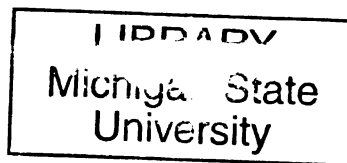




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**THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL AND RELATIONAL
FACTORS ON SUPERVISOR EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS**

presented by

Eric B. Meiners

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctoral degree in Communication

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Donald J. Foster", written over a horizontal line.

Major Professor's Signature

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Date

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**THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL AND RELATIONAL FACTORS ON
SUPERVISOR EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS**

By

Eric B. Meiners

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL AND RELATIONAL FACTORS ON SUPERVISOR EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS

By

Eric B. Meiners

Through the process of negotiation, organizational members and supervisors often seek to alter or establish role boundaries and modify work tasks and processes. Although such negotiation activity plays a vital part in the ongoing coordination of behavior in organizations, little research has addressed its inherent communicative dimensions. In attempt to shed light on these issues, the current study addresses supervisor/subordinate role negotiation through the framework of integrative negotiation. Integrative negotiation, featuring directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions is essential in affording supervisors and subordinates the opportunity to achieve greater clarity, exchange information, and modify positions to maximize their joint outcomes, all aspects critical in optimizing available knowledge to make informed decisions.

This study's sample consisted of 105 workers (80 employees and 25 supervisors) employed with the Urban County Government of a mid-sized southeastern U.S. city. Using a variation on the Critical Incident Technique, employees were asked to recall a specific interaction with their supervisor in which changes in job expectations were discussed. Employees responded to items measuring the integrative dimensions of this conversation, in addition to items assessing leader-member exchange (LMX). Divisional supervisors were asked to complete items measuring formal structure: dimensions of centralization (PDM and Hierarchy of authority) and formalization (Job Codification, Job Specification and Rule Observation).

Both structural and relational factors were found significantly associated with the dimensions of integrative negotiation. Supervisors' ratings of rule observation were negatively associated with employees' reported levels of elaboration and mutual concessions during their negotiation. Employees' ratings of LMX were positively associated with mutual concessions. A supplemental analysis of the data revealed that mutual concessions was positively related with employee reports of increases in job satisfaction, increases in supervisor satisfaction, and increases in job effectiveness. The implications of these findings are discussed in addition to the strengths and weaknesses. Future directions for research are presented as well.

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INTRODUCTION

Although the term “role” has been used in a number of ways across (and within) literatures, a role can generally be defined as “The recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome” (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 189). In performing their roles, individuals offer up semi-scripted performances guided by social norms, rules, and demands of their respective audiences (Goffman, 1959; Biddle & Thomas, 1966). The set of persons prescribing standards for how roles are to be performed and evaluated is often referred to as the role set, and the sum collection of behaviors comprising a role is typically ascribed on the basis of status or position (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Merton, 1957; Roos & Starke, 1981; Sarbin & Allen, 1968; Turner, 1956).

Although it has been applied in a number of settings (Biddle & Thomas, 1966), role theory is prominent in organizational research. Traditional models of bureaucratic organization typically posit that stable predictable role enactment is the key to the ongoing coordination of work activity (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Roos & Starke, 1981). The very nature of role activity in the modern organization has come into question, however, as scholars have recently suggested that trends such as globalization, advancing technology, and the decline of unionization necessitate more dynamic organizational forms, based more on flexible, innovative role behavior than static work routines (Bridges, 1994; Kahn & Kram, 1994; Miller, Joseph, & Apker, 2000; Parker, 1998; Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997; Rousseau, 2001). It has further been argued that, as proactive role orientations become increasingly important in organizational life and role

boundaries become more malleable and ambiguous, workers must often take a more active part in constructing day-to-day arrangements to coordinate their ongoing role behavior (Barley, 1990; Fine, 1984; Strauss, 1978).

The communication activity undertaken by organizational members as they articulate the boundaries and expectations for each member's role has most frequently been described as a process of *negotiation* (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Brett, 1984; Jablin, 2001). In negotiating their roles, members might seek to alter the expectations accompanying their work routines in a number of ways, including co-opting additional tasks, phasing out less desirable task elements, or modifying existing procedures and routines (Brett, 1984; Bunce & West, 1996; Farr & Ford, 1990; Munton & West, 1995; West & Farr, 1990).

Extended insights into the ways organizational members negotiate their role boundaries are important for a number of reasons. First, effective negotiation often allows workers to revise misspecified or inefficiently designed tasks and procedures, improving overall work effectiveness and helping the organization better adapt to its external environment (Staw & Boettger, 1990). Role negotiation might also provide members a better fit between their work activity and their own abilities, aptitudes, and preferences (Jablin, 2001; Jablin & Krone, 1987; Roos & Starke, 1981; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The successful resolution of such issues may help workers assimilate to organizational demands (Jablin, 2001; Rousseau, 2001; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), cope with work related stress (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964), and assert personal control over the working environment (Brett, 1984; Bunce & West, 1996; Farr & Ford, 1990).

Although role theory enjoys a rich and diverse history (Biddle & Thomas, 1966), the breadth of communicative activity involved in organizational role negotiation remains largely unexplored (Jablin, 2001). Nevertheless, this paper argues that the consideration of communication issues is *vital* to understanding how organization members develop their work roles. Role development and maintenance is, by definition, a communicative process enmeshed within interconnected subsystems of the organization and shaped by a number of contingencies within the work environment (Jablin, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). This research seeks to shed insight into the process of work-unit negotiation, both by addressing the key communicative dimensions comprising this process, and by proposing conceptual linkages between the organizational context and the communicative activity undertaken by members as they negotiate their roles.

I will first present the assumptions and boundary conditions for the proposed study. In the following sections, I will review literature discussing the importance of communication and negotiation to individual work role development. I will also review research in the traditional negotiation paradigm, and, drawing from work in integrative negotiation (Pruitt, 1981; Walton & McKersie, 1965), I propose three communicative dimensions of role negotiation: directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions. In the remainder of this paper, I will discuss both the formal (configurational) and informal (coactivational) views of organizational structure and derive hypotheses predicting relationships between these aspects of structure and the communicative dimensions of organizational role negotiation.

Assumptions and Boundary Conditions

This research is guided by several assumptions and boundary conditions. First, it is assumed that members *can* negotiate elements of their work role. Although success in negotiating role elements may vary as a function of skill, motivation level, or experience, it is assumed that people within a wide variety of organizational forms and job assignments can (and will) seek to negotiate role elements. Although personality factors such as extraversion, verbosity, need for achievement, or desire for control are all assumed to affect the likelihood of role negotiation (Ashford & Black, 1996; Black & Ashford, 1995), these factors are beyond the scope of this paper.

Second, this study is limited to verbal interactions involving alterations to recurrent work behaviors. The discussions of interest might involve the addition or modification of tasks, responsibilities, processes, or technologies. Also of interest are discussions involving role reduction, or the elimination of tasks deemed superfluous or unnecessary. Changes to a work role initiated without any related verbal interaction are outside the domain of this study, as are trivial or dysfunctional role modifications such as deviance, tardiness, absenteeism, or a general reduction in effort. Also beyond the scope of this paper are negotiations involving outright role transitions such as leaving the organization or transferring to another department.

Third, this study is limited to negotiations initiated by subordinates with immediate supervisors. Although it is recognized that members may negotiate role expectations with peers or subordinates, research on role development places particular emphasis on interaction between members and supervisors (i.e., Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Jablin &

Krone, 1987). The managerial dyad has long been recognized as the basic unit of instruction and report in the organization (Farace, Monge, & Russell, 1977; Jablin, 1979), as supervisors not only supply information, but can provide legitimacy for role modifications and assist coordinating changes with others in the role set.

Finally, while the impact of culture on negotiation process has spurred a formidable stream of research (Adair, 2003; Brett, 2000; Drake, 2001), the hypotheses regarding communication processes tested in this study apply to negotiations between parties in low-context, western organizations.

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNICATION AND ROLE DEVELOPMENT

The importance of communication processes to the development of work roles is a prominent theme in organizational research (Apker, 2001; Jablin, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Investigations in role development suggest that upon newcomers' entry into the organization, members of the role-set communicate, through both formal and informal channels, expectations about the privileges, duties, and obligations accompanying the newcomers' position (Kahn et al., 1964; Sarbin & Allen, 1968; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Interpreting this set of messages as a "received role," focal members engage in role-taking as they anticipate the expectations of others and enact their roles accordingly (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Turner, 1956). Role senders monitor incumbents' role activity and provide revised cues expressing acceptance or rejection of their role performance (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

In addition to prescribed task elements, organizational roles are said to include an "area of option in which the occupant can exercise choice with respect to activities, methods, and styles" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 219), and members often work to craft work role elements (Jablin & Krone, 1987; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). During this period of adjustment to the new position, organizational newcomers often work to establish a range of latitude within which they will modify aspects of their role (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Jablin & Krone, 1987; Nicholson, 1984; Schein, 1971). This two-way process whereby role incumbents and role senders attempt to clarify the boundaries for the incumbents' roles is referred to as "role-making" (Graen, 1976; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

The supervisor/subordinate dyad is a key arena in which work expectations are coordinated (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen, 1976; Jablin, 2001). The very nature of the supervisor-employee dyad necessitates the periodic negotiation and resolution of workplace issues (Lax & Sebenius, 1986). Employees often rely upon supervisors' support and facilitation of work to help reduce role ambiguity or conflict (Bedeian, Armenakis, & Curran, 1981), and those perceiving their supervisors as open and receptive to feedback are more likely to voice ideas and suggest role innovations (Axtell, Holman, Unsworth, Wall, & Waterson, 2000; Janssen, de Vries, and Cozijnsen, 1998; Saunders, Sheppard, Knight, & Roth, 1992). Likewise, supervisors depend on subordinates for resources, information, unique skills, and leverage in dealing with third parties as well (Farace, Monge, & Russell, 1977; Kotter, 1985). As the mutual dependence between managers and employees increases, so does the potential for conflicting values, preferences, and priorities, which must often be resolved through negotiation.

