferroni correction procedure at the new p-value (α = 0.013) the null hypothesis (the dependent variables have equal variables) was not rejected for any of the variables.

Testing for Multicollinearity. The last set of tests examines the independence of each independent variable from the other. Table 9 provides more detailed examinations of the correlations between the demographic, POP and PIP variables. There were high correlations between Population (POPUL) and Number of employees (EMP) (0.792) and Population (POPUL) and Organizational Levels (OL) (-0.614). A Pearson's product-moment correlation test was used to verify the statistical significance of these correlations and verified their existence (Population Served and Number of Employees, t = 14.945, p = 2.2e-16 and Population Served and Organizational Level, t = -8.993, p = 3.166e-15). Intuitively, this makes sense. As

populations grow, public sector organizations typically expand to accommodate increasing

demands for service. In turn, as organizations grow they adapt their structures to effectively

manage the increase service requirements and added personnel (Lipsky, 2010, p. 92; Ladd, 1992).

What is counterintuitive, and contrary to the literature, is the negative correlation between

population and organization level. None of the literature review indicates why this result was

produced and future research will have to address this incongruity. For this research project,

however, it did not raise enough concern to delete the variables from analysis.

Independent Variables	GOV	EMP	POPUL	RNK	OL	PIP
Governance (GOV)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Employees (EMP)	-0.043	---	---	---	---	---
Population (POPUL)	-0.110	**0.792**	---	---	---	---
Rank (RNK)	0.031	-0.101	-0.138	---	---	---
Org Level (OL)	-0.167	-0.447	**-0.614**	0.18	---	---
Education (EDU)	-0.245	-0.252	-0.345	0.017	0.476	---
POP	---	---	---	---	---	-0.28

Table 10: Correlations between independent variables

Testing the Hypotheses

Despite the correlations, it is necessary to examine the hypotheses using more robust

statistical tests so that more meaningful findings can be extracted from the analyses – specifically

do any of the independent variable have predictive values (Forsberg, 2011)? Unfortunately, there

are no universal procedures that can be applied to test all the hypotheses as the dependent and

independent variables dictate which statistical techniques are appropriate.

Because the POP and PIP dependent variables are not normally distributed and the

demographic independent variables are ordinal or categorical, it requires the use of a non-

parametric statistical test to establish the relationships between the variables (Forsberg, 2011;

McDonald, 2009). As such, the Kruskal–Wallis procedure, a non-parametric method for testing

whether samples originate from the same distribution (Kruskal and Wallis, 1952; Corder and

Foreman, 2009), was used to test first three hypotheses.

The Kruskal–Wallis tests whether the mean ranks are the same in all the groups.

Therefore, if the Kruskal–Wallis test yields a p-value less than 0.05, then a potential relationship

may exist between variables as the sample population means are not equal. It is important to note,

however, the results do not identify the predictive nature of the variables nor how they rank

amongst one another.

The first hypothesis tested (H_1) using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum procedure was: *the*

lower the rank, the more respondents will perceive organizational politics (POP) *to exist*. The

results suggest there is a statistically significant relationship between POP and Rank (Chi-squared

$= 23.073$, df$= 2$, p-value$=9.77$x 10^{-6}). That is, a lower rank corresponds to a greater tendency that

a respondent perceives the existence of organizational politics (Figure 11). Similarly, despite

there being no statistically significant relationship between organizational level and POP (Chi-

squared $= 2.0368$, df$= 1$, p-value$=0.154$), the graph indicates there may be a relationship between

organizational level and POP. That is, the lower the organizational level a respondent resides, the

more likely he or she will perceive organizational politics to exist (Figure 12).

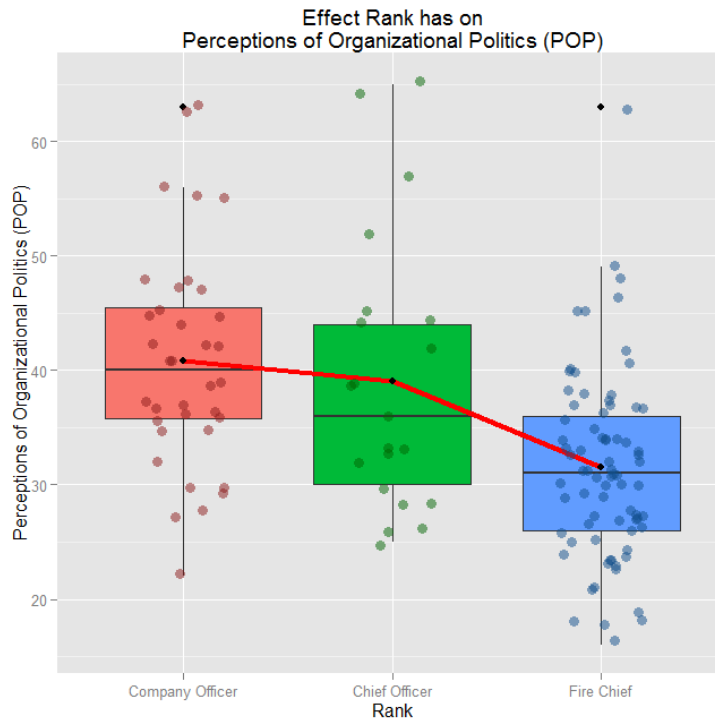93

Figure 11: Graph demonstrating the relationship between rank and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.
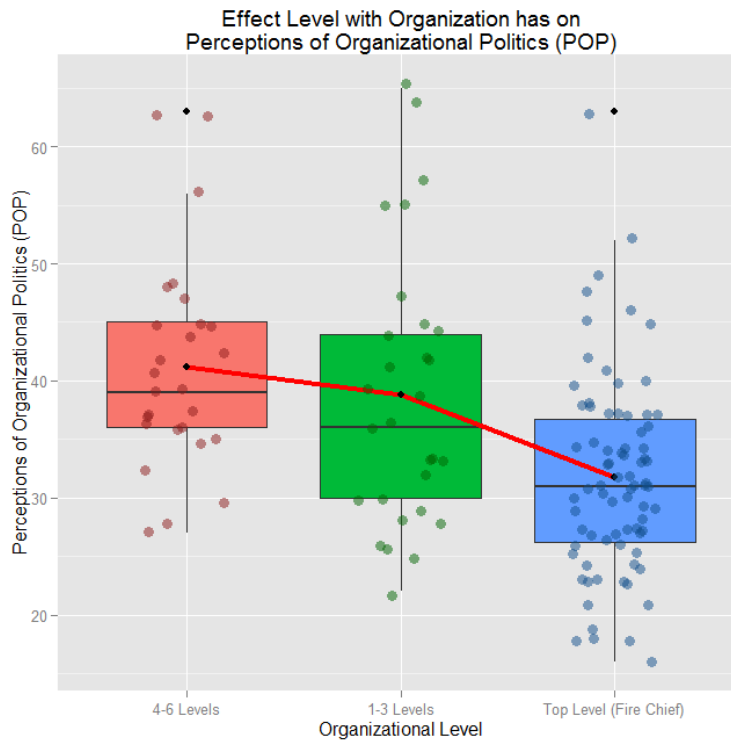

Figure 12: Graph demonstrating the relationship between organizational level and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.

The second hypothesis (H₂) tested using the Kruskal-Wallis procedure was: *respondents whose fire agencies have more personnel (both operational and staff) will perceive higher levels of organizational politics (POP)*. The results from the test suggest there is no statistically significant relationship between number of employees and respondents' perceptions of increased organizational politics (Chi-squared = 1.9346, df= 2, p-value=0.380). The graph makes this finding more evident (Figure 13) as it shows no consistent relationship between the variables.
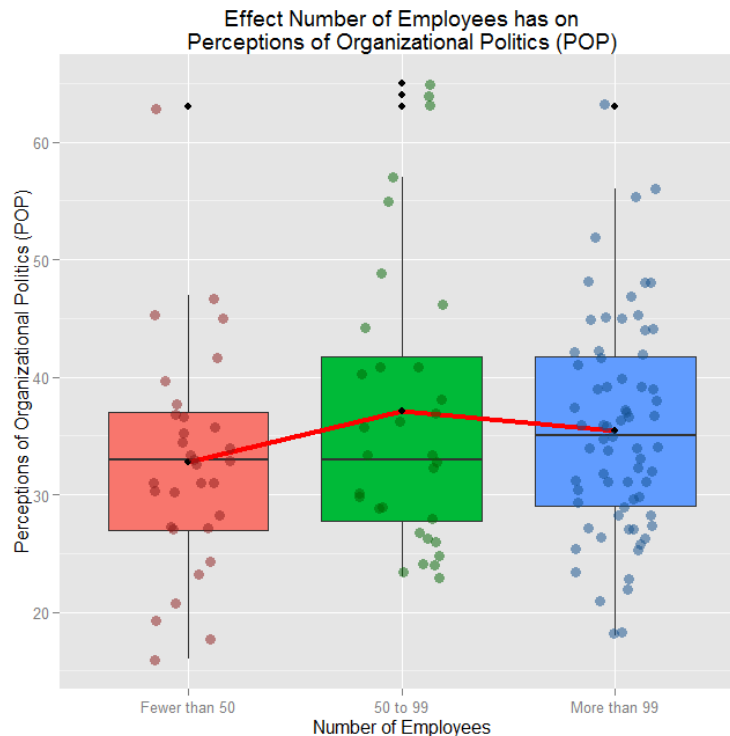
Figure 13: Graph demonstrating the relationship between number of employees and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.

