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RESEARCH REPORT

Fostering Good Citizenship Through Ethical Leadership: Exploring the Moderating Role of Gender and Organizational Politics

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Considering the implications of social exchange theory as a context for social role behavior, we tested relations between ethical leadership and both person- and task-focused organizational citizenship behavior and examined the roles played by employee gender and politics perceptions. Although social exchange theory predicts that ethical leadership is positively associated with citizenship, social role theory predicts that the nature of this relationship may vary on the basis of gender and politics perceptions. Results from data collected from 288 supervisor–subordinate dyads indicate that the pattern of male versus female employees' citizenship associated with ethical leadership depends significantly on their perceptions of politics. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behavior, ethical leadership, social role theory, gender, perceptions of politics

Ethics in leadership has become a focal topic in both the popular media and scholarly outlets (Ciulla, 2004; Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006). Many speculate that the state of the economy is in large part a result of the (un)ethical choices of leaders across a broad spectrum of industries. As a result, there has been a widespread call to focus on ethics in management in business schools, organizations, and society (Ashforth, Gioia, Robinson, & Treviño, 2008). The hope is that if business leaders can be encouraged to act ethically, characteristics of both our markets and our society will be transformed.

In response to this call, we focus on relations between ethical leadership and discretionary employee behavior, or organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). In line with Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), ethical leadership is defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120). Following Organ (1997), OCB is defined as "contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that support task performance" (p. 91). Our focus is on OCB rather than task performance, as OCB is more likely to vary across employees (Morrison, 1994; Organ, 1988) than required work. Further, ethical leadership and OCB are linked conceptually, as OCB may result in an enhancement of the social good (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006) and as such may be seen as reflecting an ethical code of conduct. Despite compelling theoretical arguments for why ethical leadership should relate to OCB (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009), relations between ethical leadership and these behaviors remain a largely unexplored topic in the citizenship domain (Piccolo, Greenbaum, den Hartog, & Folger, 2010).

Thus, in this study, we seek to make at least two contributions. First, we identify and respond to a gap in the literature by focusing on an overlooked leadership variable as it relates to employee citizenship. We hope that by linking ethical leadership and OCB we will not only answer questions about their relationship with one another but also raise awareness of an understudied area and stimulate new research efforts. Second, although OCB is conceptually grounded within social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Organ & Konovsky, 1989), we argue that social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000) may help to clarify the role played by ethical leadership. This theoretical perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of the OCB process and, more particularly, the political situations in which male versus female employees may be most likely to seek to fulfill their social exchange obligations. Thus, this study provides insight into the complex interplay between leadership, individual differences, and perceptions of organizational politics (POP).

To accomplish these goals we tested the conceptual relationships depicted in Figure 1. We focused on relations between ethical leadership and OCB, incorporating the roles played by
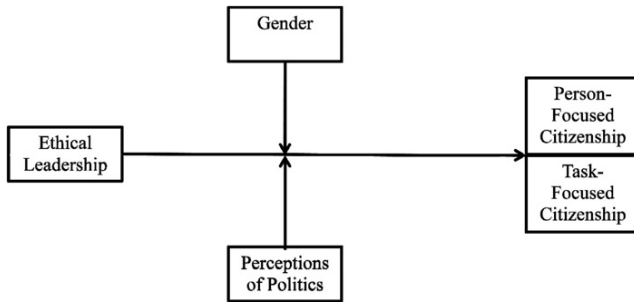
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the relationships between ethical leadership, perceptions of politics, gender, and organizational citizenship behavior.

gender and POP. Employee gender is an individual difference factor that may influence the organizational outcomes employees tend to value most (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Gender also may affect the meaning attributed to OCB by coworkers who observe or benefit from it (Heilman & Chen, 2005; Kidder, 2002). POP are a contextual factor that may influence the transparency of the work environment (Ferris, Frink, Gilmore, & Kacmar, 1994) and, as a consequence, the utility of OCB for achieving gender-specific goals. We develop the case that the pattern of male versus female employee OCB, in response to ethical leadership, is likely to differ depending on politics perceptions. The motivational frames of reference these groups tend to bring to the workplace (i.e., Eagly, 1987; Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001) suggest that POP should influence the extent to which ethical leadership drives employees' citizenship.