Researchers suggests that, although they are often limited in formal authority, employees in organizations have a number of tactics at their disposal as they attempt to influence those higher in the organization's hierarchy (e.g., Deluga & Perry, 1991, Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Among the tactics presented in these studies most similar to negotiation are *exchange*, the promise of benefits in return for compliance with the subordinate's goal, and *rational persuasion*, obtaining support through logical arguments and factual evidence (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Such research is notable in its recognition of subordinates' ability to influence and negotiate with supervisors. This

research, however, paints a fairly simplistic picture of the process, addressing negotiation as a singular type of influence tactic, and failing to consider that numerous types of negotiations between organization members are not only possible, but likely as well (Strauss, 1978).

Other research, focusing more directly on role-making activity, also addresses supervisor/employee negotiation. Extending earlier models of role-making (i.e., Katz et al., 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978), Graen and Scandura (1987) present a model of dyadic organizing, describing how supervisors and subordinates negotiate the boundaries of the subordinate's role through a series of interactions, or role episodes. In this model, supervisors initiate the role-making cycle, offering select subordinates the chance to engage in non-routine tasks in exchange for resources such as attention, information, influence, higher status tasks, latitude, and support. The cycle continues as "the member receives this proposal...decides on an appropriate counter offer, and sends this offer to the superior" (Graen & Scandura, 1987; p. 181). Although Graen and Scandura frame dyadic organizing as negotiating, this model pays little attention to the actual communication activity between supervisors and subordinates as they coordinate role activity. The authors instead suggest that role-making is "seldom explicitly discussed by the superior and member" and that "over time, a set of understandings governing appropriate transactions is developed" (p. 181-182). Hence, in this model the term negotiation is used rather loosely to describe the incremental working out of agreements between supervisor and subordinate as they enact their work duties.

In sum, although the term "negotiation" is frequently used in describing interaction (both role-related and otherwise) between managers and employees, little

insight to date has been revealed as to the communicative dimensions comprising these negotiations. Researchers have typically addressed supervisory negotiation either as a tactic of upward influence (e.g., Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980) or have de-emphasized its communicative nature altogether (e.g., Graen & Scandura, 1987). The current research differs from these approaches by assuming a communication-centered perspective to supervisory negotiation. This approach considers work-unit negotiation more than merely the use of upward influence tactics or incremental development of understandings, but rather a complex communicative interaction through which both manager and subordinate seek to reconcile conflicting work related goals (Jablin, 2001). As will be illustrated in this paper, this perspective on role negotiation focuses attention to the manner in which supervisors and subordinates exchange messages, the depth of information they reveal, and the degree of mutual influence exhibited as they coordinate task behavior.

To begin explicating the key communicative dimensions of role negotiation, it is useful to consider some of the ways negotiation has been conceptualized in its traditional research paradigm. The following section first presents a brief review of negotiation research and introduces a model of integrative negotiation (Pruitt, 1981; Walton & McKersie, 1965). This model is particularly relevant to organizational role negotiation, as integrative negotiation processes are said to help negotiators maximize joint outcomes, bring about mutually agreeable resolutions, and foster trust and attraction between parties (Pruitt, 1981). The outcomes and agreements derived from integrative processes are also valuable in that they are less prone to be refuted at a later time, and are expected to facilitate collaborative problem-solving in subsequent negotiations (Pruitt, 1981).

Drawing from research in integrative negotiation, the following section presents three key communicative dimensions of role negotiation: direct language between parties, the elaboration of plans and ideas, and the exchange of mutual concessions.

Communication and Negotiation

Negotiation can be defined broadly as a “form of decision-making in which two or more parties talk with one another in an effort to resolve their opposing interests” (Pruitt, 1981, p. xi.). Parties engaged in negotiation typically share some degree of interdependence, and voluntarily interact to settle an issue, coordinate behavior, or distribute a specific resource (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992; Neale & Northcraft, 1991; Putnam & Jones, 1982; Rubin and Brown, 1975). Early research in negotiation was grounded in game theory, and assumed bargainers behaved rationally, adhered to a set of rules, and had perfect knowledge of alternatives and the values associated with them (Bazerman, Curhan, Moore, & Valley, 2000; Putnam, 1985). Often confined to laboratory settings, researchers in this genre typically manipulated incentives or communication restrictions, and assessed the timeliness with which negotiators could resolve such well-defined scenarios as the Prisoner’s Dilemma, or the Acme-Bolt Trucking game (Putnam, 1985; Rubin & Brown, 1975).

Although game theory and laboratory settings have been valuable in advancing negotiation and bargaining theory (Rubin & Brown, 1975), a number of limitations exist in applying this research to organizational negotiations. For one, the economic game theory underlying this research tradition limits the alternatives and choices that would typically be available to negotiators in naturalistic settings (Putnam, 1985). The highly controlled laboratory setting employed in traditional negotiation research offers little

information as to how structural contingencies within organizations can actually shift the number and nature of issues subject to negotiation (Putnam, 1985). Moreover, in relying on subjects with little or no history of interaction, traditional negotiation research often fails to recreate how the underlying relationship between negotiators can shift patterns of communication as they seek to resolve issues (Bazerman et al., 2000).

Subsequent research in negotiation eased its reliance on rational models of human behavior and focused more on the process of negotiation conducted under natural circumstances (Bazerman et al., 2000; Putnam, 1985; Putnam & Poole, 1987). One such prominent framework of negotiation distinguishes *distributive* and *integrative* forms of bargaining and decision making (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Pruitt, 1981; Rubin & Brown, 1975). Distributive negotiation is “the process by which each party attempts to maximize its own share in the context of fixed-sum payoffs” (Walton & McKersie, 1965, p. 13). In a more distributive type of negotiation, power exists as a fixed quantity, and the limited availability of power fosters a competitive, win-lose orientation in which participants pursue their goals at the expense of the other (Pruitt, 1981; Raiffa, 1982; Walton & McKersie, 1965).

Although power imbalances between negotiators can foster distributive forms of decision making, parties with a more balanced power relationship are less apt to anticipate that competitive tactics will prove effective, and more likely to pursue collaborative problem-solving (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981). Integrative negotiation can be defined as “the process by which the parties attempt to increase the size of the joint gain without respect to the division of the payoffs” (Walton & McKersie, 1965, p. 13). The integrative model assumes a variable-sum approach to power, and recognizes that

negotiators can often exercise mutual influence as they seek to resolve issues and allocate resources (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Pruitt, 1981). Those in more integrative negotiations generally approach conflict less as a win-lose situation, and more an opportunity to search for mutually beneficial alternatives¹ (Bartos, 1995).

Research in distributive and integrative negotiation consistently points to three communicative dimensions differentiating these forms of negotiation: directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions (Folger & Poole, 1984; Pruitt, 1981; Walton & McKersie, 1965). More distributive negotiations are likely to be lower on each of these dimensions, as parties seek to maximize their own gains, often through the use of indirectness, strategy, equivocation, or pressure tactics (Pruitt, 1981). Conversely, as negotiations become more integrative, they are likely higher on each of these dimensions, as negotiators spend greater effort to maximize their joint outcomes. Negotiations high on these dimensions provide parties the opportunity to achieve greater clarity, exchange greater amounts of information, and modify their positions in response to information provided by the other. These dimensions can be elaborated as follows.

Directness. A direct speech act is defined as an utterance whose intended function is overtly reflected in its content (Riley, 1993). On the other hand, the intent of an indirect speech act is not reflected in its content, and requires the receiver to draw inferences to discern the sender's intended meaning (Riley, 1993). Kellermann and Park (2001) suggest that directness reflects efficiency, or "a concern for behavioral expediency" in achieving one's goals in an interaction (p. 4). Efficient conversational tactics are "immediate, and to the point," whereas inefficient tactics are "roundabout, indirect, and...consuming time, energy and effort" (Kellermann & Park, 2001, p. 4).

Employees with high levels of trust in their supervisors should be more comfortable using direct language, both in situations involving relational maintenance, (Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007; Waldron, 1991) and in situations involving dissent (Kassing, 2000). In negotiation contexts, direct language is likely to foster integrative outcomes by allowing a more precise definition of both the salient issues comprising the negotiation and the relative weight each party assigns to these issues (Walton & McKersie, 1965). In a more distributive type of negotiation, parties more likely use hints, hedges, and disclaimers to extract information from their opponent while obfuscating their own preferences (Olekalns, & Smith, 2003; Pruitt, 1981).

Elaboration. Elaboration refers to the degree to which participants offer specific plans, ideas, rationales, and suggestions for how an issue should be resolved. Negotiation researchers have often emphasized the exchange of information as a key component of integrative negotiation (Butler, 1999; Chandler & Judge, 1998; Fisher & Ury, 1981; Fulmer & Barry, 2004; Kemp & Smith, 1994; Murnighan, Babcock, Thompson, & Pillutla, 1999; Olekalns, & Smith, 2003; Thompson & DeHarpport, 1994). By exchanging key information, parties become better able to define the problem, explore various options, and weigh the consequences, as well as locate areas for potential trade-offs and compromise. In more distributive negotiations, participants might withhold information in attempts to gain a strategic advantage over an opponent (Murnighan et al., 1999; Putnam & Jones, 1982).

Mutual concessions. One of the defining characteristics of negotiation is that it usually involves the exchange of concessions and counter-offers between parties (Putnam & Jones, 1982). Pruitt defines a concession simply as a “change of offer in the supposed

direction of the other party's interests that reduces the level of benefit sought" (1981, p. 19). Accordingly, mutual concessions are present in a negotiation to the extent that both parties to some extent concede, yield, adjust, or modify their respective positions in response to information provided by the other.

Negotiation researchers frequently point to the exchange of mutual concessions as a cornerstone to integrative negotiation (Langner & Winter, 2001; Moran & Ritov, 2002; Roloff & Jordan, 1991; Weingart, Hyder, & Prietula, 1996). Mutual concessions are most likely to foster an integrative agreement when applied to a number of alternate issues, rather than a single issue over which compromise would yield a suboptimal outcome (Walton & McKersie, 1965). By exchanging mutual concessions parties demonstrate a cooperative orientation and that they are willing to work toward an equitable resolution, which is expected to foster a supportive climate for interaction (Folger & Poole, 1984; Rubin & Brown, 1975). In more distributive negotiations, parties are prone to attempt to elicit unilateral concessions from their opponent, often through the use of threats, ultimatums, or time pressure (Pruitt, 1981).