The last hypothesis (H₃) tested using the Kruskal-Wallis procedure was: *the higher the rank, the more they perceive the existence of institutional politics (PIP)*. Unlike the affirmative findings between POP and rank, there does not appear to be a similar relationship between institutional politics (PIP) and rank (Chi-squared = 1.564, df= 2, p-value=0.458) (Figures 14) nor PIP and organizational level (Chi-squared = 0.4379, df= 1, p-value=0.508). However, graphing the relationship for PIP given organizational level suggests a relationship may exist (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Graph demonstrating the relationship between rank and PIP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.
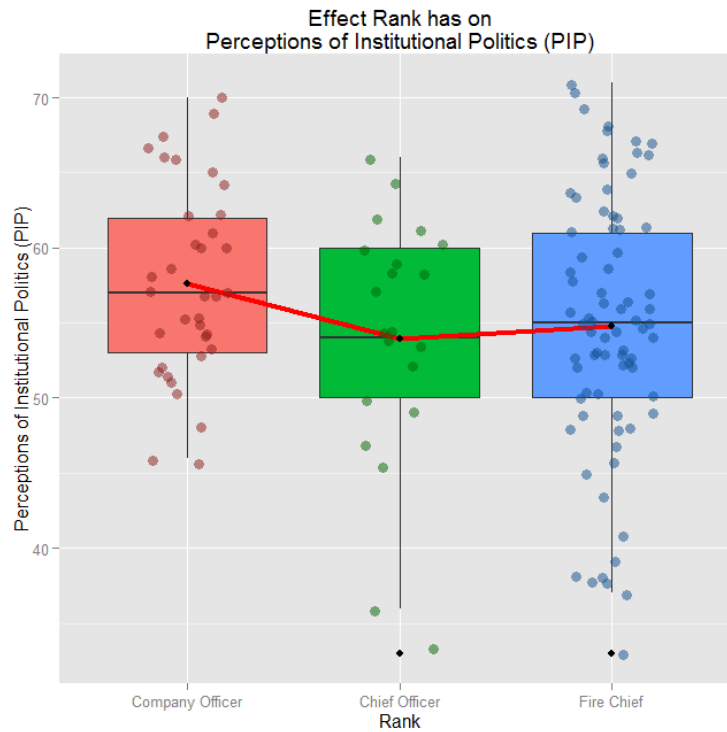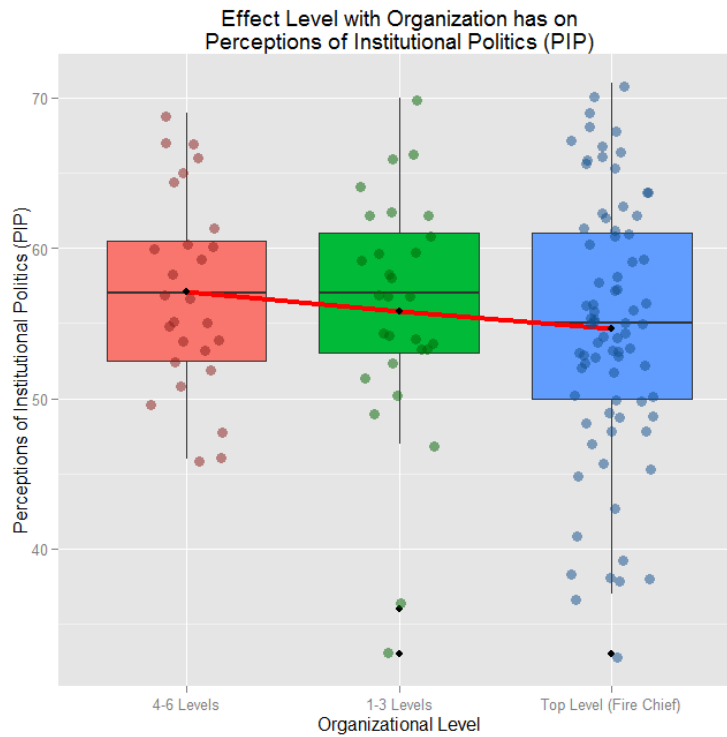

Figure 15: Graph demonstrating the relationship between organizational level and PIP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.

The last two hypotheses tested examine the influence bureaucratic politics have on management functions, which are both bounded above and below. This required manually transforming the dependent variables to proportions that yielded scores between 0 and 1. This transformation process is necessary because when predicting dependent variables that are bounded, it invariably leads to implausible predictions (Forsberg, 2011). He states that to improve the model, it requires converting the "boundedness" of the variables using three steps (p. 146):

1. Transform the dependent variable from a restricted range to an unrestricted range.

2. Second, perform the analysis on this transformed variable.

3. Back-transform the results into the original units. The logit function transforms variables bounded by 0 and 1 into unbounded variables.

While other transform processes are available, the logit function is most frequently used for the following reasons (Forsberg, 2011, p. 148):

1. The transformation and its inverse are both functions (the transform is a bijective function). This means that the results are always commensurate to the original problem.

2. The transformation is symmetric. This means that the 'stretching' is the same for values near 0 as they are for values near 1.

3. The function is exact, as opposed to the probit transform which requires numerical approximations. This increases the speed and accuracy of your predictions.

As noted previously, once the Bonferroni correction procedure was applied to all four management activities (for both internal and external influencer groups) it indicated that only two of the eight variables have abnormal distributions to cause concern (Table 9 on page 89).

Consequently, regression analysis is still appropriate to use as the two non-Gaussian variables will not skew the data enough to invalidate the results for the other variables.

The first of these two hypotheses tested, H$_4$: *the more respondents perceive the existence of organizational politics they will also perceive the phenomenon affecting one or more management functions*. Because the dependent variables, management activities, are Gaussian this allowed for the use of regression analysis. As such, four separate tests were conducted to examine the impact POP has on each management task (strategic planning, personnel management, budgeting and social capital). The results were revealing, albeit, contrary to what the literature indicated the relationships would be.

Of the four management activities, all but one (personnel management: t = -0.773, p-value = 0.441) showed statistical significance. However, what was unexpected is that these relationships were negative and significant. For instance, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between POP and strategic planning indicating that as respondents perceived increased levels of organizational politics, there was a corresponding decrease in their perceptions that the phenomenon influences strategic planning (t=-3.921, p-value= 0.001). Likewise, POP appears to have a casually negative impact on both budgeting and building social capital (t=-2.228, p-value= 0.028 and t=-2.457, p-value= 0.015, respectively). The graphs showing the relationships of these three variables, relative to POP, are shown in Figures 16-18. The results suggest that hypothesis H$_4$ is valid given the sampled population.
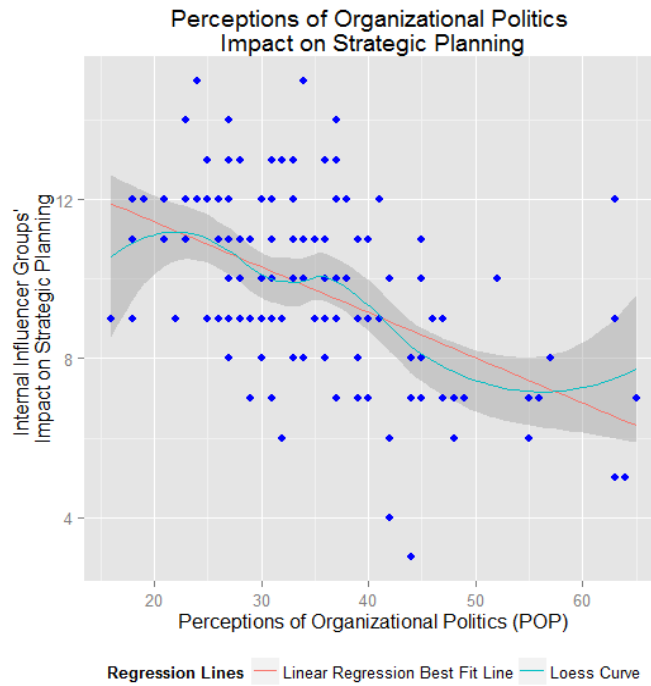
Figure 16: Regression analysis graph showing impact of POP on strategic planning.[18]