Background and Hypotheses

Ethical Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Consistent with traditional conceptual underpinnings in the area, we ground our work in social exchange theory (SET) to help understand relations between ethical leadership and OCB (Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Williams & Anderson, 1991). SET (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) holds that social exchanges entail feelings of obligation and that when parties provide benefits to one another, there is an expectation of valued future returns (Gouldner, 1960). Applied to organizations, supervisors may provide benefits to employees that contribute to the tension to satisfy these obligations via demonstration of OCB (Organ et al., 2006; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). OCB, in turn, may be enacted with the expectation that it will lead to valued future personal (Bolino, 1999; Hui, Lam, & Law, 2000), interpersonal (Blatt, 2008; Bowler & Brass, 2006; Grant, 2008), or organizational (Rioux & Penner, 2001) outcomes. Thus, in essence, SET suggests that a reciprocal feedback loop of prosocial behaviors may develop between supervisors and subordinates.

Ethical leadership is tied to perceptions of the degree to which leaders behave ethically (Brown et al., 2005). Ethical leaders differentiate themselves through their honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness (Brown & Treviño, 2006). They tend to be balanced decision makers who consider the ethical consequences of their

actions, provide employees with consistent expectations, and follow through with organization-constrained, normatively appropriate behavior (Brown et al., 2005). Ethical leadership stands in contrast with leadership that fails to meet these high standards of fairness and transparency. Given this leadership profile, SET suggests that the behaviors and characteristics exemplified in ethical leadership are likely to engender feelings of indebtedness to which employees may respond through the demonstration of OCB. Consistent with the implications of SET and empirical evidence pointing to the key role played by leadership in predicting OCB (P. M. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000), we posit the following:

Hypothesis 1: Ethical leadership will be positively associated with employee OCB.

However, we argue below that relations between ethical leadership and OCB are likely to be impacted by employees' gender and their perceptions of politics.

Role of Gender and Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Gender.   Social role theory (e.g., Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2000) holds that gender differences emerge as a consequence of two related processes: social learning and societal power relations (House, 1981). Gender-appropriate behaviors are socially modeled, learned, and reinforced through society's power and status structures (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Geis, 1993; Kidder, 2002; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1992). Through this process, people internalize defined gender roles and tend to see the world and behave in ways that conform to the societal expectations associated with these roles (Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001; Maccoby, 1990). On the basis of established gender roles, women and men also tend to respond to social information in different yet predictable ways. Over time, these processes generally lead either to *communal* (e.g., nurturing and socially oriented) or *agentic* (e.g., competitive and achievement oriented) behavior patterns (Eagly, 1987). Although not all men are driven by agentic goals, and not all women are driven by communal goals, in aggregate terms, communal patterns tend to emerge principally among women, whereas agentic patterns tend to emerge principally among men.

Through communal patterns, women are more likely than men to define themselves in terms of their close relationships and to engage in interpersonal and cooperative behaviors that support those relationships (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997; Kidder, 2002). Women tend to build connections that provide them with social support and contribute to feelings of belongingness. From this perspective, personal affiliation is seen as an end in itself (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Conversely, men are more likely than women to act according to agentic patterns of behavior that enhance personal status (Cross & Madson, 1997). As we argue below, when men enact OCB, they may do so, at least in part, in an effort to achieve increased status in their careers (Eagly & Koenig, 2006; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Gardner & Gabriel, 2004). In contrast, when women demonstrate OCB, they may do so in part to enhance their ties with coworkers. From this perspective, OCB may be viewed as both a mechanism to alleviate social

exchange tensions as well as a means to achieve gender-specific goals of affiliation or status.

As we considered the implications of social role theory within the social exchange framework, we concluded that the social contexts (Johns, 2006) within which women and men were most likely to achieve gender-specific goals were likely to be different. Although OCB may create ties and feelings of cohesiveness between coworkers (Bowler & Brass, 2006; Kidwell, Mossholder, & Bennett, 1997) and also contribute to personal status (Hui et al., 2000; N. P. Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009), the conditions for achieving these ancillary goals are likely to depend, to a significant degree, on the relative transparency of the working environment within which they are demonstrated.