Integrative Potential and Role Negotiation

Although the benefits of integrative processes are apparent, negotiation theorists suggest that not all situations are equally conducive to negotiating an integrative agreement. In other words, negotiations differ in terms of integrative potential. One critical determinant of integrative potential is the number of issues subject to concurrent consideration by the parties involved (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Pruitt, 1981; Rubin & Brown, 1975). With multiple issues on the table, negotiators become able to assign relative weight to each issue, and make trade-offs based on their respective value. Doing

so allows parties to seek high payoffs on issues they view as most important and grant concessions on issues their opponent considers more important (Pruitt, 1981; Rubin & Brown, 1975). In situations with higher integrative potential, negotiators have the opportunity to choose cooperative avenues of problem solving, and work toward mutually satisfactory resolutions (Pruitt, 1981). When few issues are available for consideration, cooperation becomes less likely and parties are more prone to compete over limited resources (Pruitt, 1981).

The principles of integrative potential in negotiation hold interesting implications when applied to supervisor/subordinate negotiations. Members negotiating role boundaries with managers essentially bargain over the set of tasks and activities comprising their work routines² (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Therefore, the breadth of activities within a given work role subject to negotiation should affect the likelihood of integrative role negotiation. Lower integrative potential results when few role elements are subject to negotiation. In these situations managers and subordinates can be imagined to assume more traditional sender-receiver role relationships, with managers acting as directive role senders and subordinates acting as passive role receivers (Roos & Starke, 1981). Subordinates lacking the opportunity to engage in open negotiation of the expectations regarding their routines may choose to enact role modification through more furtive means and avoid negotiations of role preferences with supervisors altogether. A wider array of task elements available for negotiation, however, results in higher integrative potential. Members and supervisors have greater opportunity to go beyond the conventional sender-receiver role relationship and engage in more bilateral discussions of role preferences. With high integrative potential, supervisors and members will be better

able to align their positions in a cooperative manner, directly expressing suggestions, elaborating ideas, and offering mutual concessions regarding role performance.

The negotiated order perspective holds that the social fabric of the organization itself is not static and unchanging, but rather is constantly revised through the ongoing negotiation and construction of arrangements among members (Day & Day, 1977; Fine, 1984; Maines, 1977; Strauss, 1978). A critical point in this perspective is that formal rules and structures in the organization do not determine individual behavior as much as they provide constraint and context as members reconfigure patterns of behavior with others in the work environment (Barley, 1990; Conway, 1988; Corbin & Strauss, 1993; Fine, 1984). As Strauss (1978) suggests, the structural properties of the social system not only serve as backdrop to negotiation activity, but are also likely to enter “very directly as conditions into the *course* of the negotiation itself” (p. 99, original emphasis).

The tasks performed as part of a members’ work role do not take place in isolation, but are instead situated within an array of structural constraints within the organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978). It follows that the role-making process, and its inherent negotiation activity is also embedded within a host of structural factors within the organization (Roos & Starke, 1981), and that these factors should affect the integrative potential of any given negotiation. The following sections describe two perspectives on organizational structure: the configurational view and the coactivational view (Dow, 1988). Although these perspectives are based on contrasting metaphors of organizations (Morgan, 1986), both have implications for the integrative potential of supervisor-subordinate negotiations. The following section addresses the configurational

view of structure and describes two of its essential indices: centralization and formalization.

Formal Organizational Structure and Integrative Negotiation

The configurational view of organizational structure emphasizes formal structural mechanisms, prescribed by organizational authorities to allow for the coordination and control of work activity (Dow, 1988; McPhee, 1985; Pugh, Hickson, Hinings, & Turner, 1968). In the classic bureaucratic model organizational authorities formally specify and differentiate work roles so that members follow predictable patterns of performance, consistent with organizational goals and objectives (Miner, 1982). This approach views structure as a relatively enduring pattern of role relations sustained by formalized communication between members, flowing through official channels as depicted in the organization's hierarchical chart (Monge & Eisenberg, 1987). Such formal structures mandate the set of people with whom the role incumbent should interact, suitable topics for interaction, and the procedural requirements for their communicative interactions (Monge & Eisenberg, 1987). Two indices of formal structure, centralization and formalization, are likely to help determine the integrative potential involved in supervisor/subordinate role negotiation and in doing so, affect levels of directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions.

Centralization. Centralization refers to "how power is distributed among social positions" (Hage & Aiken, 1967, p. 77). Hage and Aiken describe two specific dimensions of centralization: participation in decision making (PDM) and hierarchy of authority. Participation in decision making is the degree to which "occupants of various positions participate in decisions about the allocation of resources and the determination

of organization policies” (p. 77). Hierarchy of authority refers to the degree to which subordinates must defer to supervisors for decisions involving their own work. Role activity in highly centralized organizations is likely maintained through routines, programs, and schedules (Hage et al., 1971; March & Simon, 1958), with less reliance upon the open communication of information to achieve coordination (March & Simon, 1958). In less centralized organizations, power is more evenly distributed throughout hierarchical levels, and the more frequent communication of new information is required to coordinate role activity (Hage et al., 1971).

Harrison (1985) suggests communication between managers and workers becomes more important in decentralized work units as the dyad works to achieve “shared understandings regarding the appropriateness of subordinate influence and the channels by which that influence will be exercised” (1985, p. 97). In her study, members perceiving their work units as more participative reported more frequent interaction and greater exchange of information with supervisors. Members in participative work units also reported engaging in less distortion and withholding of information when dealing with managers. Similarly, Krone (1992, 1994) found that employees perceiving higher levels of participation in decision making and greater autonomy reported they were more likely to attempt to influence their supervisor and to anticipate that these influence attempts would be successful.

Given these findings, the centralization of a work unit can be imagined to have an impact upon the communicative dimensions of supervisory negotiation. As members in highly centralized organizations are likely to experience more programmed roles, they should have fewer task elements subject to negotiation and lower integrative potential.

Those anticipating less opportunity to influence their supervisor through negotiation are apt to choose more indirect routes to affect role change (Krone, 1992). Employees in centralized work units should thus be less direct in the negotiation of role elements. Those in more participative units should anticipate greater opportunity to negotiate specific task elements and should be more forthcoming when doing so.

H1a: Holding other factors constant, work-unit PDM will be positively associated with members' reported directness during supervisory negotiation.

H1b: Holding other factors constant, work-unit hierarchy of authority will be negatively associated with members' reported directness during supervisory role negotiation.

Workers in centralized units are likely to have fewer elements over which they can elaborate during negotiation with their supervisor. Those in more participative work units, requiring more intensive feedback to coordinate role activities, should be more apt to elaborate role preferences during negotiation.

H2a: Holding other factors constant, work-unit PDM will be positively associated with members' reported elaboration during supervisory negotiation.

H2b: Holding other factors constant, work-unit hierarchy of authority will be negatively associated with members' reported elaboration during supervisory role negotiation.

With fewer issues available to negotiate, members in centralized units should also have fewer opportunities to elicit concessions from supervisors. In decentralized units supervisors and members are likely to find more areas for mutual concessions and trade-offs.

- H3a: Holding other factors constant, work-unit PDM will be positively associated with members' reported mutual concessions during supervisory negotiation.
- H3b: Holding other factors constant, work-unit hierarchy of authority will be negatively associated with members' reported mutual concessions during supervisory negotiation.

Formalization. A second index of organizational structure likely to have an impact upon role negotiation is formalization. Jablin defines formalization as “the degree to which the behaviors and requirements of jobs are explicit...codified into policies, rules, regulations, customs, and so forth” (1987, p. 404). The degree of formalization in an organization reflects the extent to which detailed rules and regulations define role expectations, authority relations, and expected flows of communication (Hage & Aiken, 1969; Pugh et al., 1968). Aiken and Hage (1966, 1968) conceptualize formalization along three separate dimensions: job codification (the presence of written rules for job descriptions), job specificity (the extent to which procedures are detailed for employees), and rule observation (the extent to which employees are monitored for rule violations).

Like centralization, formalization is a critical aspect of the organization structure, and a likely influence on members' communication activity (Hage & Aiken, 1967; Jablin, 1987). In a study involving 16 social welfare organizations Hage, Aiken, and Marrett (1971) report that job codification was negatively associated with the frequency of unscheduled interactions as well as the frequency of participation on organizational committees. Job specificity was also negatively associated with attendance at departmental meetings.

Formalization practices also have implications for communication patterns between supervisors and subordinates. Supervisors in more formalized work groups

possess greater legitimate authority to see that rules and procedures are followed (Atwater, 1995). Supervisors' increased legitimate authority should foster the use of more directive role sending messages, and make for fewer negotiable elements in subordinates' work roles. Workers in these settings are likely to choose more indirect tactics to alter their work routines and avoid supervisory sanction or disapproval. Those less bound by rules and procedures, however, are expected to have less fear of posing a challenge to well-established and explicit standards of work and be more direct in negotiating their roles.

H4a: Holding other factors constant, job codification will be negatively associated with members' reported directness during supervisory negotiation.

H4b: Holding other factors constant, job specificity will be negatively associated with members' reported directness during supervisory negotiation.

H4c: Holding other factors constant, rule observation will be negatively associated with members' reported directness during supervisory negotiation.

Because supervisors in formal units have greater opportunity to defer to formal rules to justify decisions regarding role enactment, they should be less likely to engage in elaboration during role negotiation. Members in formalized work units should also resist divulging a great deal of explicit information to supervisors. In less formalized settings, with fewer explicit rules, managers are more prone to engage in elaborated discussions with members during role negotiation. Likewise, subordinates are expected to anticipate less resistance to role change based on explicit rules and be more comfortable elaborating their preferences.

- H5a: Holding other factors constant, job codification will be negatively associated with members' reported elaboration during supervisory negotiation.
- H5b: Holding other factors constant, job specificity will be negatively associated with members' reported elaboration during supervisory negotiation.
- H5c: Holding other factors constant, rule observation will be negatively associated with members' reported elaboration during supervisory negotiation.