Perceptions of Organizational Politics
Impact on Building Social Capital
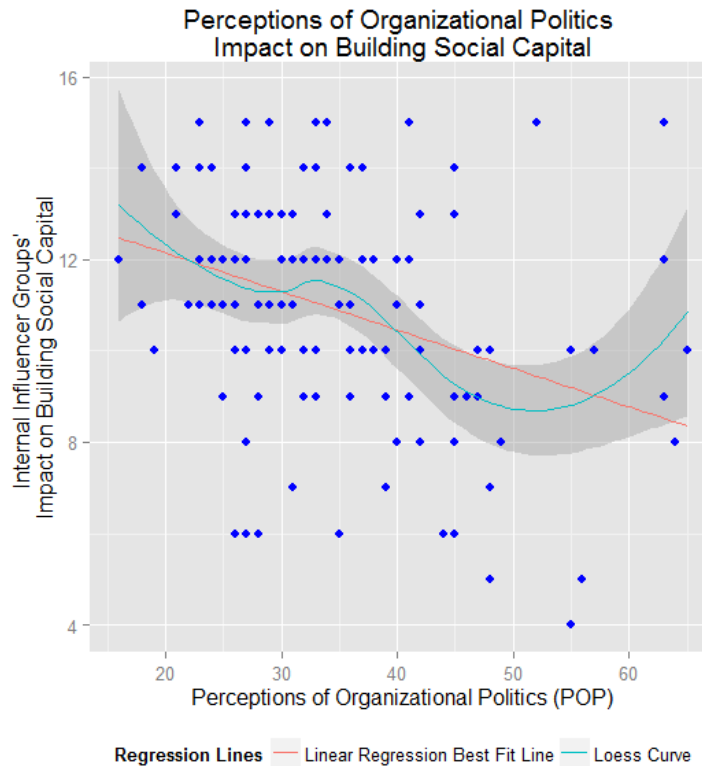
Figure 18: Regression analysis graph showing the impact POP has on building social capital.

As with Hypothesis 4 (H_4), regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 5 (H_5): *the more respondents perceive the existence of institutional politics they will also perceive the phenomenon affecting one or more management functions.* The results did not demonstrate any statistically significant results that would indicate respondents perceive institutional politics affecting any management activities. The statistical results are as follows:

- SPE~PIP ($t = 0.247$, p-value $= 0.805$)

- BE~PIP ($t = -0.661$, p-value $= 0.51$)

- PE~PIP ($t = -0.068$, p-value $= 0.946$)

- SCE~PIP ($t = 1.380$, p-value $= 0.17$)

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Additional Inferences

While the results for POP and PIP and their impact on management activities were either mixed or did not show any statistically significant relationships, the survey data collected allowed for additional statistical analysis that helped answer several research questions.

Through manual manipulation of the data, the researcher was able to aggregate respondents' perceptions of the impact each influencer group (*Chief Officers*, *Rank and File personnel*, *Other Internal Stakeholders*, *Local Elected Officials*, *Unions*, *and Local Business Groups*) has organizational and institutional politics. This was accomplished by aggregating the individual scores for each group from questions five through eight and running regression analysis using POP and PIP as the dependent variables. For instance, aggregating the survey responses from questions 5a, 6a, 7a and 8a yielded the impact respondents felt local politicians have on all four management activities cumulatively. Running generalized regression analysis produced results indicating that a statistically significant and negative relationship exists between respondents' perceptions of Chief Officers' impact on all management activities and POP. That is, as respondents perceive the influence of Chief Officers to increase (specifically with respect to management activities), their perceptions of organizational politics correspondingly decreased ($t = -4.457$, p-value $= 1.76$ x 10^{-5}). This runs counter to the literature, which would have predicted the contrary relationship. Similar findings were discovered for the other two influencer groups:

- POP ~ rank and file personnel ($t = -5.292$, p-value $= 4.9$ x 10^{-7})
- POP ~ internal stakeholders ($t = -2.126$, p-value $=0.044$)

Graphically, these three relationships are shown below (Figures 19-21).
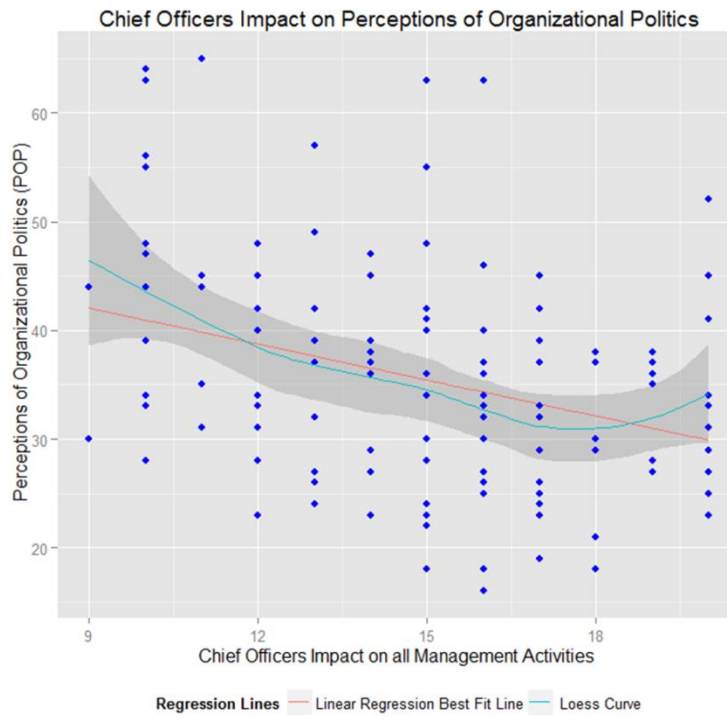
Figure 19: Regression analysis graph showing the impact Chief
Officers have on POP.
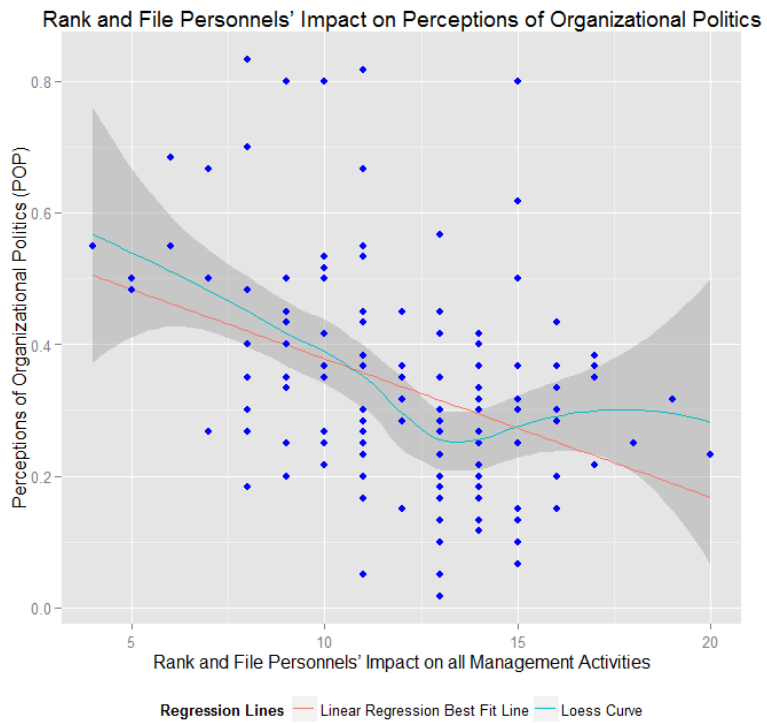
Figure 20: Regression analysis graph showing the impact Rank and
File has on POP.
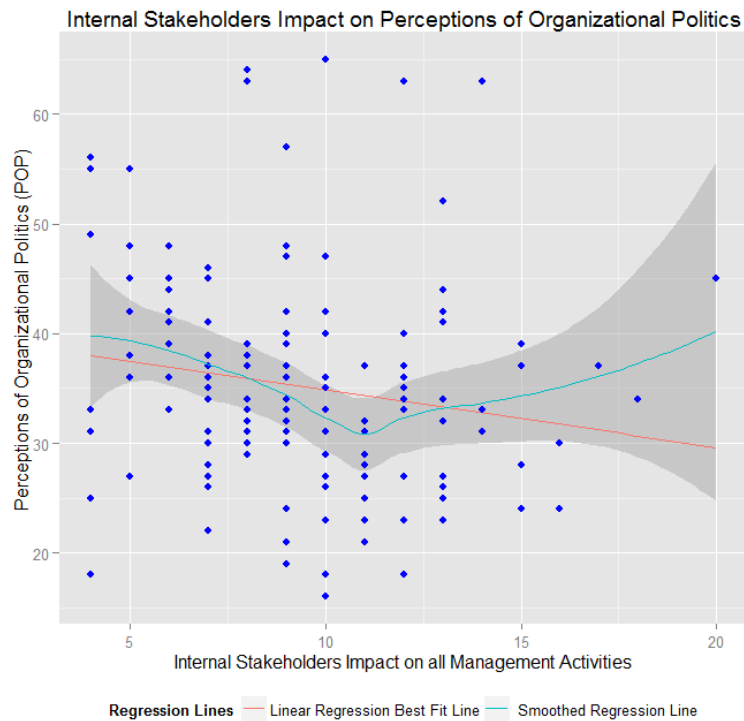
Figure 21: Regression analysis graph showing the impact Internal
Stakeholders have on POP.