POP. POP (Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2003) may influence the relative clarity of the working environment and provide the final focus of our study. POP reflect employees' perceptions that coworkers' behaviors are motivated by self-interest, with little attention paid to others' well-being (Kacmar & Baron, 1999). At one end of the spectrum, a political environment may provide sufficient turbulence for employees with agentic goals to use OCB to stand out from coworkers (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993). These employees (Bolino, 1999; Eastman, 1994; Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, & Judge, 1995; Hui et al., 2000) may see a charged political environment as an opportunity to achieve the material outcomes they seek.

For example, power and status typically flow to those who provide, but do not seek, help from others (Anderson & Williams, 1996; Krackhardt, 1990; Lee, 1997). In environments perceived to be highly political, agentically driven employees who help coworkers with work-related and personal problems (i.e., Settoon & Mossholder, 2002) may be seen as more knowledgeable and valuable to the organization. At the other end of the spectrum, the turbulence endemic to environments perceived as political also potentially casts in doubt the behaviors of employees driven by communal goals (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004). Employees' attempts to leverage the positive relational consequences of OCB (Bowler & Brass, 2006; Kidwell et al., 1997) are likely to be undermined in environments perceived as being characterized by self-serving motives. Conversely, less politically charged environments, although potentially supportive of the development of close social ties, make the gaming environment necessary to gain status at the expense of coworkers potentially less fertile (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989).

The Three-Way Effects of Ethical Leadership, Gender, and POP

Female employees and POP. In political work environments it is difficult to build and sustain trusting, interpersonal relationships with coworkers. Although OCB may reduce social exchange tensions, attempts at personal affiliation through its use are unlikely to be successful, as the underlying motives driving it are unclear (Tepper et al., 2004). An environment perceived as politically charged, wherein affiliative ties are relatively unlikely to be developed through OCB, should diminish female employees' drive to demonstrate this behavior. Thus, under high POP, female employees should demonstrate fewer OCBs in response to ethical leadership.

On the other hand, we expect that relatively transparent working environments are more likely to facilitate female employees' efforts at affiliation through the use of OCB, which is more likely to be interpreted generously by coworkers. In the absence of the clouding effects of organizational politics, female employees may both alleviate social exchange tensions and achieve affiliative goals through citizenship. Thus, at lower levels of POP, we expect a strong positive relationship between ethical leadership and OCB among female employees.

Male employees and POP. In contrast, men's general tendency to adopt an agentic perspective is likely to lead to an opposite pattern in response to ethical leadership. Social role theory suggests that male employees are likely to be more focused on achieving enhanced status rather than close personal ties. In political environments, where there is a great deal of workplace gamesmanship, male employees may see OCB as a mechanism for standing apart from coworkers to whom they provide help. In political contexts, therefore, male employees may view OCB both as a mechanism to relieve the inherent tensions of their social exchange obligations and also as a means to achieve the enhanced personal status they seek (Yun, Takeuchi, & Liu, 2007). Thus, POP should strengthen relations between ethical leadership and OCB among male workers.

Finally, however, at low levels of politics, male employees may be less apt to respond to ethical leadership with a display of citizenship. In this relatively transparent environment, there is less to be gained personally by engaging in OCB, because performance appraisals are likely to be a relatively transparent process with fewer opportunities to achieve status at coworkers' expense. Because male workers are likely to expect less personal gain through citizenship (Bergeron, 2007), this should weaken relations between ethical leadership and OCB when POP are low. Thus, we propose the following three-way interaction between ethical leadership, gender, and POP:

> *Hypothesis 2:* POP and gender will moderate relations between ethical leadership and OCB such that (a) for female employees the relationship will be strong and positive under low POP and weakened under high POP, (b) whereas for male employees the relationship will be strong and positive under high POP and weakened under low POP.

Method

Sample

The sample was composed of full-time state government employees in the United States whose jobs focused on environmental (e.g., red tide and coastline erosion) and health issues (e.g., food stamps and teen pregnancy). Their jobs required them to complete some work individually but also to interact extensively with coworkers and supervisors on an ongoing basis. We also sought data from each employee's immediate supervisor and received responses from 81 (83%) of 98 supervisors, who averaged 47.3 years of age and 13.2 years of organizational tenure, were 46% ($n = 37$) male and 54% ($n = 44$) female, and were 75% ($n = 60$) Caucasian. Deleting cases with missing/unmatched data resulted in a total of 288 (74% response rate) dyadic cases used in our analyses. The subordinate sample averaged 45.8 years of age, with 10.5 years of organizational tenure, was 39% ($n = 113$) male and 61% ($n = 175$) female, and was 56% ($n = 161$) Caucasian.