With the greater power distance between supervisors and subordinates in formalized settings (Atwater, 1995), there should be less opportunity for the exchange of mutual concessions. In less formal organizations the power distance in the managerial dyad should not be as pronounced, and members and supervisors are prone to be more comfortable exchanging concessions.

- H6a: Holding other factors constant, job codification will be negatively associated with members' reported mutual concessions during supervisory negotiation.
- H6b: Holding other factors constant, job specificity will be negatively associated with members' reported mutual concessions during supervisory negotiation.
- H6c: Holding other factors constant, rule observation will be negatively associated with members' reported mutual concessions during supervisory negotiation.

Informal Organizational Structure and Integrative Negotiation

Although formal structures within the organization can facilitate or inhibit integrative forms of decision making, they are not the sole determinants of communicative behavior. The coactivational view of structure recognizes that linkages in organizations are not based solely on formal positions, but the personal goals, needs, and

relationships between members as well (Dow, 1988; McPhee, 1985; Monge & Eisenberg, 1987). Negotiation researchers have also recognized that the interpersonal orientation between parties can have a large impact on how they go about settling issues and distributing resources (Gelfand, Major, Raver, Nishii, & O'Brien, 2006; Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995; Kramer, Pommerenke, & Newton, 1993). Negotiators with more pro-social motives and cohesive relationships generally tend toward more relationship-enhancing integrative processes emphasizing shared goals over distributive process emphasizing competing goals (Olekalns & Smith, 2003; Pavitt & Kemp, 1999).

Accordingly, the emergent interpersonal relationships between members and supervisors should be another important factor in the integrative potential of their negotiations. The most prominent theory describing the effect of interpersonal dynamics on role coordination is that of leader-member exchange (LMX).

Leader-member exchange. Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) suggests that supervisors do not initiate identical relationships with all members within their sub-unit, but rather form different types of ties based on various levels of exchange (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen, 1976). Higher LMX subordinates (the supervisor's in-group) engage supervisors in more social exchanges, based on mutual trust and anticipation of fair treatment over the long term. Low LMX members (the supervisor's out-group) maintain more transactional exchanges with supervisors, in which participation in structured tasks is traded for minimal levels of support (Graen & Scandura, 1987). In-group members are said to experience greater latitude in negotiating and personalizing their work roles, whereas out-group members have less negotiation

latitude and are more likely to be given routine work assignments (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen, 1976; Liden & Graen, 1980).

Research in leader-member exchange demonstrates different communication patterns between supervisors and their in-group and out-group members. In situations involving upward influence, dissent, or relational maintenance, in-group members have been shown to engage in more open and direct communication, and provide supervisors more information, whereas out-group members have been shown to favor strategic self-presentation, self-censoring, and distortion (Kassing, 2000; Krone, 1992; Lee & Jablin, 1995; Waldron 1991; Waldron, Hunt & Dsilva, 1993). In addition, in-group members have been demonstrated to be less likely to engage in such abrasive tactics as assertiveness, coalition, and appeal to higher authorities when dealing with supervisors, and less likely to employ formal bargaining as an upward influence tactic (Deluga & Perry, 1991).

In a conversational analysis involving supervisors with high, middle, and low LMX followers, Fairhurst and colleagues (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Fairhurst, Rogers, & Sarr, 1987) reported that the interactions of high LMX dyads involved more mutual persuasion and reciprocal influence than the middle or lower LMX dyads. The supervisor in this study was also shown to impose direct authority over middle and lower LMX members more often than with high LMX members. Fairhurst (1993) reported that high LMX dyads engaged in more aligning behaviors, in which power differences were minimized, as well as non-routine problem solving, support, and coaching. Low LMX dyads were found more likely to engage in polarizing types of communication as well as performance monitoring and competitive conflict.

As an emergent form of organizational structure, LMX holds implications for the manner in which supervisors and subordinates negotiate role expectations. A high LMX dyad, by definition, is likely to have a wider range of role activities subject to modification and development (Graen & Scandura, 1987). With greater integrative potential, coupled with the greater interpersonal familiarity inherent in a high LMX relationship, in-group members and supervisors should be more candid and direct in their discussion of role elements.

H7: Holding other factors constant, LMX will be positively associated with members' reported directness during supervisory negotiation.

High LMX dyads are more likely to invoke a wider range of topics in their daily interactions and should be more comfortable elaborating role preferences and exchanging alternates, plans, and rationales. The narrower range of communication topics in lower LMX dyads likely lowers the probability of the full elaboration of role preferences.

H8: Holding other factors constant, LMX will be positively associated with members' reported elaboration during supervisory negotiation.

Given the pattern of mutual influence and reciprocity within high LMX dyads, in-group members should also be more likely to offer concessions to, and elicit concessions from, supervisors in negotiating their roles. Less effectual out-group members are unlikely to elicit as many concessions or compromises from a supervisor when negotiating role elements.

- H9: Holding other factors constant, LMX will be positively associated with members' reported mutual concessions during supervisory negotiation.

The Interaction of Formal and Informal Structural Factors

The previous sections have proposed two types of structural influences on the communicative dimensions of role negotiation: formal and informal. Although these perspectives on organizational structure emerge from separate traditions, communication scholars have called for their integration (Monge & Eisenberg, 1987; Rapert & Wren, 1998). Rapert and Wren suggest both that “prescribed frameworks stand in a superficial relationship to the daily interactions in an organization,” while, at the same time, “understanding emergent structural processes would be incomplete without examination of the structural frameworks that evoke or constrain the communication” (1998, p. 288). Scholars of structuration theory also suggest that formal rules and structures are reproduced and granted legitimacy through their impact on informal routines, and emergent patterns of interaction can become institutionalized and, over time, affect formal organizational structures (McPhee, 1985).

Accordingly, the relational exchanges and interpersonal sentiments between managers and subordinates do not exist independently of the organization's formal frameworks. Rather, communication linkages between supervisors and subordinates are situated within the workflow of the organizational system (Lee, 1997; Sias & Jablin, 1995). Formal and informal structures should thus exert a non-additive effect on the communicative dimensions of role negotiation, and the impact of each type of structure may be contingent upon the other.

Centralization and LMX. Earlier it was proposed that members in highly centralized work units experience lower integrative potential in their work roles, and are less apt to engage in integrative role negotiation. Supervisors, however, often have discretion over how closely they adhere to such prescribed patterns of behavior. For this reason the relational dynamics between supervisors and members of their work units could act to override structural constraints. High LMX relationships often afford subordinates autonomy over their work routine that would otherwise not occur. Even in centralized work units, supervisors and in-group members may be more likely to voice their ideas directly, elaborate preferences, and engage in mutual concessions. Out-group members in centralized work units might have a doubly difficult time initiating integrative role negotiation, having little official autonomy, coupled with little interpersonal leverage to enact role change and modify task elements.

In less centralized settings, however, in-group and out-group members alike should experience greater integrative potential in their role negotiations, independent of their personal relationships with supervisors. As members rely less upon their supervisory relationship to gain negotiating leverage, the effect of LMX on the communicative dimensions of role negotiation will be diminished. Thus, the effect of leader-member exchange on directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions during role negotiation should be strongest under conditions of high centralization.

H10a-b: LMX and the dimensions of centralization will interact, such that the regression slopes of LMX on directness under high and low conditions of centralization will both be positive, but the slope of LMX under high centralization will be greater than the slope of LMX under low centralization.

H11a-b: LMX and the dimensions of centralization will interact, such that the regression slopes of LMX on elaboration under high and low conditions of centralization will both be positive, but the slope of LMX under high centralization will be greater than the slope of LMX under low centralization.

H12a-b: LMX and the dimensions of centralization will interact, such that the regression slopes of LMX on mutual concessions under high and low conditions of centralization will both be positive, but the slope of LMX under high centralization will be greater than the slope of LMX under low centralization.

Formalization and LMX. As with centralization the relational dynamics between the member and supervisor are expected to allow members to bypass formalized rules and procedures in configuring their roles. Under high formalization in-group members should experience latitude negotiating and modifying work activities that would typically not occur. In formal work units high LMX relationships are particularly likely to give in-group members an advantage over their out-group counterparts, who lack both the structural and interpersonal conditions conducive to integrative role negotiation.

In less formal settings, however, fewer prescribed rules, routines, and procedures constrain employees' role negotiation activities. In these contexts members should experience greater integrative potential, regardless of their supervisory relationship. Therefore, in informal settings, members may not rely as heavily upon their supervisory relationship for leverage, and the impact of leader-member exchange on the communicative dimensions of role negotiation might be diminished.

H13a-c: LMX and the dimensions of formalization will interact, such that the regression slopes of LMX on directness under high and low conditions of formalization will both be positive, but the slope of LMX under high formalization will be greater than the slope of LMX under low formalization.

H14a-c: LMX and the dimensions of formalization will interact, such that the regression slopes of LMX on elaboration under high and low conditions of formalization will both be positive, but the slope of LMX under high formalization will be greater than the slope of LMX under low formalization.

H15a-c: LMX and the dimensions of formalization will interact, such that the regression slopes of LMX on mutual concessions under high and low conditions of formalization will both be positive, but the slope of LMX under high formalization will be greater than the slope of LMX under low formalization.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Research Site

Data for the current study were collected from individuals employed with a city government located in the southeastern United States. The city has a population of approximately 270,000 and is the second largest city in its state. In 1959, the governmental and corporate functions of the city merged with those of its surrounding county, creating a single Urban County Government replacing the respective governments of both city and county. The Urban County Government employs over 3000 authorized positions, and has an annual expenditure of approximately 529 million dollars (Personal contact, City Director of Budgeting, Sept 30, 2008).

This study was coordinated through the Urban County Government Chief Administrative Officer, who serves as the senior advisor to the Mayor. Among the powers and duties of the C.A.O. are the supervision of each of the city's executive departments, including the departments of: Environmental Quality, Finance, General Services, Law, Public Safety, Public Works, and Social Services. These departments are further divided into a total of over 30 divisions, each presided over by a Division Director.

Participants

Five hundred full time employees in non-supervisory positions were randomly selected from a roster of city wide employees. A packet containing a cover letter, consent form, survey instrument, and return envelope was mailed to each employee at her or his work address. Eighty-nine surveys were returned for an initial response rate of 18%. Nine

of the initial respondents either did not fill out the survey completely or reported that they had no relevant supervisory conversations to report. These respondents were subsequently removed from the analysis. Respondents from a total of 25 city divisions ($n = 80$) returned usable surveys (see Appendix 1). The divisions most often represented in the sample are Parks and Recreation ($n = 11$), Building Maintenance ($n = 7$) and Air & Water Quality ($n = 7$).