Interestingly, there is also a statistically significant and positive relationship between

POP and Local Elected Officials (t = 2.098, p-value =0.038). To be exact, as respondents

perceived local elected officials influence on management activities to increase they

correspondingly perceived higher levels of POP (Figure 22). This was an unexpected finding as

the literature suggested this would affect perceptions of institutional politics rather than POP.
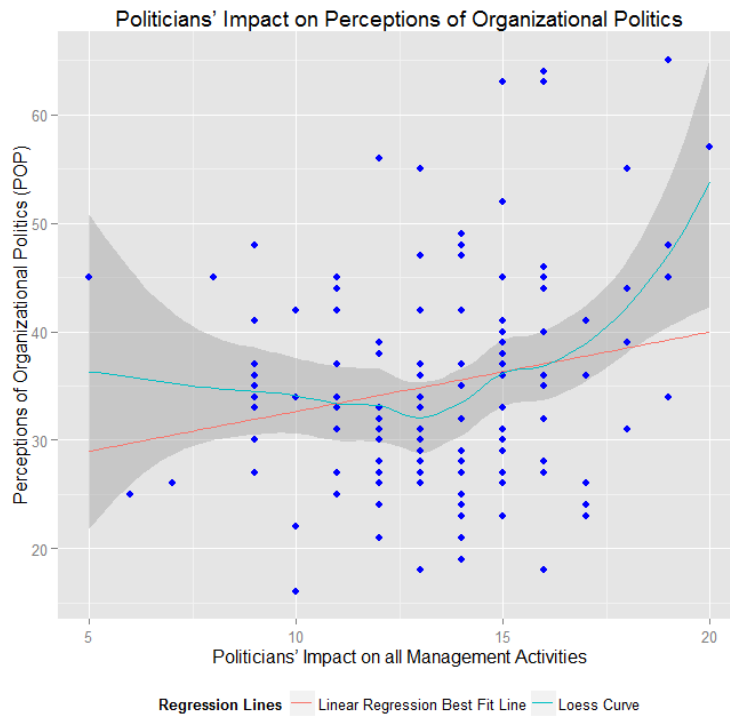
Figure 22: Regression analysis graph showing the impact Elected Officials (Politicians) have on POP.

Regression analysis showed a similar statistically significant and negative relationship between PIP and Politicians (t = -2.095, p=0.038) (Figure 23). Regression analysis did not find any statistically significant relationships with respect to Unions and Business Groups (t = -0.867, p= 0.387 and t = 1.689, p = 0.062 respectively). With that said, the influence of Business Groups and PIP was just outside the statistical threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$ suggesting a positive relationship may exist.
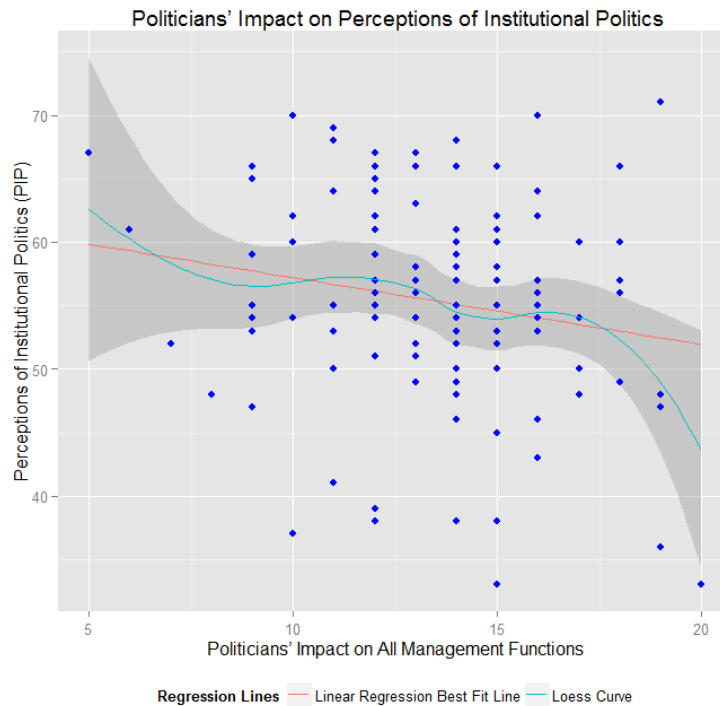
Figure 23: Regression analysis graph showing the impact Elected Officials (Politicians) have on PIP.

The last set of findings, not associated with testing one of the five hypotheses, relates to demographics' influence on POP and PIP. As Table 11 illustrates, in addition to those noted previously for Rank and Organizational Level, there were statistically significant relationships between POP and population served (Chi-squared = 8.800, df= 2, p-value = 0.012) and level of education (Chi-squared = 6.196, df= 2, p-value = 0.045). More precisely, the lower the educational level, the more respondents perceived the existence of organizational politics. The graphs depicting these relationships (Figures 23 and 24, respectively), were mixed in supporting the statistical findings. Figure 23 does not demonstrate a linear relationship between population and higher levels of POP. Conversely, Figure 24 shows a strong linear trend between education level and POP.

Perhaps one of the more compelling findings, despite its marginal statistical significance, is the relationship between PIP and population served (Chi-squared = 5.064, df= 2, p-value=0.08). As the Figure 14 shows, as the population served increases, there is a corresponding

increase in PIP. This suggests, at least with this sample population, respondents perceived the

existence of external politics more frequently as the population they service increases. This

compliments the regression finding that a possible positive linear relationship may exist between

business groups' influence and increased levels of PIP.   These findings support the notion that

institutional politics are perceptually real. Moreover, while just outside the statistically

significant range, the more active business groups are the greater the possibility they increase an

organization's level PIP. What is not as evident is how business groups affect organizational

outcomes as they did not have any discernable influence on management activities.

	Chi-Squared	Degrees of Freedom (df)	P-Value	Relationship
PIP				
• Employees (EMP)	3.335	2	0.189	No
• Education (EDU)	0.202	2	0.904	No
• Org Level (OL)	1.564	2	0.458	No
• Rank (RNK)	2.695	2	0.260	No
• Population (POPUL)	5.064	2	0.080	No
• Governance (GOV)	0.395	1	0.530	No
POP				
• Employees (EMP)	1.935	2	0.380	No
• Education (EDU)	6.196	2	**0.045**	Yes
• Org Level (OL)	23.073	2	**9.77×10^{-6}**	Yes
• Rank (RNK)	24.674	2	**4.386×10^{-6}**	Yes
• Population (POPUL)	8.800	2	**0.012**	Yes
• Governance (GOV)	0.499	1	0.480	No