Procedure

Approximately one week prior to data collection, the agency director sent an e-mail to all employees introducing the study and requesting their participation, followed by a personalized e-mail from the researchers. In the second e-mail we explained the study goals, described employees' rights as participants as per agency and university institutional review board guidelines, and provided a survey hyperlink. Survey responses were requested within a 3-week window. On site, respondents' immediate supervisors were asked to rate their direct reports' OCB. These ratings were made on a matrix survey that allowed supervisors to read an item once and then rate each subordinate on that item. On average, supervisors rated 3.6 subordinates (range: 1 to 10).

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all items were measured on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). To measure person-focused citizenship behavior, supervisors responded to Settoon and Mossholder's (2002) eight-item scale ($\alpha = .91$). A sample item is "This employee makes an extra effort to understand coworkers' problems." To measure task-focused citizenship behavior, supervisors responded to Settoon and Mossholder's five-item measure ($\alpha = .94$). A sample item is "This employee helps coworkers who are running behind in their work activities." We measured employees' perceptions of ethical leadership with Brown et al.'s (2005) Ethical Leadership Scale. The scale consists of 10 items ($\alpha = .94$). A sample item is "My supervisor has the best interests of employees in mind." Employee gender was self-reported, with female coded as 1 and male as 2. We measured employees' POP using Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewe, and Johnson's (2003) six-item scale ($\alpha = .94$). A sample item is "At this workplace, people do what's best for them, not what's best for the organization."

Control variables. Tenure, a correlate of OCB (Morrison, 1994), may contribute to employees' feelings of obligation to demonstrate this behavior and thus impact supervisory ratings of its incidence. On the basis of theory and prior research (Harris, Kacmar, & Carlson, 2006; Morrison, 1994; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002), we controlled for three forms of tenure: organizational, job, and supervisor. Each was self-reported by the subordinate.

Data Analyses

We used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2004) to test our hypotheses. Because supervisors provided OCB ratings of multiple subordinates, there is a possibility of dependency in responses that would violate independence assumptions of ordinary least squares regression. HLM permitted us to model supervisor rating effects while testing the hypotheses by treating the intercepts as random rather than fixed effects. Our HLM analyses were composed of multiple steps using grand-mean centered variables. In Step 1 we entered the control variables. In Step 2 the independent variables, which were all individual or Level 1 predictors, were entered. In Step 3 we entered the two-way interactions. In the final step we entered the three-way interaction. This series of analyses was conducted twice, once for each dependent variable.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 1. As expected, POP and ethical leadership were correlated, as were the two OCB variables, but at a lower level than reported by Settoon and Mossholder (2002). To explore the discriminant validity of our key variables, we followed Fornell and Larcker's (1981) procedure and calculated the square root of the average variance explained for all study variables. For discriminant validity, this value (presented on the diagonal in Table 1) must exceed the corresponding variable correlations in the same row and column. This condition, met for all study variables, constitutes evidence that the shared variance between any two study constructs is less than the variance explained by the scale items capturing variance in a construct.

Prior to testing our hypotheses, we ran null model equations to determine the degree of nonindependence in our dependent variables. This test, which is equivalent to a one-way analysis of variance of supervisory effects on citizenship behavior ratings, was significant for both forms of OCB (task-focused OCB, $\chi^2[82, N = 288] = 345.65$, $p < .001$; person-focused OCB, $\chi^2[82, N = 288] = 508.00$, $p < .001$), indicating the presence of systematic between-supervisor variance in citizenship ratings and supporting our decision to use HLM.