This sample can be described as 55% male ($n = 44$) with an average age of 46.84 years ($SD = 10.53$ years). Participants reported an average organizational tenure of 7.55 years ($SD = 6.60$ years), an average job title tenure of 4.88 years ($SD = 4.52$ years), and an average dyadic tenure with their target supervisor of 3.59 years ($SD = 3.98$ years).

To more precisely summarize the current sample, respondents' work positions were categorized as either predominantly blue-collar (i.e., non-office work, hourly wage, involving physical labor) or white-collar (i.e., office work, salaried, involving information management). In the event that a respondent's title could not be categorized as obviously blue-collar (e.g., mechanic) or white-collar (e.g., paralegal), an organizational informant was solicited for clarification regarding the content of the individual's work role. A total of 44% of the sample ($n = 35$) was classified as blue-collar, while 56% ($n = 45$) was classified as white-collar. A series of independent sample t-tests were performed to see whether the blue- and white-collar workers differed along any significant variables that would qualify this study's findings. Although workers in blue-collar positions reported significantly lower levels of LMX than their white-collar counterparts ($t(76) = -2.61, p > .05$), the negotiations reported by blue- and white-collar workers did not differ on any of the communication dimensions or outcomes.

Survey Instrument

Instructions. This study employed a variation on the critical incident technique (CIT; Flanagan, 1954). The CI technique is a very flexible process used to collect, analyze, and classify participants' accounts of personally significant experiences likely to have an effect upon their experiences of a phenomenon. This technique has been incorporated into instruments such as the ICA Communication Audit (Goldhaber & Rogers, 1979) as a means of analyzing instances of effective and ineffective communication in the organization and has been used similarly in studies in which participants have recalled critical conversations within organizations (e.g., Korsgaard, Brodt, Whitener, 2002; Tjosvold, Johnson, Johnson, & Sun, 2003; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996).

Employees were asked to recall a recent conversation they initiated with their immediate supervisor in which they discussed potential changes in expectations for their own work routine. Participants were instructed that the discussions could involve major or minor changes, as long as they involved recurring, everyday patterns of work behavior. Among the possible types of changes listed were: new tasks, increased or reduced responsibilities, or different methods of performing work. The term "negotiation" was not used in the instructions to avoid cueing participants to an overly narrow sense of the word and limiting their responses. Respondents were asked to write a few sentences describing the type of change and the specific area of work discussed with their supervisors.

To allow for a thorough description of the negotiation episodes, participants were asked a series of closed-ended items assessing the following contextual factors: perceived importance of the issue, the length of the focal discussion, the number of times the issue

had been discussed prior to the focal discussion, and the amount of time elapsed since the focal discussion. Respondents were then asked a series of closed-ended items measuring their subjective outcome of the negotiation. Anchored with the options “Big Decrease” and “Big Increase” with “No Change” as the midpoint, these items assessed the degree of change in: job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor, and job effectiveness.

Criterion variables. To assess the communicative dimensions of the conversations, participants were asked to respond to three scales designed by Meiners and Miller (2004), measuring perceived levels of directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions present in the reported negotiation. In their study, Meiners and Miller provide details as to the construction of these scales as well as evidence of their unidimensionality and reliability.

Predictor variables. To assess the affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect dimensions of leader-member exchange identified by Dienesch and Liden (1986), employees were asked to respond to survey items measuring the relational quality between them and the supervisors with whom they had the discussions. These items were developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998).

To help reduce common-method bias typically occurring when predictor and criterion variables are measured using the same respondents (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), supervisors from each of the organizational divisions were sought as “key informants” to assess structural predictors at the division level³ (Rousseau, 1985). Supervisors in each city division were mailed surveys asking them to assess the dimensions of centralization and formalization for the division in which they were employed. A total of 25 supervisors from 16 different divisions returned usable surveys.

This supervisor sample can be described as 66% male ($n = 18$) with an average age of 48.73 years ($SD = 8.82$ years). Supervisors reported an average tenure with the Urban County Government of 14.58 years ($SD = 10.26$ years), and an average tenure in their current job title of 7.42 years ($SD = 6.77$).

Two dimensions of centralization, participation in decision making, (PDM) and hierarchy of authority, were measured. PDM was measured using items adapted from Alutto and Acito (1974). This scale was deemed particularly useful for this study in its focus on decision making situations involving day-to-day workplace activities. Hierarchy of authority was assessed with items designed by Hage and Aiken (1967). Three dimensions of formalization: job codification, rule observation, and job specificity, were measured using scales designed by Aiken and Hage (1967).⁴

Each employee respondent's individual data was matched with the appropriate supervisory divisional rating for centralization and formalization. In the event that multiple supervisors from the same division returned surveys, their ratings were averaged to derive one unit-wide measure. The responses from a total of 52 employees could be matched with a supervisory division rating. The divisions for which structural predictors were available are summarized in Appendix 1.

Confirmatory factor analysis. All scale items were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis techniques (CFA; Hunter, 1980; Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). This technique is useful in determining the dimensionality of multiple-item scales and producing unbiased estimates of scale reliability (Hunter, 1980; Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Related techniques such as Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) can be problematic when testing causal models with highly correlated constructs. In these instances, EFA is prone to

underreport the number of factors or cluster dissimilar items together based solely on their correlations (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Furthermore, in studies with small sample sizes, EFA becomes susceptible to pernicious sampling error and the factor structures derived through this technique are highly unstable. Confirmatory factor analysis, in contrast to EFA, tests whether the dimensionality in the data accurately fits the hypothesized model specified by the researcher in advance (Hunter, 1980; Hunter & Gerbing, 1982).

Following Hunter's suggestions, items retained met the following criteria: face validity, internal consistency, and external consistency (parallelism). The product rule for internal consistency was used to estimate correlations for items within factors (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Observed inter-item correlations were compared to the estimates, and items producing errors outside of a 95% confidence interval were dropped from their scales until fewer than five percent of the inter-item correlations exceeded the confidence interval. The product rule for external consistency (parallelism) was employed in a similar manner to evaluate correlations between items in different factors. Only those items demonstrating internal consistency with items within their scale and external consistency with the items in the other scales were retained.

Following the initial factor analysis, an inspection of the four subscales of LMX revealed an average inter-scale correlation of .64, upon correction for attenuation due to measurement error. A follow-up confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test for second-order unidimensionality. The procedure for a second-order factor analysis is identical to that of first-order factor analysis, except the primary factors in the first-order analysis are treated as individual indicators and the second-order factor is treated as the

underlying construct (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). When two or more first-order factors measure the same underlying factor, their correlations should be internally consistent and parallel to other variables. The four subscales of LMX were examined for internal consistency and parallelism using the same procedure as described earlier. The data revealed that the four subscales were internally consistent within their second-order factor and parallel to the other scale items, and hence consistent with a second-order uni-dimensional factor model. Accordingly, these items were combined into one scale producing an overall measure of LMX. The factors were then re-analyzed using the CFA technique, and following the removal of one LMX item, the uni-dimensional LMX scale was found internally consistent and parallel to the other factors.

The average primary factor loading was .81, and the bivariate correlation between the predicted and observed inter-item correlations for the final measurement model was .95 (RMSE = .09). The items retained for analysis, their reliabilities, and primary factor loadings are presented in Appendix 2.

Demographic information. Following their completion of the scale items, participants were asked to report their sex, age, length of time working for this organization, length of time under their current job title, and when applicable, length of time working with their current supervisor. Participants were also asked to report their job title, department, and division.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

A total of 80 critical communication incidents were reported. Although some studies employing the CI Technique allow individual respondents to report multiple incidents, the instrument used in the current study only solicited one incident per respondent. This decision was made largely because of the prohibitive length of the closed-ended portion of the survey instrument necessary to measure the constructs of interest.

Critical Incident Categories

To better understand the types of incidents reported by the respondents, a set of categories was developed in which each incident could be classified. First, the principal investigator and an associate independently examined and reflected upon the participants' narrative accounts. While the reviewers began this process with key concepts from the research literature in mind (e.g., task revision, role innovation), they were also open to recognizing emergent themes, other than those specified in the extant literature, that might reveal insight into the supervisory negotiation process. Through repeated examination of the narratives, two judges sorted the descriptions according to similarity until distinct categories emerged. Through discussion, consensus was developed for the content of each category. The final coding scheme consisted of five categories:

Communication/coordination. This category included changes to either the quantity or quality of communication and coordination within the work unit. These changes might include increasing communication between the focal member and his or

her supervisor personally, increasing time in meetings and training sessions, or greater coordination of activity among the entire work-unit.

Task revision. This category includes changes involving the processes, procedures, techniques, equipment, or scheduling of tasks involved in the focal member's work. These include the introduction or adoption of new tools or suggestions to modify the core processes involved in one's existing work duties.

Role innovation. This category includes changes involving the introduction of new tasks or the reduction in tasks for focal member. These changes include incorporating new tasks, activities, duties, or responsibilities into the existing job, or altering one's position, title, or job description.

Third parties. This category includes changes involving expectations for the activities and routines of specific third-party individuals, outside the supervisor/subordinate dyad. These can include other members of the work-unit itself, or those employed in other organizational units. These are not necessarily changes involving the members of the work unit as a whole but rather specific other members.

Miscellaneous. These changes included those for which the respondent did not provide adequate information to reasonably classify the incident in one of the aforementioned categories.

Following detailed instruction as to the content of the categories, a third judge, not involved with the initial category generation, sorted each incident into one of the categories. Initial inter-rater agreement on incident classification was 80% (Cohen's Kappa = .72). The cases on which judges did not agree were resolved through discussion.