Table 11: Kruskal-Wallis test results of the means for demographics relative to POP and PIP.
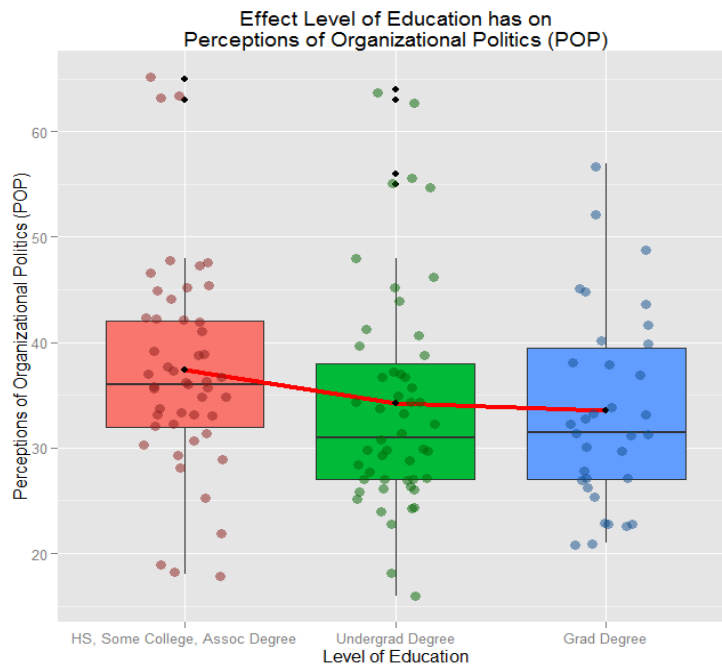
Figure 24: Graph demonstrating the relationship between level of education and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.
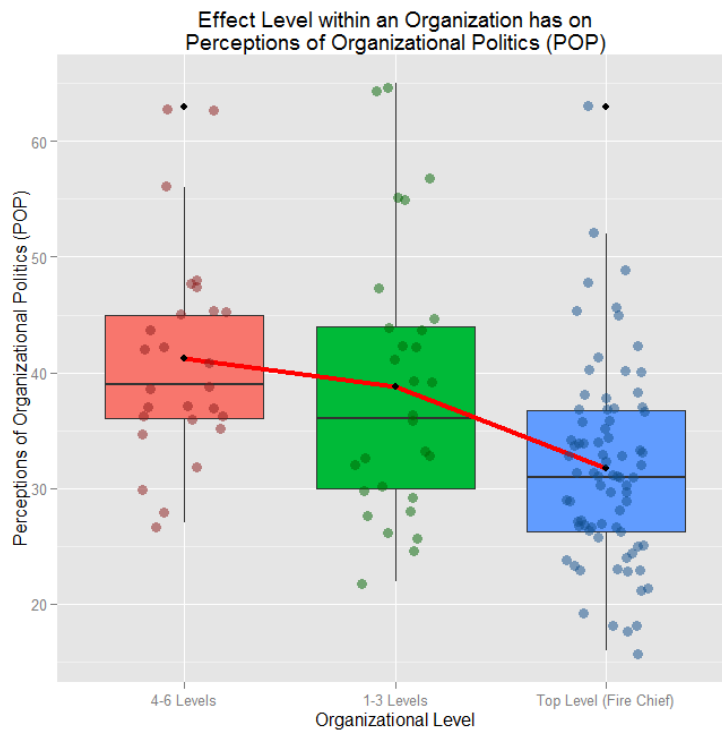
Figure 25: Graph demonstrating the relationship between levels within an organizational and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.
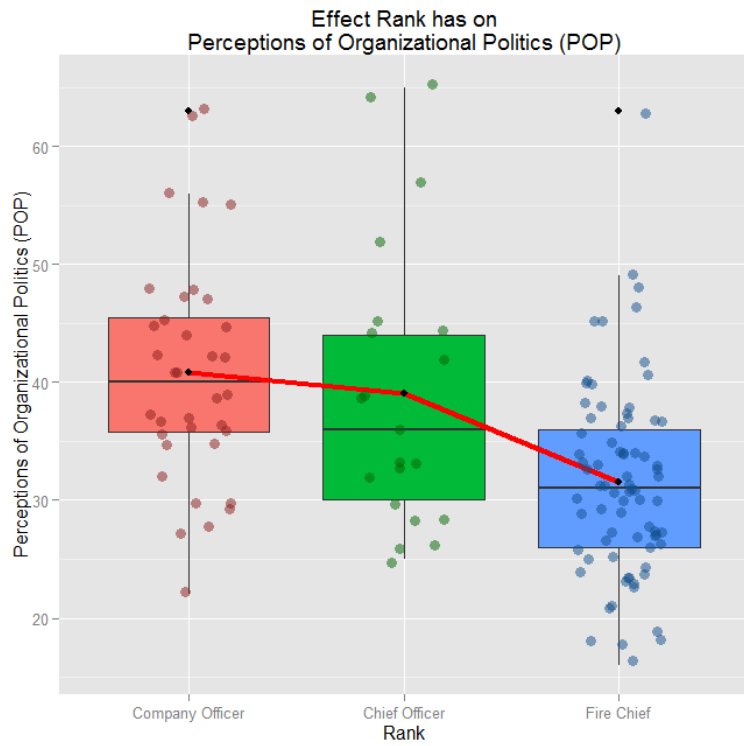
Figure 26: Graph demonstrating the relationship between rank and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.
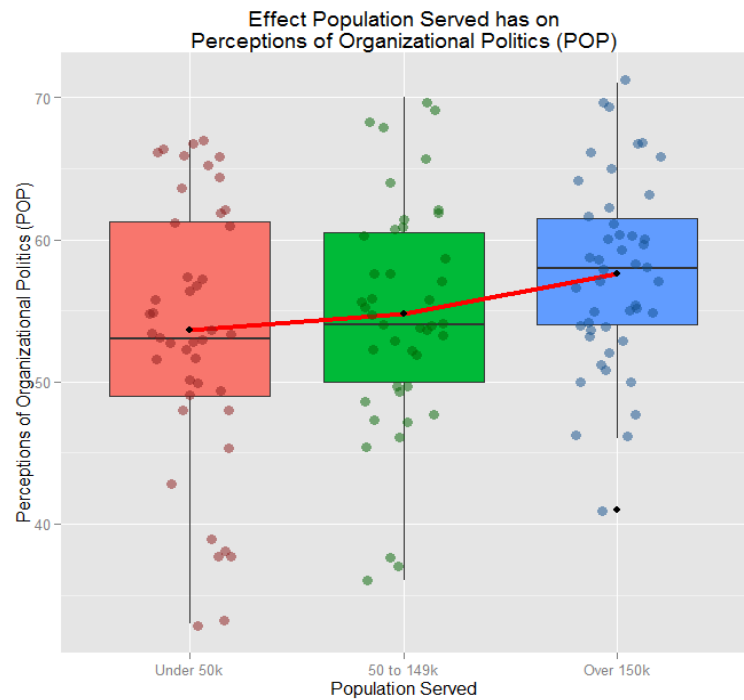
Figure 27: Graph demonstrating the relationship between population served and POP using the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test.

As we close out this chapter, two salient questions remain unanswered and is outside the scope of this project, how do these groups affect organizational outcomes and is their influence necessarily negative? Despite this research projects inability to answer these questions as completely as we had hoped, the next section, *Chapter V*, expands on the findings detailed above.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental research project was to conduct a scientific inquiry into the perceived existence and effects of bureaucratic politics. It is anticipated these findings will better inform our understanding of the internal and external political pressures fire service managers encounter and how they perceive them to affect specific management activities.

While little research has been devoted to examining the phenomena within public sector organizations, it is especially scarce with respect to fire service agencies. As noted earlier, one of the few studies that centers on fire service organizations was conducted by Charles Phillips (2004). His research narrowly focused on executive-level fire service administrators (fire chiefs) and their perceptions of organizational politics. The primary benefits of Phillips's (2004) study are the findings provided an initial insight into the relationship between internal politics and fire chiefs.

This project builds on Phillips's (2004) research but expands the scope in five distinct ways as it:

1. Included fire service supervisors from lieutenant through fire chief;

2. Examined both types of politics – organizational and institutional;

3. Comprised departments of various sizes and types (e.g., city, county, special district);

4. Encompassed respondents from non- metropolitan departments.

It is expected the findings from this research project will, in turn, enable fire service leaders to develop techniques and strategy to capitalize on the positive effects or combat their subversive tendencies.

This final chapter reviews the research questions and restates the results of the hypotheses tests; examines the findings; discusses the implications of the research; describes the studies limitations; and, provides recommendations for future research.

Restatement of Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose and approach of this research was designed to align with previous research that examined the perceived existence and impact of internal and external politics. Most of these studies, however, primarily centered on one dimension or the other, which are more precisely defined as organizational (internal) or institutional (external). This study, by contrast, examined the phenomenon from both dimensional perspectives, which, as noted in the *Literature Review* section, is more broadly categorized as *Bureaucratic Politics*. This expanded examination is necessary as organizations are influenced by both political variants (Kacmar and Baron, 1999; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Finally, continuity between this study and prior research is found in the linkage between organizational politics and critical organizational outcomes. Specifically, it links to such outcomes as job involvement (Ferris , Russ, and Fandt, 1989; Witt, 1995) and organizational commitment (Maslyn and Fedor, 1998; Witt, Patti, and Farmer, 2002). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) underscored the importance of this expanded focus, as all levels of an

organization are influenced by politics. The disruptive nature of these forces necessitates

developing management techniques to mitigate their detrimental effects. As such, the underlying

research questions for this study were:

1. To what extent do fire service personnel perceive the existence of institutional and

    organizational politics?

2. When respondents perceive one or both dimensions of bureaucratic politics

    (organizational and institutional), how do the phenomena affect their ability to

    execute core management functions?

3. At what supervisory level or classification within fire organizations do supervisors

    perceive one or both dimensions of bureaucratic politics (organizational and

    institutional)?

4. What additional individual and fire department demographic characteristics affect the

    perceived existence and impact on management activities for one or both forms of

    bureaucratic politics (organizational and institutional)?

These questions served as the basis for operationalizing and measuring the concepts of

organizational and institutional politics and their perceived influence on management activities,

which allowed for testing of the following five hypotheses:

- H_1: *The lower the rank s, the more respondents will perceive organizational politics*
  (POP).

  The Kruskal-Wallis test results supports this hypothesis; however, it's important to

  clarify this test does not indicate causation. Rather, it only suggests that respondents

  at the three ranks perceived the existence of organizational politics differently.

  Graphing the results indicates a linear relationship that supports the hypothesis.

- H_2: *Fire agencies with more personnel (both operational and staff), the more*
  respondents will perceive organizational politics (POP).

This hypothesis was not supported from the Kruskal-Wallis test results.

- H₃: *The higher the rank, the more respondents will perceive institutional politics (PIP).*

  This hypothesis was not supported from the Kruskal-Wallis test results; however, the graph for *Organizational Level* indicates a linear relationship may exist. That is, as that the lower the rank, the more respondents perceived that institutional politics exists and runs counter to the hypothesis, which was supported by the literature.