Our HLM results are shown in Table 2. Model 1 provides the results for our control variables, where no variance was explained

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Perceptions of organizational politics	2.46	0.89	(.86)							
2. Ethical leadership	3.95	0.74	$-.41^{**}$	(.79)						
3. Subordinate gender	1.39	0.49	$-.04$	.03	—					
4. Job tenure	5.51	2.89	$-.04$	.10	$.21^{**}$	—				
5. Organizational tenure	10.55	5.35	$-.04$	.08	$.17^{**}$	$.47^{**}$	—			
6. Tenure with supervisor	5.36	2.53	$-.03$	.09	.10	$.59^{**}$	$.39^{**}$	—		
7. Task-focused citizenship behavior	4.02	0.75	$-.09$	$.27^{**}$	$-.01$	.05	.04	.08	(.87)	
8. Person-focused citizenship behavior	4.00	0.62	$-.06$	$.24^{**}$	$-.03$	$-.02$	.05	.04	$.66^{**}$	(.75)

Note. $N = 288$. Values in parentheses on the diagonal are the square root of the average variance explained, which must be larger than all zero-order correlations in the row and column in which they appear to demonstrate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).
$^{**} p < .01$.

Table 2
HLM Results for Hypotheses

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Task-focused organizational citizenship behavior				
Controls				
Organizational tenure	−.000	−.000	.000	.000
Job tenure	−.012	−.012	−.011	−.013
Tenure with supervisor	.015	.011	.011	.012
Main effects				
Perceptions of politics (A)		−.006	−.068	−.085
Ethical leadership (B)		.170**	.321	.495*
Gender (C)		−.121	−.129	−.043
Two-way interactions				
A × B			−.009	−.414**
A × C			.046	.056
B × C			−.097	−.218*
Three-way interaction				
A × B × C				.297***
ΔR^2	.00	.03	.00	.04
Total R^2				.07
Person-focused organizational citizenship behavior				
Controls				
Organizational tenure	.003	.003	.004	.004
Job tenure	−.013	−.012	−.012	−.013
Tenure with supervisor	.013	.011	.011	.012
Main effects				
Perceptions of politics (A)		.016	.058	.051
Ethical leadership (B)		.096**	.209*	.291*
Gender (C)		−.108	−.110*	−.070
Two-way interactions				
A × B			.003	−.189*
A × C			−.033	−.029
B × C			−.081	−.138
Three-way interaction				
A × B × C				.140*
ΔR^2	.00	.03	.00	.02
Total R^2				.05

Note. $N = 288$. Pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula. HLM = hierarchical linear modeling.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

for either form of OCB. In Model 2 we added the main effects of our independent and moderating variables, which explained an additional 3% of the variance in both task- and person-focused OCB. Model 3 includes the two-way interactions formed by crossing the three main effects. No additional variance was explained for either form of OCB in this step. Finally, Model 4 includes the three-way interaction we proposed, which explained an additional 4% of the variance in task- and an additional 2% in person-focused OCB. The main effect results for ethical leadership for both forms of OCB found in Model 4 provide support for Hypothesis 1; as ethical leadership increased, so did employees' citizenship behaviors.

In order to confirm that the form of the three-way interaction matched our predictions, in Figure 2 we plotted the significant three-way interactions, split by gender and then split at 1 *SD* above and 1 *SD* below the mean for ethical leadership (Stone & Hollenbeck, 1989). As predicted for female employees, the relationship between ethical leadership and OCB was positive when POP were low (task-focused OCB, $t = 3.89$, $p < .000$; person-focused OCB, $t = 3.77$, $p < .000$). In contrast, for male employees this relationship was positive when POP were high (task-focused OCB, $t =$

3.31, $p < .001$; person-focused OCB, $t = 2.41$, $p = .017$). For women, when POP were high, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and both forms of OCB remained, but the strength of this relationship was weaker (task-focused OCB, $t = 3.32$, $p < .001$; person-focused OCB, $t = 3.48$, $p < .001$). Finally, for men, when POP were low, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and both forms of OCB disappeared (task-focused OCB, $t = −0.49$, $p = .624$; person-focused OCB, $t = −0.08$, $p < .935$), providing support for Hypothesis 2.