The frequencies for each of these categories and representative examples are provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Frequencies and Sample Excerpts of Critical Incident Categories

Category	Sample Excerpt	n	%
Communication/Coor.	<i>"...We need to get back to having manager owner meetings...We used to have the meetings and it helped. Now its just a shot in dark [sic]."</i>	10	12.5
Role Innovation	<i>"I requested additional work as my daily workload was too light. Mine is a new function...there was no way to tell what the average workload would be or how long it would take."</i>	23	28.8
Task Revision	<i>"I suggested using a downtown map, to lay out pots and create a legend to aid in documentation, and organization. He agreed this could be a possible upgrade in procedure and agreed to look into. We had a good dialogue back and forth about how to possibly arrange and lay out this new method."</i>	33	41.3
Third Parties	<i>"We discussed the performance of... outside contractors...and the results we are seeing from his poor performance."</i>	9	11.3
Miscellaneous	<i>"I spoke with him about implementing several changes within my section, shortly after I took over."</i>	5	6.3
Total:		80	100

Quantitative Descriptions of Critical Incidents

Almost 63% (n = 50) of the sample listed the focal discussion issue as "Very

Important” while 31% (n = 25) listed the issue as “Pretty Important.” Sixty-four percent (n = 51) reported the conversation taking between 0 and 20 minutes, and 20% (n = 16) reported one 21 and 40 minutes in length. Just over 46% (n = 37) reported having discussed the issue “a few times” prior to the focal discussion, while 29% (n = 23) reported it was the first time the issue had been discussed. Just under 47% (n = 37) recalled a conversation that had taken place three months or fewer prior and 25% (n = 20) recalled a conversation from between four to six months prior to the data collection.

In terms of changes in job satisfaction levels, 51% (n = 41) of the sample reported either “Slight Increase” or “Big Increase,” 21% (n = 17) indicated either “Slight Decrease” or “Big Decrease” in satisfaction, and the remaining 28% (n = 22) indicated “No Change.” Similarly, when asked about satisfaction with their supervisors following the discussion, 47% (n = 37) reported either “Slight Increase” or “Big Increase,” 27% (n = 21) indicated either “Slight Decrease” or “Big Decrease,” and 26% (n = 21) indicated “No Change.” When asked about changes in ability to do their job effectively, 53% (n = 42) reported either “Slight Increase” or “Big Increase,” 13% (n = 10) indicated either “Slight Decrease” or “Big Decrease,” and 35% (n = 28) indicated “No Change.”

To illustrate the types of discussions reported for this study, it is instructive to view some excerpts of the respondents’ own descriptions. Some employees recalled highly satisfying interactions in which they successfully brought innovation to their work roles. For example, a female, 36, from the Social Services Department described a supervisory interaction in which she attempted to expand her tasks and responsibilities:

[My supervisor] was very receptive to the idea and gladly accepted the help. She in turn, took the time and effort to show me additional tasks and how to complete them.

Another female from the Law Department, 47, reported successfully introducing a new process for scanning documents:

[My supervisor] was very receptive and excited about the efficiency of the new process and cost savings in file storage, file folder supplies and document imaging....[My supervisor] thanked me and asked me to present the process at the next weekly manager meeting so that the division staff will be on board with the new process.

A male public service worker with General Services, 26, reported discussing with his supervisor a revision in the technique by which flowers got planted:

I suggested using a downtown map, to lay out pots and create a legend to aid in documentation, and organization. He agreed this could be a possible upgrade in procedure and agreed to look into. We had a good dialogue back and forth about how to possibly arrange and lay out this new method.

Not all of the respondents however, reported positive interactions. Some responses reflected either frustration with the organizational system as a whole, or individuals within it. For example, a female, 48, in the Finance and Administration Department reported a failed attempt to resist the implementation of a change by her supervisor:

Her method was actually going to make more work for the department. I asked that she re-think her change and to allow me and the team to research other ways to make the process more efficient. She declined.

A male, 55, in the Department of General Services, described a downright antagonistic relationship with his supervisor when he suggests technological innovations:

He makes fun of me to other employees. Describing me as a geek + gearhead. I'm tired of being mocked. I won't innovate or pioneer any more—this gov't shoots pioneers [sic].

Tests of Hypotheses

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for all scale items are presented in Table 3.2. To test the hypotheses, OLS multiple regression analysis was employed. First, a regression was performed for each criterion in which all lower-order predictors were entered simultaneously.⁵ The summaries of the regression models for each of the criterion variables are presented in Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5. The omnibus model of lower order predictors accounted for significant variance in elaboration ($F(6,45) = 2.75, p < .05$, adjusted $R^2 = .17$) and in mutual concessions ($F(6,45) = 5.96, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .37$).

Hypotheses 1 through 3 predicted PDM would be positively associated, and hierarchy of authority will be negatively associated, with members' reported directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions, holding the other factors constant. As shown in Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, neither PDM nor hierarchy of authority was a significant predictor for any of the outcome variables.

Hypotheses 4 through 6 posited that job codification, job specificity, and rule observation will each be negatively associated with directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions. Consistent with hypotheses 5c and 6c, supervisors' rating of rule observation in their respective division was negatively associated with member's elaboration ($\beta = -.34, t = -2.51, p < .05$) and mutual concessions ($\beta = -.37, t = -3.13, p < .01$). The regression coefficient for rule observation and directness approached significance in the predicted direction ($\beta = -.25, t = -1.74, p < .10$).

Table 3.2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations for Control Variables and Scales

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex			--											
2. Age	46.84	10.53	-0.05	--										
3. Dyad Tenure	43.05	47.76	-0.12	0.30**	--									
4. PDM	3.42	0.52	-0.14	-0.19	-0.04	--								
5. Hier of Auth.	2.25	0.63	-0.04	0.30*	0.09	-0.59**	--							
6. Cod.	2.11	0.80	0.11	-0.08	0.05	0.09	-0.01	--						
7. Spec.	3.65	0.52	-0.05	-0.03	-0.20	0.10	-0.21	-0.67**	--					
8. Rule Obs.	2.11	0.35	-0.15	0.12	0.06	0.03	-0.01	-0.14	0.27*	--				
9. LMX	3.70	0.94	-0.15	-0.15	-0.22	0.33*	-0.18	0.11	-0.04	-0.10	--			
10. Directness	4.14	0.67	0.02	0.12	0.11	0.08	0.14	-0.12	0.05	-0.21	0.01	--		
11. Elaboration	3.28	1.05	0.06	-0.01	-0.11	-0.03	0.06	0.24	-0.09	-0.33*	0.37**	0.26*	--	
12. Mut. Con.	2.68	1.01	-0.03	-0.20	-0.12	0.03	0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.39**	0.51**	0.03	0.61**	--

Note. Variables 4-12 were measured using 5-point scales. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Hypotheses seven through nine predicted that leader-member exchange will be positively associated with members' reported directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions. Consistent with hypotheses 8 and 9, LMX had a significant positive association with elaboration ($\beta = .30, t = 2.23, p < .05$) and mutual concessions ($\beta = .56, t = 4.67, p < .001$).

To test the proposed interaction effects among the predictor variables, a set of product vectors was computed by multiplying each employee's score for LMX with the respective dimensions of either centralization or formalization. Since these product vectors only carry the interaction terms once their constituent variables are partialled out, they were each entered individually into the regression models containing the lower order predictors for each criterion. Because the constituent predictors were all continuous variables without a meaningful zero point, each was centered prior to computation of the interaction vector (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

Hypotheses 10 through 12 predicted an interaction between LMX and the subscales of centralization, such that as centralization increases, the effect of LMX on members' reported directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions will increase. As shown in Table 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, none of the predicted interaction terms achieved significance.

Hypotheses 13 through 15 predicted a similar set of interactions between LMX and the subscales of formalization. As shown in Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, none of these proposed interaction terms achieved significance.

Table 3.3

Main and Interaction Effects for Directness

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	ΔR^2	<i>Adj-R</i> ²
SupPDM	0.36	0.24	0.27	1.51		
SupHier	0.33	0.19	0.31	1.76		
Supcod	-0.12	0.16	-0.14	-0.71		
SupSpec	0.08	0.26	0.06	0.31		
SupRule	-0.49	0.28	-0.25	-1.74		
LMX	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.01	.13	.02
LMX x PDM	0.05	0.23	0.30	0.20	.00	.00
LMX x Hier	-0.24	0.18	-0.20	-1.31	.03	.03
LMX x Cod	0.06	0.12	0.07	0.49	.01	.00
LMX x Spec	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.01	.00	.00
LMX x Rule	-0.49	0.47	-0.18	-1.06	.02	.02

Table 3.4

Main and Interaction Effects for Elaboration

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	ΔR^2	<i>Adj-R</i> ²
SupPDM	-.19	.34	-.09	-1.56		
SupHier	.19	.27	.12	1.71		
Supcod	.45	.24	.33	1.88		
SupSpec	.58	.38	.28	1.53		
SupRule	-1.02	.41	-.34	-2.51*		
LMX	.33	.15	.30	2.23*	.27*	.17
LMX x PDM	-0.39	0.32	-0.17	-1.21	.02	.18
LMX x Hier	0.18	0.27	0.10	0.69	.01	.16
LMX x Cod	-0.24	0.17	-0.19	-1.42	.03	.19
LMX x Spec	0.19	0.29	0.09	0.65	.01	.16
LMX x Rule	0.34	0.68	0.08	0.51	.00	.16

* $p < .05$.

Table 3.5

Main and Interaction Effects for Mutual Concessions

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	ΔR^2	<i>Adj-R²</i>
SupPDM	-.15	.29	-.08	-0.51		
SupHier	.12	.23	.08	0.54		
Supcod	-.07	.20	-.06	-0.37		
SupSpec	.13	.32	.07	0.41		
SupRule	-1.07	.34	-.37	-3.13**		
LMX	.58	.12	.56	4.67***	.44***	.37
LMX x PDM	-0.29	.27	-0.13	-1.07	.01	.37
LMX x Hier	-0.13	.22	-0.07	-0.58	.00	.36
LMX x Cod	0.06	.15	0.05	0.41	.00	.36
LMX x Spec	-0.14	.24	-0.07	-0.60	.00	.36
LMX x Rule	-0.83	.56	-0.20	-1.49	.03	.39

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Supplemental Analysis

Supplemental analyses were conducted to explore potential relationships between the measures of the negotiation categories, contextual factors, communication dimensions, and negotiation outcomes. Although no formal hypotheses have been offered regarding these relationships, their examination should be useful for generating additional knowledge of the supervisory negotiation process.