- H₄: *The higher the perception of organizational politics (POP), the more respondents will perceive the phenomenon affecting one or more management functions.*

  The results from the generalized linear regression analysis supported the hypothesis for three of the four management activities (strategic planning, budgeting and social capital but not for personnel management).

- H₅: *The higher the perception of institutional politics (PIP), the more respondents will perceive the phenomenon affecting one or more management functions.*

  This hypothesis was not supported from generalized linear regression analysis results.

Discussion of the Findings

This section provides an in-depth discussion of the findings that help answer the four research questions. In view of that, the following discussion centers on how respondents perceived the existence of organizational and institutional politics; how they influence management activities; and, what demographic characteristics influence perceptions of bureaucratic politics.

Perceived Existence of Bureaucratic Politics. The summary data indicates that respondents overwhelmingly perceive the existence of both bureaucratic politics variants (POP and PIP). Specifically, the mean scores for both variations were well above the mean survey scores. Surprisingly, respondents were considerably more aware of the existence of external

politics than they were of internal politics as measured by their respective mean scores (Table 15).

	POP	PIP
Survey Scale Average	30	30
Mean	**39.0**	**55.0**

Table 12: Median scores for POP and PIP survey scale and results.

It also appears, based on the results derived from the Kruskal-Wallis tests, there is a linear relationship between rank and POP. Specifically, graphing the Kruskal-Wallis test results indicates a negatively linear trajectory of the mean scores for Rank (descending from the categories of *Fire Officer*, *Chief Officer* to *Fire Chief*). To be more precise, the higher the rank, the less likely a respondent perceived organizational politics to exist. This finding is consistent with the organizational politics research.

Influence of Bureaucratic Politics on Management Function. The second set of findings center on how bureaucratic politics influence select management activities - strategic planning, budgeting, personnel management, and building social capital. The mean scores for the influence internal and external groups have on several management activities were above the survey instrument averages. Specifically, internal groups are perceived to affect strategic planning and building social capital while external groups are perceived to affect strategic planning, budgeting, and building social capital (Table 16).

	Strategic Planning Internal (SPI)	Social Capital Internal (SCI)	Strategic Planning External (SPE)	Budgeting External (BE)	Social Capital External (SCE)
Survey Scale Average	6	6	6	6	6
Median	**10.0**	**11.0**	**9.0**	**9.0**	**10.0**

Table 13: Median scores for perceived influence of internal and external groups on management activities survey scale and results.

While respondents clearly see the existence of POP and PIP as well as acknowledging the influence over select management activities, the correlation analysis only yielded one statistically

significant negative relationship (between POP and Strategic Planning [SPI]). This runs contrary to the literature, which indicated that politically motivated behavior negatively affects job related outcomes such as involvement, commitment, and stress (Vigoda-Gadot, and Drory, 2006).

Complicating matters, the regression analysis showed statistically significant negative linear relationships between POP and strategic planning, budgeting and building social capital. That is, as respondents perceived increased levels of organizational politics, there were corresponding decreases in their perceptions that the phenomenon influences these three management activities.

Augmenting these findings, regression findings suggest there are negative linear relationships between internal influencer groups (*Chief Officers*, *Rank and File* personnel, and *Internal Stakeholders*) and the respondents' perceived existence of organizational politics.

These two findings were unexpected as the literature indicated the results would be contrary to what they were. There is, however, some evidence to suggest the results were not as inconsistent as initially thought.

Respondents may not perceive these groups as political; rather, they may consider these groups advocates for their interests as they represent avenues for direct feedback and input. This comports with the organizational research that suggests that as POP increases, the level of job involvement decreases. Conversely, as job involvement increase, ostensibly, POP should decrease as confirmed in these results (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Ferris , Russ, and Fandt, 1989; Maslyn and Fedor, 1998; Vigoda-Gadot, and Drory, 2006; Witt, 1995; Witt, Patti, and Farmer, 2002).

Conversely, there was only one statistically and one marginally significant (p-value was slightly above the selected $\alpha = 0.05$ at 0.062) positive relationship between institutional politics and external influencer groups (PIP and *Local Elected Officials* and, marginally, *Business Groups*). This result was supported by the institutional politics literature as both groups are

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recognized to be overtly political, so it was not surprising to find respondents' perceived these groups as politically oriented and affecting internal activities.

Influence of Demographics on Perceptions of Bureaucratic Politics. The last set of findings reviewed in this section pertains to how individual and fire department demographic data, excluding rank and organizational level, influence respondents' perceptions of bureaucratic politics. As noted in the previous chapter, demographics seemingly affect POP and marginally do so with respect to PIP. More explicitly, as the population served decreases and level of education increases, there is a corresponding decrease in respondents' perceptions of the existence of organizational politics. Likewise, as the population served increases there is a corresponding decrease in respondents' perceptions of the existence of institutional politics. These are interesting findings as the literature only indirectly supports these relationships.

The results of the statistical analysis, while not as definitive or supportive of some of the hypotheses as desired, did illuminate some interesting findings.

First, there is clearly support for the notion that supervisors at all levels perceive internal and external politics to exist.

Second, respondents perceived that influencer groups affect specific management activities. What is divergent between internal and external groups is that the former seemingly have a positive effect reducing POP, while external groups (specifically politicians and potentially business groups) increase the perceptions of institutional politics.

Finally, there is evidence to suggest demographic characteristics, both individually and organizationally, affect perceptions of one or both variants of bureaucratic politics. One of the more fascinating findings is the linear relationships between demographic characteristic and POP and PIP. Explicitly, as education level increases, POP decreases, and as population served increases, PIP increases. These findings have implications for fire service leaders, which is discussed in more depth in the following section.

Implications

It was anticipated this study would yield relevant information of particular interest and benefit for fire service leaders. While the results were not as definitive as expected, there were findings that have broader implications for both fire service administrators and those in other industries.

Research has consistently demonstrated that individual leaders can positively decrease the presence and limit the impact of politics by promoting a culture of inclusivity, transparency, and tolerance (Brownrigg-Innes, 2004; Barkdoll , 1992). For this reason, it is essential managers develop and support policies that clearly articulate organizational values, expected culture, and desired behavior (Schein, 1993). Additionally, numerous scholars have observed that negative political behavior manifests for a variety of reasons, including but limited to (Burns, 1961; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; DuBrin, 2001 Lowi, 1969; Vigoda, 2003; Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2006)

1. Insufficient resources available for individuals or groups to accomplish their activities that support organizational goals and objectives;

2. Inconsistent or non-transparent decision-making;

3. Unpublished or ambiguous organizational vision, mission, goals, and/or objectives.

Leaders must also distinguish between those behaviors and actions that lead to negative political perceptions versus those that can be useful and productive (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Vigoda-Gadot, and Drory, 2006). Researchers suggest there are a number of actions organizations can take to facilitate a less politically oriented culture:

1. Honestly evaluate the current climate and culture of the organization. An organization's culture consists of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions, which

aid in guiding behavior and establishing the organization's political environment (Schein, 1993).   To mitigate a politically toxic organizational culture, leaders must assess the cultural changes required to transition the organization, develop and implement a strategy, and regularly gauge progress. The following four actions are useful strategies for integrating into the implementation plan.

- Encourage an open, ethical, and supportive environment as the fear of retaliation and ridicule precludes an atmosphere conducive to building trust, collaboration and development of shared values.

- Regularly communicate organizational goals, objectives, and, perhaps most importantly, values. Doing so improves employees' understanding of the organization's values needed to support its overarching vision. Moreover, effective communication allows for easier alignment of workforce efforts with an organization's vision, goals, and objectives.

- Recognize and reward desired performance and behaviors.

- Minimize the type of workplace stress that contributes to psychological and physiological harm.

- Reassess the locus of control for allocating resources and decision-making. Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989) suggested mechanisms that enable more control over resources and decision-making contributes to a more positive culture. O'Connor and Morrison (2001) more bluntly assert control is a significant predictor of political perceptions. Enhancing individual or group control at lower levels of the organization, then, may be an effective tool for

blunting politics' adverse effects or minimizing the development of negative political behavior.

2. The finding that as population increases, there is a resultant increase in PIP is one of the more vexing issues confronting fire service leaders. The scarcity of literature limits practitioners' understanding how best to address the nexus between these two variables. The literature that has the most relevance is in the realm of public policy theory that includes Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, 1993), Deliberative/Participatory Democracy (Dryzek, 2010), Policy Network Theory (Klijn, E.H., Koppenjan, J. and Termeer, K. (1995). Unfortunately, none of these theoretic frameworks assesses, nor do they do explicitly address, the internal perceptions of institutional politics. This makes developing adequate strategies for dealing with their unfavorable effects when servicing a larger population difficult. Thus, it makes future research in this area necessary.

