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Special Issue: Call for Papers

Politics in organizations: Positive and negative aspects of political behavior

The Guest Editors invited for this issue are:

Dr Ilias Kapoutsis, Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece

Dr Ioannis C. Thanos, Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster University, UK

The premise that politics are ubiquitous, but damaging to most individuals, teams, and organizations, has been the dominant view in the management literature for more than three decades (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009; Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008; Thanos, Dimitratos, & Sapouna, 2016). Such a pejorative view treats politics as a zero-sum game wherein personal interests are pursued at the expense of those of others, resulting in backstage trade-offs, innuendos, and backstabbing. This has led scholars and managers alike to either refrain from or mask their use, or to make a scapegoat of them when unfavorable outcomes emerge. Without neglecting their toxic effects (Child, Elbanna, & Rodrigues, 2010; Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, & Ammeter, 2002; Vigoda, 2001), there are also positive outcomes which have been documented in the literature and are worth further investigation, such as higher productivity, career advancement, higher innovation, and decision making consensus (Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2008; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010; Hochwarter, 2012; Kurchner-Hawkins & Miller, 206; Landells & Albrecht, 2016).

Political behavior refers to “intentional acts from a broad repertoire that may include influence tactics, self-presentation, impression management, voice and helping behavior to manage (create, maintain, modify or abandon) the shared meanings of organizational situations so as to produce desired outcomes that would otherwise be unfeasible” (Kapoutsis, 2016, p. 41). Such a broad definition encompasses both self-serving and benevolent motives in employees'/managers' attempts to achieve personal and/or organizational goals. Such purposive behaviors, which may range from active to passive engagement, create a context within which employees and managers operate to attain their goals. Therefore, politics in organizations can be researched from either a micro- or a macro-perspective (Ferris & Treadway, 2012).

Studies on organizational politics fall into three major streams. The first focuses on how perceptions of politics in the workplace shape personal and organizational outcomes (Ferris & Treadway, 2012). The majority of prior studies have shown that individuals react negatively which may reduce performance, job satisfaction, and commitment, while increasing employee turnover, negligent behavior, absenteeism, and job stress (Chang et al., 2009; Ferris et al., 2002; Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2000). The second examines the

role of actors' political behavior in proactively or reactively influencing these outcomes. Here, research has focused on the nature of political behavior, how it manifests (e.g., Kapoutsis, Papalexandris, Thanos, & Nikolopoulos, 2012; Buchanan, 2008; Zanzi and O'Neill, 2001), and its impact on strategic decision making processes and outcomes (e.g., Elbanna & Child, 2007; Elbanna, Thanos, & Papadakis, 2014; Dean & Sharfman, 1996; Papadakis, Thanos, & Barwise, 2010). Finally, the third stream examines the motives (e.g., political will), skills (e.g., political skill, emotional intelligence), and traits (e.g., personality) that employees need to possess in order to endure demanding political environments (see Kapoutsis, Papalexandris, Treadway, & Bentley, 2016; Chang, Rosen, Siemieniec, & Johnson, 2012; Kapoutsis, Papalexandris, Nikolopoulos, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2011). These can also be added to political behaviors (e.g., influence attempts, impression management, voice, and helping behaviors) to secure favorable outcomes and thriving in the workplace (e.g., Kimura, 2015).

Although scholars have provided some answers to how politics are perceived, enacted, and responsible for damaging effects (with less discussion on their constructive influences), many important questions remain unanswered and warrant substantial theoretical and empirical attention. Examples of such questions include: How perceptions of politics shape managers' political behavior? How differentiated views of organizational politics may affect team or organizational level outcomes? and What personal, cultural, and situational factors determine whether politics will result in positive or negative outcomes? The overarching aim of this special issue is to initiate a constructive debate and enhance our understanding of the positive and negative effects of politics at work, from a theoretical and practical multi-disciplinary standpoint.

1. Topics for this special issue

We particularly welcome theoretical, empirical, and experimental studies on the complexities of political behavior, and fresh insights into their constructive or damaging effects. Specifically, this special issue aims to develop a balanced view of this inextricable and important social process by highlighting outcomes from employees' enactment of political behavior or perception of the political environment. In addition, we welcome papers that

explore new boundary conditions (i.e., moderators) that might regulate political efficiency, as well as mediating mechanisms that might provide new insights on the processes that lead to positive or negative outcomes.

We thus encourage submissions that focus on, but are not limited to:

- Antecedents and correlates of positive and negative politics across management disciplines;
- Multi-level (micro, meso, macro) effects of political behavior at work;
- The role of politics on strategic decision making and strategy implementation;
- Non-linear effects of politics on individual, team, and organizational outcomes;
- Cognitive and affective drivers of political behavior at work;
- Motives, skills, and traits for successful political enactment;
- How perceptions of politics shape employees' political behavior;
- Configurations of effective political behavior;
- Political will and political skill differentiation within teams and their impact on personal and team outcomes;
- Processes to turn politics from negative to positive, and vice versa;
- Political behavior from a leader's and follower's perspective;
- Cross-cultural differences in the motives that drive political action, in the configurations of political behavior, and in the way contextual politics affect outcomes;
- New insights on the constructive and damaging effects of politics.

2. Submissions

Every manuscript submitted to this special issue needs to provide a clear conceptual contribution. All submissions will be subject to the *European Management Journal's* usual double-blind peer-review process, should respect the journal's general publication guidelines and should be submitted electronically to <http://ees.elsevier.com/emj/> between 1st January and 31st March 2017. To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified for consideration for this special issue, it is important that authors select "SI: Politics in organizations" as the paper type. You may direct any questions to the special issue editors: Ilias Kapoutsis (ikapoutsis@aub.gr), Ioannis Thanos (ioannis.thanos@lancaster.ac.uk).

The *European Management Journal* is a generalist, academic journal covering all fields of management. The *EMJ* aims to present the latest thinking and research on major management topics in the form of articles that meet high academic quality standards, while still being accessible to non-specialists. Interdisciplinary research and cross-functional issues are particularly favored. The Journal takes a broad view of business and management and encourages submissions from other disciplines if they contribute significantly to problems considered by managers and researchers.

3. Brief CVs of special issue editors:

Dr Ilias Kapoutsis is a research fellow at the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), Greece. His work on organizational politics focuses on the motivational and cognitive aspects that trigger political action and on the skills required to effectively navigate political settings. He has published in several academic journals including *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *Group Decision and Negotiation*, *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, and *Journal of Management Education*.

Dr Ioannis C. Thanos is Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster University, UK and Associate Editor of the *European Management Journal*. His research focuses on political aspects of Strategic Decision Making and Mergers and Acquisitions. He has published in several academic journals including *British Journal of Management*, *Journal of World Business*, *International Small Business Journal*, *International Business Review*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *Journal of General Management*, *Journal of Strategy and Management*, and in edited volumes and books (e.g., *Handbook of Decision Making*, Wiley; *Handbook of Mergers and Acquisitions*, Oxford University Press; *Advances in M&As*, Emerald). His co-authored paper in the *Journal of Strategy and Management* received the 2015 outstanding paper award from the Emerald Literati Awards for excellence.

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