Negotiation categories. First, regressions were performed to test for any differences among the negotiation categories as to context, communication, and outcome variables. To use this qualitative predictor in the multiple regressions, dummy coding was employed. With dummy coding, a qualitative variable of k groups is represented by $k-1$ dichotomous predictor variables.

The four substantive categories of negotiation topics: communication/

coordination, role innovation, task revision, and third parties were rendered in three predictor variables. Because it was the most theoretically fitting with the spirit of the current study, the role innovation group was not represented as a predictor variable but was employed as the reference group in the regression equation. The sample mean for this reference group is the Y-intercept (Cohen & Cohen, 1983) and the unstandardized regression coefficients represent the difference between the sample mean for each of the other categories and the reference group.

The three dummy variables were first entered as predictors into regression equations with each of the contextual variables as a criterion. The different negotiation topics did not differ significantly in terms of importance. Similar regressions were performed with each of the communication variables entered as the criterion. No significant differences among the negotiation topics were revealed for directness, elaboration, or mutual concessions. The final set of regressions involved the subjective outcome variables. Role innovative negotiations were found to result in higher levels of satisfaction than those involving communication/coordination ($B = -.97, t = -1.96, p > .05$). Notably, those reporting role innovative negotiation episodes reported significantly higher levels of LMX than those who recalled a negotiation over communication/coordination issues ($B = -.80, t = -2.26, p > .05$). No differences among the communication topics were revealed for supervisor satisfaction or job effectiveness.

Contextual factors. To examine the effect of context, a series of multiple regressions was performed in which each of the contextual factors (i.e., perceived issue importance, discussion length, number of prior discussions, and time elapsed since the discussion) was entered as a predictor for the criterion variables: directness, elaboration,

and mutual concessions. This block of variables accounted for a significant portion of variance in directness ($F(4, 73) = 6.48, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .22$). The importance of the issue was positively associated ($\beta = .33, t = 3.22, p < .01$) and the time elapsed since the discussion was negatively associated ($\beta = -.31, t = -3.06, p < .01$) with directness. Contextual factors also accounted for significant variance in elaboration ($F(4, 73) = 4.39, p < .01$, adjusted $R^2 = .21$). Discussion length was positively associated with elaboration ($\beta = .40, t = 3.80, p < .001$). None of the contextual factors was significantly associated with levels of mutual concessions.

To examine the relationships between the contextual factors and negotiation outcomes, a similar series of regressions was performed with the following criterion variables: changes in job satisfaction, changes in satisfaction with supervisor, and changes in job effectiveness. The number of times the issue had been discussed prior to the focal conversation was negatively associated with supervisor satisfaction ($\beta = -.29, t = -2.43, p < .05$). None of the contextual factors was associated with changes in job satisfaction or job effectiveness.

Communication factors. To explore the relationships between the integrative communication variables and outcomes, a series of regressions was performed in which directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions were entered as predictors for each of the outcomes. Mutual concessions was significantly associated with increases in job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.30, t = 2.15, p < .05$), supervisor satisfaction ($\beta = 0.49, t = 3.72, p < .001$), and job effectiveness ($\beta = 0.31, t = 2.19, p < .05$). Neither directness nor elaboration was significantly associated with any of the outcome measures.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The concept of negotiation is one of the most profound and enduring topics in all of organizational theory (Lax, & Sebenius, 1986; Neale & Northcraft, 1991; Putnam & Poole, 1987). Negotiation has been an extremely versatile concept, informing organizational analysis at the systemic (e.g., Strauss, 1978) and the interpersonal and psychological levels as well (e.g., Graen & Scandura, 1987). Despite the ubiquity of the topic, there have been few efforts to link micro-level negotiation processes with organizational contextual variables (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995). Drawing from such areas as role theory, negotiated order, and traditional negotiation theory, the current study has investigated the impact of structural and interpersonal factors on supervisor-employee negotiation. Using the critical incident technique, this study has examined the effects of centralization, formalization, and leader-member exchange on directness, elaboration, and mutual concessions.

Consistent with research in organizational role-making and negotiated order, both structural and relational factors were found to have an impact upon the supervisor-employee negotiations within the work unit. Supervisors' ratings of rule observation was found negatively associated with employees' accounts of elaboration and mutual concessions. Apparently, it is not merely the *presence* of rules in the work-unit that constrains the breadth of topics subject to negotiation and revision, but rather the extent that employees are observed for violations of formal rules. The heightened power distance between workers and management reinforced through formal rule surveillance seems to inhibit integrative potential during workplace negotiations, and make

elaboration and mutual concessions less likely. These findings suggest that work units relying heavily on formal rules to provide stability and order may be less likely to respond and adapt to changes in its external environment, due to the lack of integrative negotiation at the dyadic level. In addition, employees in formal work units might also have an especially difficult time modifying and streamlining their work roles to improve their overall work process.

The failure of the centralization variables (PDM and hierarchy of authority) to account for significant variance in the outcome measures comes as a surprise. Conceptual issues surrounding these measures can perhaps help explain these findings. PDM, for example, is a complex phenomenon that existing at different levels of analysis. Not only can participation be formal or informal, participation may also exist at the unit level or at the individual level (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995; Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994). Unit-wide rates of participation are most likely affected by formal factors such as reward structures, or worker representation on standing committees, while rates of individual participation are likely linked with more personal factors such as locus of control or skill level (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995). The items in Alutto and Acito's (1974) PDM scale (e.g., "I participate in decisions regarding time limits and schedules") are clearly posed at the individual level. As a result, this measure (even though assessed using supervisors) might be tapping into more unofficial, individual-level types of participation in the work unit. A different measure of PDM, one reflecting more officially sanctioned, group-level forms of PDM, might have made a more unique contribution to the predictor models. Such causal models certainly await future testing.

Another key finding is the positive association between leader-member exchange and mutual concessions. This finding is consistent with prior research showing that higher exchange dyads engage in more mutual persuasion and reciprocal influence than their low exchange counterparts (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Fairhurst Rogers, & Sarr, 1987). While it would surely be a banal platitude to suggest that a high LMX relationship is a cure-all for all organizational ills, this study suggests that it will be particularly unlikely for employees to engage in truly integrative negotiation with supervisors with whom they share a low exchange relationship. Furthermore, this lack of integration may not only serve to reduce job satisfaction but may further exacerbate tension between managers and members as they seek to improve their work respective processes. Hence, not only might a low LMX relationship make the work environment less pleasant for the focal member, it may also inhibit workplace innovation, the improvement of faulty tasks, and ultimately, long term member assimilation and well-being.

Somewhat surprisingly, none of the predictors was found significantly associated with the measure of directness. At the statistical level, this could largely be due to the lack of variance in the directness variable. The high mean and small standard deviation of the directness scale ($m = 4.14/5.00$, $SD = .67$) indicates that respondents simply did not report many indirect interactions. A couple of potential explanations exist for the sparse variance. First, it is possible that direct conversations are more easily recalled and described upon request than highly indirect interactions. Indirect conversations with a great deal of subtext, which may provide more subtle, ambient cues about the organizational order, may not be as easy to articulate in a single paragraph.

The lack of variance in the directness measure might also lie in the nature of the survey instrument itself. In the instructions, participants were asked to report a discussion involving fairly concrete issues such as new tasks or different methods of performing work. These types of discussions might inherently lend themselves to more direct types of interaction. Negotiation involving more ambiguous issues such as interpersonal influence and power between supervisors and employees may involve a wider range of direct and indirect messages, which may not be as easily revealed using the critical incident technique.

Despite the current findings, it seems premature to dismiss directness outright as an important dimension of manager-employee interaction. For this sample, directness *was* significantly associated with the perceived importance of the issue at hand. It seems, however, that direct language may be just as likely to reflect time pressure or even frustration as it is to reflect warmth or affiliation between managers and employees. Further research is merited to examine the functions of direct and indirect messages in the role-making and negotiation process.

Supplemental Analysis

In addition to the hypothesis tests, a supplemental analysis of the data has revealed some interesting results. Most notably, mutual concessions between supervisors and employees has been shown linked with increases in job satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, and perceived job effectiveness. While the value of integrative process in fostering positive negotiation outcomes has been almost axiomatic in negotiation research, the current data points up mutual concessions as a particularly strong predictor of positive negotiation outcomes for members. It may not be sufficient for

managers to merely foster direct and elaborated workplace communication (e.g., suggestion boxes, “open door” policies). Empowering leadership might also involve supervisors not only being receptive to upward influence, but fostering more flexible, concessionary forms of problem solving, eliciting concessions *from* employees as they themselves offer the same.

In an unexpected finding, the number of times an issue had been discussed prior to the focal conversation was related to a decrease in supervisor satisfaction. It appears respondents made a clear distinction between the elaboration of a topic and the belaboring of the topic. Repeated negotiations of the same issue can be a tiresome process, perhaps reflecting frustrating or unresolved influence attempts. Although scholars of negotiated order typically discuss negotiation as though it is a perpetual process within the organizational system, the current data suggest detailed, one-shot conversations in which some mutual concessions are exchanged might be more effective in maintaining effective labor management relations than the continual revisiting of the same tired issue. These critical discussions need not be repeated *ad infinitum* to be effective turning points in the development of the employees’ work role.

Strengths and Limitations

As with any research endeavor, circumstances beyond the control of the author introduced limitations to his findings. The most obvious of these involves the study’s response rate. The restrictions placed on the study by the mayor’s office combined with the principle researcher’s financial limitation resulted in a low response rate of 18 percent. An informant with the Urban County Government informed me that a culture of distrust and suspicion among city employees might have made potential respondents

hesitant to cooperate with a research project affiliated with the office of the Mayor. Despite reassurances that their responses would be confidential, employees might have possibly feared that their responses may have been made available to their supervisors and could have created problems in their work units.