Discussion

Building social role theory into the SET framework that generally informs the citizenship area, we developed and tested a model predicting that male and female employees are likely to respond to ethical leadership differently, depending on their perceptions of politics. Our results provide general support for the prediction that, although both men and women may be driven by social exchange tensions to repay ethical leadership with OCB (Hypothesis 1), ancillary gender-normed goals may temper the strength of these relationships depending on political perceptions (Hypothesis 2).
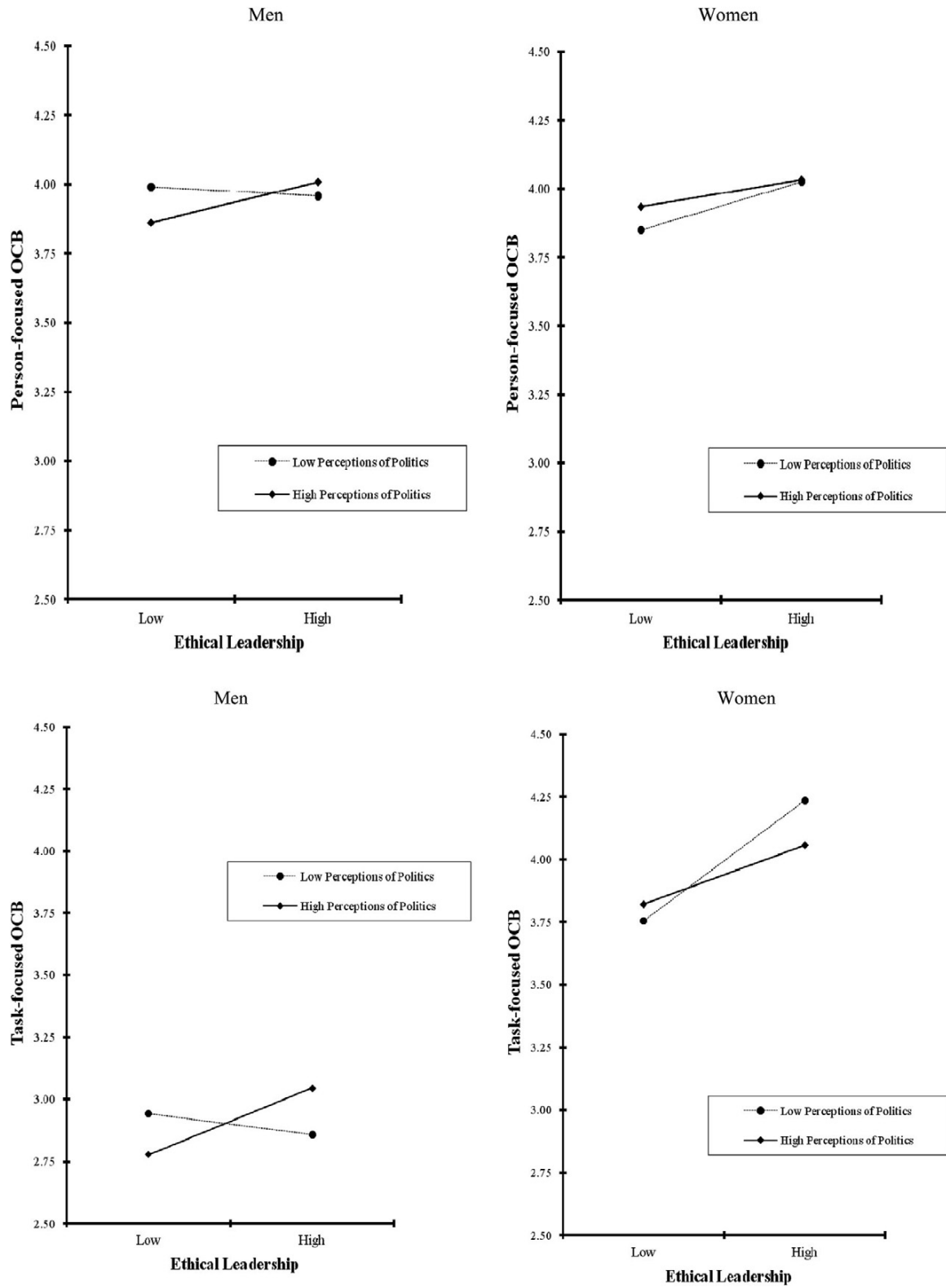
Figure 2. Three-way interactions for perceptions of politics, ethical leadership, and gender on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Specifically, among male employees, although relations between ethical leadership and OCB are positive when POP are high, this relationship disappears when POP are low. In contrast, for female employees, there is a strong positive relationship between ethical leadership and OCB when POP are low, which decreases in strength when POP are high.