3. Lastly, the finding that as the level of education increases there is a resultant decrease in POP is an important lesson for fire service leaders. Historically, the fire service has been perceived to be a predominately blue collar profession (Antonellis, 2012; Sargent, 2006). In last several decades, however, this view has shifted as the level of training, education, and requisite knowledge, skills and abilities has precipitously risen (Fleming, 2010; Smeby, 2013; Smeby and Smeby , 2005; Waite, 2008). Despite these gains, there is still internal discussion how much college education is necessary to "do the job?" This is a broader debate outside the scope of this paper; nonetheless, the findings from this survey certainly augment a more progressive line of thought about the value of education in the fire service. If these

findings are any indication, education may be another elemental key to reducing or managing the adverse effects of firefighting.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations of this study that merit discussion:

1. While this research randomized for the selection of the sample population, the lack of direct access to the fire supervisor population may have hindered a more robust response rate. It is plausible that having had a narrower focus (e.g., using departments in a confined region or state or sending the survey directly to supervisors within an agency the researcher had direct access to) would have produced more conclusive results.

2. Because this study was limited to a sample population of U.S. fire service supervisors the results should not be generalized to any other public or private sector groups.

3. The researcher's commitment, as outlined in the IRB, to maintain respondent anonymity precluded tracking of individual respondents. This limited the researcher's ability to assess possible biases or follow up with reminders to those who had not taken the survey to help ensure higher response rates.

4. As noted in the *Literature Review* chapter, the concept of institutional politics has not sufficiently evolved as a theoretic paradigm to allow for measuring its perceived existence, much less impact. This has forced the few researchers who have attempted to study individual perceptions of the phenomenon to develop instruments that have not been rigorously validated. Thus, the instrument used for this survey was constructed using criteria the literature indicated would be necessary for accurate measurement. Unfortunately, the results from this survey did not substantiate this assessment and, the instrument constructed, used criteria

narrowly tailored to the industry. Future researchers would be well advised to

adapt this survey to be more generalized and apply it to a broader set of industries,

which could assess its validity for measuring PIP.

5. While the operationalization of management activities allowed for some unique

findings suggesting causal relationships between those activities and POP, the low

response rate does not allow for more generalizable conclusions to be made.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations from this study will prove instructive for future inquiries into

the phenomenon of bureaucratic politics, particularly within the fire service. Specific

recommendations are as follows:

1. There may be a need to utilize an expanded and more refined survey instrument

tailored to the unique organizational attributes of the fire service. If a researcher

studies this population, he or she should take into consideration inclusion of

additional information or revise the survey instrument to include:

   a. Questions to help a researcher gauge respondents' perceptions of how

   politically active specific stakeholder groups are – i.e., do they view their

   respective unions low or highly politically active.

   b. Include additional demographic information:

   • More respondent demographic information such as age, ethnicity, sex,

   years in service, etc.

   • More demographic information of respondents' agencies.

   • Hiring practices to include use of civil service boards or processes.

   • The participant's relationship with the union, if applicable (e.g., former

   union president, member, etc.) or specific political activity (e.g.,

engaging in collective bargaining negotiations, assisting with election

activities for local or state officials or for ballot initiatives).

- The hiring/firing process for the fire chief (e.g., city or county managers, political appointment, civil service, etc.).

   c. Refine the PIP construct so it assesses politics across other industries.

   d. Refine the management construct to include other activities.

2. Consider alternate survey sampling techniques. Since there is no accessible database listing all fire supervisors it required sending the engagement emails to fire chiefs who acted as gatekeepers. Their ability to withhold distribution of the email and link to the survey may have hindered a more robust response rate. Initially the researcher had considered utilizing recognized trade organizations to assist disseminating a request to participate in the survey. Concerns over invalidating the randomized nature of the sample population out-weighed the concerns for low response rates. In retrospect, a follow-on research project would be instructive for validating the results of this project as well as Phillips' (2004) findings.

3. A qualitative follow on study would contribute greater clarity and context to the quantitative studies done to date. More precisely, at the heart of qualitative research is its ability to uncover socially relevant meanings to the events, actions or interactions of life (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). These inquires may inform future quantitative researchers to allow refinement of the survey instrument to reflect information gleaned from the qualitative findings.

4. Integrate more network analysis in future research. As noted in the *Literature Review*, scholars are only recently documenting the importance of an organization's ability to harness or build social capital. The ability to secure both tangible and intangible resources empowers members by using their social networks in manner

that benefits the organization (Portes, 1998; Wilson, 1997). It is evident that political obstacles undermine an organization's ability to build invaluable social capital. Failure to recognize this connection can lead to underutilization or misallocation of human capital (Wilson, 1997). Organizational leaders must, then, enhance the five distinct skill sets required to build social capital: communications, relationship building, group development, networking, and leadership skills (Wilson, 1997). This realization provides strong incentive to integrate the concept into future research.

While there are other recommendations that could be made for improving on this research, they are largely stylistic or minor in nature. The ones noted above, by contrast, are substantive as they would improve the quality and generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

There is an old adage in the fire service that defines the profession as "200 years of tradition unimpeded by progress" (Nollette, Foster Nollette, and Goertzen , 2012, p. 131). No one can say where it originated, but its constant usage paints an uncomplimentary portrait of a profession that cannot, or will not, easily change with the times. While this seems overly simplistic and marginalizes the profession's actual progress, it does leave one to wonder if, in some small way, it has merit. If true, the more relevant question is what is the underlying reason for the persistence of such a fatalistic sense of stagnation? One answer might be the existence and impact of internal and external politics that afflicts the profession, and, more specifically, fire service supervisors. These political forces are more precisely termed bureaucratic politics.

Certainly, understanding how bureaucratic politics affects fire service executives is as important as it is in other industries (Dawson, 1980; Grant and Hoover, 1994). Accordingly, this paper advanced four research questions designed to allow for an increased understanding of the relationship between perceptions of bureaucratic politics and fire service supervisors' opinions that they hinder management functions.

In this era of hyper-politics, it is more than an academic exercise to examine how bureaucratic politics affect policy formulation and implementation. As such, this research project represents the first step in examining this phenomenon in an industry political scientists have largely ignored. If bureaucratic politics do exist within the fire service as the findings suggest, the information gleaned from this research will help scholars and practitioners develop specific strategies to deal with them. In so doing, fire service leaders can minimize their negative influence and enable them to more effectively carrying out their agency's mission. Perhaps, then, with this enhanced insight the tiresome adage used to define today's fire service will one day be nothing more than a relic of the past.

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APPENDIX

Survey Instrument

 <u>Measuring fire officers' perceptions of politics and their impact on managing</u>

Introduction:

Your department was randomly chosen to participate in this survey from 1,708 career departments registered with the United States Fire Administration (USFA) Census.

The purpose of the survey is to gather data that will help measure the extent to which career fire service supervisors, nationally, perceive the existence of internal and external politics. It will also examine the extent to which supervisors perceive these influences to affect specific management activities.

Politics, as used in this survey, are those activities engaged in by individuals or groups that are intended to protect or promote their special interests. These individuals or groups can be inside or outside the department.

The survey is broken into three sections:

• Section I: Perceptions and Impact of Politics
• Section II: Demographic Information
• Section III: Survey Instrument Feedback

The primary benefit of this study is that the findings will give future researchers and practitioners deeper insight into the relationship between internal and external politics and fire service supervisors. In turn, this knowledge will allow fire service leaders to develop the necessary skills to successfully manage these frequently counterproductive forces.

Procedure: Proceeding with this survey implies your consent to participate and that you are affirming that you are a line or staff supervisor within your department holding the rank, or its equivalent, of lieutenant or higher.

Participation is voluntary and if at any point you would like to stop, you may do so at any time.
There are no incorrect responses, and answering the questions requires no special knowledge.
Time Commitment: This survey will take you approximately 25 -35 minutes to complete.

Survey Dates: The survey will be available from February 21 - March 31, 2014.
Contacts: If you have any questions, please contact me or my Student Advisor using the following contact information:

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If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may also contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 116 North Murray Hall, Department of Psychology, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or shelia.kennison@okstate.edu.
Thank-you in advance for your time and consideration.

Q1. In order to proceed with the survey you must be employed with a career fire department as a line or staff supervisor within your department holding the rank, or its equivalent, of lieutenant or higher. Please note, if you hold a staff position that does not have a denoted rank but it is considered a supervisory position comparable to those in ranked positions with respect to pay and/or position within the department (e.g., Human Resources Director, Fleet Manager, etc.) you meet the criteria to proceed with the survey.
Please indicate if you meet the criteria.
- □ Yes
- □ No

Q2. In order to proceed with the survey, please confirm that you have read and agree to the terms of the consent form:
- Confidentiality – No information will be collected that will identify the survey taker, therefore they will remain anonymous throughout the process.
- Data Security – the following measures will be used to ensure confidentiality of the data obtained from the surveys:
  - o Data Storage – all survey data will be stored in two password encrypted protected hard drives on the principal researcher's personal computer located at his home residence.
  - o This computer and the associated hard drives are only accessible to the principal researcher and no one else.
  - o This data will be kept for five years after publication. If no inquiries are made requesting specific information about the data it will be deleted from the hard drives.
  - o The data will be reported as part of the principal researcher's dissertation requirements and an academic journal as an article.
- There are no foreseeable risks to maintaining confidentiality as the completed surveys and all related data will only be accessible to the research author and reported as a summary in the final dissertation paper. The records from this study will be kept private.
- There are no other known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

- □ Yes: I have read and fully understand the information contained in the introduction and consent pages. I proceed with the following survey freely and voluntarily.
- □ No: I have not read and/or do not fully understand the consent information provided.

Section I
Perceptions and Impact of Politics

This section measures the extent to which you perceive the existence of internal and external politics. It also measures your perceptions politics have on your ability to manage your day-to-day responsibilities, make managerial decisions, or institute change. Check the answer that most applies for your organization.

Q3. The following questions measure the extent to which you perceive the existence of internal politics. Check the answer that most applies for your organization

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided /Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
People in my department attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down	1	2	3	4	5
There has always been an influential group in my department that no one ever crosses	1	2	3	4	5
Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas	1	2	3	4	5
There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization	1	2	3	4	5
It is best not to rock the boat in my department	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than fight the system	1	2	3	4	5
Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth	1	2	3	4	5
It is safer to think what you are told than make up your own mind	1	2	3	4	5
Since I have worked in my department, I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically	1	2	3	4	5
I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the	1	2	3	4	5

published policies

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided /Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
None of the raises I have received are consistent with how raises should be determined	1	2	3	4	5
The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined	1	2	3	4	5
When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5
Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political	1	2	3	4	5

Q4. The following questions measure the extent to which you perceive the existence of external politics. Check the answer that most applies for your organization.

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided /Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My department pays attention to or adopts the practices of other fire departments considered "leaders" in the industry	1	2	3	4	5
My department pays attention to or adopts the "best practices" of non-fire organizations (e.g., educational requirements, financial and hiring practices, information technology standards)	1	2	3	4	5
My department adopts the recommendations of fire service associations/organizations the department belongs to (e.g., National *Fire* Protection *Association* [NFPA], Fire Department Safety Officers A*ssociation,* U.S. Fire Administration, International Society of Fire Service Instructors, International *Association* of *Fire* Chiefs [IAFC])	1	2	3	4	5

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided /Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My fire department adopts policies similar to those of other regional or local mutual aid fire departments	1	2	3	4	5
My department adopted national response time benchmarks to be uniform with other regional or local mutual aid fire departments	1	2	3	4	5
My department is subject to periodic review by an outside licensing organization (e.g., state or federal health departments, motor vehicle agencies, Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], Federal Communication Commission [FCC])	1	2	3	4	5
My department is regulated very much or almost completely by government agencies (Civil Service Commissions/Boards, Employee Equal Opportunity Commission [EEOC], State Fire Marshal)	1	2	3	4	5
My department adopted the *National Incident Management System (NIMS)* as our formal incident management system to become eligible for federal or state grant funds	1	2	3	4	5
My fire department adopted *policies* to avoid litigation or meet state or federal requirements	1	2	3	4	5
My department adopted *national response time benchmarks* to avoid litigation or meet state or federal requirements	1	2	3	4	5
Members of my department who have at least a four-year degree (bachelor's, master's, doctorate, or law) are influential change agents within the department	1	2	3	4	5

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided /Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Members of my department who have received industry specific professional credentials (Center for Public Safety Excellence's [CPSE] Chief Fire Officer [CFO], National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer's [EFO] designations) are influential change agents within the department	1	2	3	4	5
Members of my department who are active in regional, state, or national groups (e.g., Urban Area Security Initiative [UASI], training officer, technical rescue, hazmat groups) are influential change agents within the department	1	2	3	4	5
My fire department adopted policies to conform to meet NFPA standards, address recommendations made by an outside consultant/study, or improve an accreditation criterion	1	2	3	4	5
My department adopted response time benchmarks to meet NFPA standards, address recommendations made by an outside consultant/study, or improve an accreditation criterion	1	2	3	4	5

Q5. Please indicate the impact each of these groups has on strategic planning:

	No Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Much Impact	Extreme Impact
Local elected officials	1	2	3	4	5
Union or collective bargaining unit	1	2	3	4	5
Local business groups or organizations (e.g., homeowners, chamber of commerce, realtor, builder associations, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Chief Officers (Battalion Chief or higher)	1	2	3	4	5
Rank and File Operational Personnel (Captain or lower)	1	2	3	4	5
Other **Internal** stakeholder groups excluding groups listed in a-e (support or non-uniformed staff personnel, committees, special workgroups, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

Q6. Please indicate the impact each of these groups has on budget development:

	No Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Much Impact	Extreme Impact
Local elected officials	1	2	3	4	5
Union or collective bargaining unit	1	2	3	4	5
Local business groups or organizations (e.g., homeowners, chamber of commerce, realtor, builder associations, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Chief Officers (Battalion Chief or higher)	1	2	3	4	5
Rank and File Operational Personnel (Captain or lower)	1	2	3	4	5
Other **Internal** stakeholder groups excluding groups listed in a-e (support or non-uniformed staff personnel, committees, special workgroups, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

Q7. Please indicate the impact each of these groups has on personnel actions (e.g., hiring, promotions, demotions, firings):

	No Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Much Impact	Extreme Impact
Local elected officials	1	2	3	4	5
Union or collective bargaining unit	1	2	3	4	5
Local business groups or organizations (e.g., homeowners, chamber of commerce, realtor, builder associations, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Chief Officers (Battalion Chief or higher)	1	2	3	4	5
Rank and File Operational Personnel (Captain or lower)	1	2	3	4	5
Other **Internal** stakeholder groups excluding groups listed in a-e (support or non-uniformed staff personnel, committees, special workgroups, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

Q8. Please indicate the impact each of these groups has on communicating positive or negative images of your department:

	No Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Much Impact	Extreme Impact
Local elected officials	1	2	3	4	5
Union or collective bargaining unit	1	2	3	4	5
Local business groups or organizations (e.g., homeowners, chamber of commerce, realtor, builder associations, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Chief Officers (Battalion Chief or higher)	1	2	3	4	5
Rank and File Operational Personnel (Captain or lower)	1	2	3	4	5
Other **Internal** stakeholder groups excluding groups listed in a-e (support or non-uniformed staff personnel, committees, special workgroups, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

Section II
Demographic Information
This section captures the demographic characteristics of your department. Check the answer that most applies for your organization.

Q9. How is your fire department governed (check the one that most applies)?
_____ City Department
_____ County Department
_____ Special District
_____ Other: Specify _____

Q10. How many full time employees (front line operational and staff) does your department employ?
_____ Fewer than 50
_____ 50 - 99
_____ More than 99

Q11. What is the population density your fire department serves?
_____ 450,000 or more
_____ 300,000 – 449,999
_____ 150,000 – 299,999
_____ 50,000 – 149,999
_____ Less than 50,000

Q12. What is your rank?
_____ Fire Chief
_____ Deputy Chief
_____ Assistant Chief
_____ Division Chief
_____ District Chief
_____ Bureau Chief
_____ Battalion Chief
_____ Captain
_____ Lieutenant
_____ Other: Specify _____

Q13. At what level of the organization is your rank?

_____ Top Level (Fire Chief)

_____ One Level Down from Fire Chief

_____ Two Levels Down from Fire Chief

_____ Three Levels Down from Fire Chief

_____ Four Levels Down from Fire Chief

_____ Five Levels Down from Fire Chief

_____ Six or More Levels Down from Fire Chief

Q14. What is your highest level of education?

_____ High School (8th -12th Grades)

_____ Some College or an Associate's Degree

_____ Undergraduate Degree

_____ Graduate Degree (Masters, PhD, JD)

Section III
Survey Instrument Feedback

This section is designed to solicit your feedback for improving the survey you just took in order for final distribution to the larger sample population. Please be honest in your assessment of the instrument. Your feedback is the only means I have for improving its clarity and utility.

Q15. Was the purpose of the survey clear to you?
- □ Yes
- □ No

why?_____

_____

Q16. Was this subject of interest to you?
- □ Yes
- □ No

why?_____

_____

Q17. Was the length of the survey for the topic:
- □ Too short
- □ Just right
- □ Too long

why?_____

_____

Q18. Were the questions in Section I understandable?
- □ Yes
- □ No

If no, please specify which question(s) and
why?_____

_____

Q19. Were the questions in Section II understandable?
- □ Yes
- □ No

If no, please specify which question(s) and
why?_____

_____

Q20. Additional Comments:

_____

_____

VITA

Steven E. Standridge

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: EXAMINING HOW FIRE SERVICE SUPERVISORS PERCEIVE THE EXISTENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS AND THEIR EFFECT ON MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Major Field: Political Science (Fire Administration)

Biographical:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy/Education in Political Science (Fire Administration) at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2015.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Political Science University of Colorado-Denver, Denver, CO. in 2007.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Management at Regis University, Denver, CO. in 2005.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA in 1992.

Experience:
South Metro Fire Rescue (Special Ops and Emergency Management Chief)
Red Rocks Community College
   Courses: Introduction to the Fire Service (2008)
            Instructional Methodology (2008)

Professional Memberships:

Chief Fire Officer (CFO) – International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) – International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)