As we noted above, although relations between OCB and leadership variables such as abusive supervision (Zellars et al., 2002), leader–member exchange (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), transformational leadership (P. M. Podsakoff et al., 2000), and self-sacrificial leadership (De Cremer, Mayer, van Dijke, Bardes, & Schouten, 2009) have seen attention in the literature, ethical leadership represents an overlooked variable in the citizenship domain (Piccolo et al., 2010). The main effect we observed between ethical leadership and citizenship provides evidence that this dimension of leadership may be an important variable to consider in future studies exploring the leadership role in the citizenship context. However, our principal goal was to test arguments incorporating the roles played by employee gender and POP as pertains to the impact of ethical leadership.

Our results help to build and integrate theory in the areas of social exchange and social roles. The main effect of ethical leadership we observed provides support for the social exchange model wherein feelings of tension to reciprocate positive treatment drive employees' OCB. Beyond the main effects of ethical leadership, consistent with the moderating role played by POP in the current study, previous research also has suggested main effects of leadership may depend on employees' climate perceptions (Hofmann, Gerras, & Morgeson, 2003). That is, employees may be more likely to reciprocate leadership-driven social exchange obligations with behaviors that are consistent with their climate perceptions, but the tension to reciprocate may dissipate under dissonant climate perceptions.

The integration of social role theory into an SET framework provides a conceptual mechanism to help predict within what kinds of working contexts the SET tension model may be most likely to adhere among different employee subgroups. In conditions characterized by high POP, the relative opacity of the operating environment may facilitate the goals of employees seeking to achieve agentic outcomes and, as a consequence, serve to amplify the positive relationship between ethical leadership and OCB among these employees. In contrast, among employees pursuing more communal goals, conditions characterized by low POP, wherein relative operational transparency may facilitate a generous interpretation of citizenship (Tepper et al., 2004), may strengthen relations between ethical leadership and OCB. Embedding social role theory here enables us to develop a more nuanced sense of how perceptions of the work environment impact the social exchange model and its context-constrained behavioral consequences.

Our findings offer several theoretical implications. Perhaps most importantly, these results exemplify the utility of integrating multiple theoretical lenses when teasing apart the relations between citizenship behavior and its conceptual drivers. For example, although we failed to uncover subdimensional differences in the pattern of male versus female employees' OCB across different political conditions, Heilman's work (Heilman & Haynes, 2005; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Lyness & Heilman, 2006) generally has suggested that

employees may be differentially advantaged through the demonstration of normatively masculine versus feminine work behaviors, including citizenship (Heilman & Chen, 2005). That is, male employees may be expected to achieve greater work-related outcomes through the demonstration of "masculine" behaviors such as task-focused OCBs, whereas female employees may be expected to garner greater rewards through the demonstration of "feminine" behaviors such as person-focused OCBs. Thus, in addition to politics perceptions playing a role in the degree to which ancillary gendered goals may be achievable through OCB (as per our model), the political context also may impact how otherwise "gendered" behaviors are perceived. It will be important for future research to determine whether the political contexts within which OCBs are demonstrated impacts the degree to which gender-normed behaviors differentially benefit male versus female employees.

Further, our focus on POP as a contextual moderator of relations between ethical leadership and citizenship behavior immediately begs the question of the relative ethicality of male and female employees within the social exchange framework. A surface-level reading of our results suggests that men may have stronger political motives for demonstrating OCB than do women (Bolino, 1999). However, before drawing this conclusion it is important to consider what our situational variable actually measures. The POP scale captures perceptions of the process through which decisions are made and resources are allocated. Political behavior per se may never have actually been witnessed but is attributed to decisions in the workplace (Ferris et al., 1989; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993). Thus, our measure taps the operational transparency of the working environment, which potentially bears on the utility of OCB for achieving ancillary, gender-normed goals.

Specifically, because we uncovered significant, positive relationships between ethical leadership and OCB among both female and male employees, it follows that both subgroups appear to experience social exchange tensions in response to ethical leadership. Thus, it is important to consider the implications of social role theory in this context. Men generally seek to achieve agentic goals, which may be easier to achieve through OCB when the context provides the opportunity. In contrast, women typically seek to achieve communal goals, which may be easier to achieve given particular operational conditions. However, despite these differences, both subgroups responded to ethical leadership. There is ongoing debate regarding whether OCB motives "matter" and whether OCB performed with a self-serving motivation is by definition political behavior rather than OCB (Bolino, 1999; Organ et al., 2006). We speculate that both men and women have ulterior motives in the performance of OCB (in addition to the motive of easing social exchange tensions)—for women, to support relationship development, and for men, to support career development.

Implications for Practice

Our results suggest that if managers are interested in maximizing employees' OCB, they must recognize that there are likely to be predictable differences in employee subgroup responses to their leadership tactics and that employees' political perceptions are likely to play a key role in the degree to which ethical leadership tactics will influence male versus female employees' citizenship. For male employees, the optimal environment for achieving agen-

tic goals appears to be one in which POP are high. We conjecture that this finding reflects male employees' sense that it may be more "worth it" to engage in OCBs if those behaviors are likely to get noticed and earn kudos. Thus, in environments characterized by low levels of POP it will be essential for ethical leaders to go to great lengths to convince male employees that their OCBs are important and will be noticed (i.e., N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2009). To that end, reinforcing desired citizenship behaviors with recognition or rewards becomes an effective citizenship-management tool (Rubin, Bommer, & Bachrach, 2010).

In stark contrast, to engender OCB from female employees, it seems that leaders need to behave in a consistently ethical manner. Leaders' actions may tend to override strong political perceptions among female employees. Though it sounds simple, this advice is of course much more difficult to put into practice. Managers must have the capacity for ongoing, honest self-reflection and self-regulation, have a clear view of themselves, and have a strong vision of the culture they want to create in their workgroup. They must behave with consistency and hold themselves to a high ethical standard. In short, ethical leaders seeking to inspire female employees to engage in OCB must be ethically driven, committed leaders, guided by their deepest values rather than by circumstance.

Limitations and Strengths

The above discussion should be interpreted in light of the design limitations of the current study. First, our cross-sectional data do not allow us to eliminate alternative explanations for our observed relationships or to draw definitive causal inferences. For example, it is possible that POP influenced ratings of ethical leadership or that ethical leadership influenced POP. Further, it also is possible that supervisors' ratings of OCB were influenced by the political climate environment in which they were collected. Because we did not capture supervisors' POP, we are unable to determine whether OCB variance was subject to the influence of politics. In order to establish whether these issues played a role in our analysis, future research should incorporate longitudinal or experimental designs.

Second, all of our respondents worked for a state government. There is evidence that expectations differ regarding the way managers in the public versus private sector should perform their jobs. Thus, it is unclear whether these results are generalizable to the private sector. Future research exploring gender differences and the role of politics perceptions in the private sector is needed to determine the degree of generalizability of our findings.

Further, although within our social role theory framework we made the argument that the pattern of results we report is driven by employees' agentic versus communal focus, we did not collect data that allow us to substantiate this assumption. We used gender as a proxy, with the explicit assumption that male workers tend, in the main, to adopt an agentic perspective with regard to the utility of their OCB, while female workers in contrast tend to adopt a more communal perspective. Although these expectations are supported by a great deal of both conceptual and empirical research in the area, our measure remains a proxy. A final limitation of our design and analysis is that we examined only two outcome variables—person- and task-focused citizenship behavior—and two moderators of the relationship between ethical leadership and these outcomes—gender and POP. A natural extension of this

research would be an exploration of a broader range of outcomes associated with ethical leadership.

However, these limitations may be somewhat mitigated by the strengths of our study. The antecedents in our model, which included ethical leadership (i.e., P. M. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990), gender (Kidder, 2002), and POP (Bolino, 1999), were conceptually grounded in the citizenship domain and chosen on the basis of theory. Our focus on ethical leadership to explain the incidence of citizenship behavior adds to a growing body of literature seeking to more fully understand the citizenship process in the leadership domain (Ilies et al., 2007; Piccolo et al., 2010). Second, we were able to achieve significant results for our theoretically grounded test of the three-way interaction between ethical leadership, gender, and POP on two different outcomes. These findings are all the more noteworthy when considering the difficulty of finding a significant three-way interaction (Duffy, Ganster, & Shaw, 1998). Finally, our use of a matched sample of supervisors and employees, who worked together on a daily basis, allows us to have some confidence in our measures of citizenship. In conclusion, the results we report, that ethical leadership is a predictor of employee citizenship and that the nature of this relationship depends significantly on employees' gender and POP, shed light on the timely issue of the consequences of ethical leadership in the workplace.

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