Dillman (1978) points out that mail survey response rates computed as the number of completed surveys divided by the total number of surveys sent in this way tend to be underestimated, because *any* lack of a response is typically classified as a refusal to participate. The researcher cannot be sure whether the participant chose not to complete the survey after reading it (resulting in a decrease in the response rate numerator), or if the respondents either never received or read the survey (resulting in a decrease in the denominator). Mail surveys also involve the least amount of control for the researcher because employee mail often goes unread and, in bureaucratic organizations, must often go through many gatekeepers before arriving at its intended destination. Furthermore, in the case of the Urban County Government, many of the employees in the initial sampling frame work in field positions and may lack the appropriate physical settings (e.g., a quiet place to sit) to read and complete a multi-page survey.

On an optimistic note however, Dillman notes that “the prevailing obsession with response rate leads to overlooking other barriers to representativeness.” Response rates by themselves are poor predictors of non-response bias (Dillman, 1978; Groves & Peytcheva, 2008). In their recent meta-analysis of studies in which participant and non-participant data were both available, Groves & Peytcheva (2008) report a virtually non-existent association between the studies’ response rates and the mean differences between

respondent and non-respondent standardized means. Non-response bias can occur however, if the *content* of the survey influences the decision to participate (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008). Although the presence of non-response bias is difficult to determine for the current study, the fact that workers from 25 different divisions returned surveys suggests that response bias did not occur at the divisional level. While a perfect study would involve data from multiple organizations, the present study presents data from employees representing a wide array of divisions and work roles.

Another obvious limitation brought about by the low response rate is the small sample size and lack of statistical power. Clearly the study was not adequately powered to test the set of interaction terms proffered in the hypotheses. Given the small effect sizes for the interaction terms, their observed power estimates ($1 - \beta$) ranged from .26 to .38. Hoenig and Heisey (2001), however, argue that power analyses are most appropriate in the planning stages of a research project and that post-hoc power analyses contribute little to the interpretation of a test statistic. They point out that non-significant *p*-values always correspond with low observed power, since observed power is directly a function of observed *p*-value.

Other limitations to this study are present as well. At the request of the Mayor's office, however, this sample was recruited randomly at the organizational level and not at the divisional or group level. There were not sufficient respondents from within intact work groups to allow for the clear partialling of group level effects. Even when located within the same division, different work units are apt to have disparate job objectives, work flows, task interdependencies, and communication structures that would have a large impact upon day-to-day interactions (Rousseau, 1995). Therefore, the current data

offer little insight into group level effects on the negotiation process. Future research efforts would benefit from recruitment within existing work groups to allow for a more systematic study of group level effects on micro-negotiation processes.

A limitation exists in that, nowhere in instructions, were respondents asked to report the *most* significant role-episode during their tenure with their managers. The negotiations included in this study may have merely been recent enough or important enough to merit recall and discussion. The relative magnitude and contribution of each of these episodes to overall role adjustment or quality of the supervisor-employee relationship may vary across participants, introducing additional error variance in the analyses.

This study's unit of analysis provides a limitation in that each of these episodes essentially serves as a snapshot of a complex, ever-evolving process of role development. The present data reveal little as to how multiple episodes are embedded within the managerial relationship. Role theory typically maintains that work expectations should become routinized between managers and employees during the early phases of their dyadic tenure. Successful early negotiations should help clarify which issues are subject to negotiation and which are not. Norms regarding flexibility, discretion, and acceptable tactics of influence might also emerge and later assist managers and employees resolve future issues more efficiently (Lax & Sebenius, 1986).

The negotiated order perspective, however, does recognize that as contingencies in the organization shift, so does the negotiation context in which actors interact. No single negotiation should ever resolve a issue permanently (Strauss, 1978). Although some degree of predictability between managers and workers is likely to arise during

their tenure, it seems unlikely that any work role is ever truly “routinized” with any sense of finality. It would be a boon to future negotiation research to explicate the types of critical events and negotiations that effect more permanent types of changes in employees work roles and those which set the stage for subsequent negotiation and problem-solving.

Future Directions

Clearly, the current study has only scratched the surface in its examination of integrative negotiation process. Negotiation research has a rich and diverse history, with many potential areas that can be applied to manager-employee relations. The behavioral decision perspective on negotiation holds that individuals employ a host of cognitive heuristics, frames, shortcuts and other devices as they seek to resolve conflict and make decisions (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992; Neale & Bazerman, 1992). The mental models held by negotiating parties serve as critical structures for their interaction process and will affect individuals goals, tactics, and expectations for their opponent’s tactics. For instance, negotiators often fail to reach integrative agreement due to a “fixed-pie” assumption, a belief that their interests are diametrically opposed to those of their counterpart or that no opportunities exist to trade off on issues to maximize joint gains (De Dreu, Koole, & Steinel, 2000). These assumptions can cause managers and employee to lock into patterns of distributive negotiation, when in fact integrative potential exists.

Harinck, de Dreu, & van Vianen (2000) suggest that the “fixed-pie” assumption is more likely to occur in negotiations concerning personal, vested interests than those involving more intellectual or evaluative issues. As issues become more personal, negotiators become more likely to perceive a fixed-pie, and less likely to hold a cooperative orientation. Negotiators in these instances however, may be more likely to

explore trade-offs and mutual concessions, leading to higher joint gains, than they are in instances involving intellect or values, issues not as easily subject to logrolling or compromise (Harinck, de Dreu, & van Vianen, 2000). Future research should consider the effect of the type of issue on managers and employees' distributive assumptions and negotiation tactics.

Other types of negotiation frames have implication for manager employee negotiations as well. For example, Pinkley (1990) suggests that situations of conflict elicit in individuals a "dimension of conflict frame," based on prior conflict experience and current goals. These frames serve to guide "disputant behavior, strategy selection, outcome concerns, and evaluations of the other party" (Pinkley, 1990, p.117). The dimensions of conflict described by Pinkley are: relationship versus task, emotional versus intellectual, and compromise versus win. Clearly the last of these dimensions would seem to be the most natural analog of integrative versus distributive communication process. Future research, however, should examine how each of these conflict frames affects supervisors and employees' strategy selection and outcome evaluations of workplace negotiations. Issues involving a greater emotional or relational dimension may involve different processes and outcomes than those solely intellectual and task related. Furthermore, examination of the effects of interpersonal and structural factors such as the ones featured in the present study on participants' assumptions and conflict frames' seems a fertile area for future inquiry.

While the current study has placed primary emphasis on the predictors of integrative process, the link between such process and the economic outcomes of negotiation remains ambiguous. The question inevitably arises, "how does one know

when a negotiation is successful?” Rife with bounded rationality, pressing deadlines, and ambiguous cause-and-effect relationships, real-life negotiations between managers and employees are messier than those conducted in research laboratories between actors with little interpersonal history and no anticipation of future interaction. As noted by Curhan, Elfenbein, & Xu (2006), “It would be implausible, not to mention uncomfortable, for a real-world negotiation to conclude with a debriefing of parties’ aspirations, targets, and breaking points” (p. 495).

Because workplace negotiations are inevitably embedded within ongoing relationships, social psychological outcomes may be as important and often more important than the actual economic gains. The subjective value of a single negotiation can help shore up interpersonal rapport between two parties and motivate them to pursue high quality negotiations at a later time (Curhan et al., 2006). When negotiators share a strong personal bond or social identity, the need to maintain the face needs of one’s partner and equity or fairness may weigh heavier than the need for an optimal solution (Curhan et al., 2006; Kramer et al., 1993).

Work unit negotiation involves face concerns for managers and employees as well. The data for the current study is consistent with the notion that managers constantly re-negotiating workplace issues with subordinates may be viewed as less credible or competent than those who choose areas for negotiation more prudently. A skillful manager might acquiesce in areas too mundane to negotiate, exert formal authority in non-negotiable domains, and negotiate in areas important to the work-unit yet too ambiguous to resolve by formal rules (Lax & Sebenius, 1986). Future research will benefit from examining the linkages between integrative (and non-integrative) process

and the constituent parties' instrumental outcomes, face needs, feelings about the relationship, and feelings about the negotiation process as a whole (Curhan et al., 2006). Such efforts would surely add richness to our understanding of workplace negotiation.

One final observation is warranted. The tacit assumption underlying the current research is that integrative process is preferable to other forms of decision making in that it provides parties the chance to explore options, rank preferences, and produce high quality outcomes. Although integration is considered by many the "normative benchmark" for evaluating negotiation outcomes (Kramer et al., 1993), it would be rash to suggest that supervisors and subordinates must engage in perpetual integrative negotiation to build a successful working relationship. First, integrative negotiation requires time, energy, and resources that managers and employees could spend enacting other aspects of their work roles. Addressing too many simultaneous issues within a negotiation could cause parties to doubt the effectiveness of their respective outcomes, and have a deleterious effect upon satisfaction with the negotiation (Naquin, 2003).

Many decisions in organizations are made through shortcuts, rules of thumb, and other cognitive heuristics. Sometimes time pressure can cause parties to seek a "satisficing" solution, one that meets a minimal set of acceptable criteria, but is easier reached than a fully integrative arrangement (Simon, 1957). Although such sub-optimal arrangements may be viewed in the traditional paradigm as representing failed negotiation, these arrangements need not receive short shrift from researchers. An expedient agreement allowing managers and employees to complete their work duties in a timely manner might indeed prove more desirable than a laborious negotiation in which every possible alternative is addressed and debated. Further research is needed to

explicate the types of problem solving issues for which integrative communication process will be linked with positive outcomes and those for which it will prove unnecessary.

ENDNOTES

¹Although integrative and distributive negotiation processes are conceptually distinct, it is unlikely that any given negotiation will be entirely integrative or distributive. These two processes are instead imagined to exist as polar ends of a continuum, with most real-life interactions falling somewhere in between.

²Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991) suggest that all jobs and roles, regardless of the nature of the work involved, consist of a “relatively finite set of generic job components beyond which further reduction is unnecessary” (p. 172). In their framework, the term “job” refers solely to the formally documented set of task elements specified by the prime beneficiaries of the work (i.e., the organization), and roles consist of the set of established and emergent elements. Emergent elements represent the more subjective aspects of the person’s role, and are more likely subject to negotiation among those in the role-set.

³The Mayor’s Office requested that we not measure supervisor ratings of LMX for the focal employee (SLMX).

⁴Reverse-coded items were included in the original scales measuring job codification and hierarchy of authority. Neither item was retained after the confirmatory factor analysis.

⁵To test if any control variables warranted inclusion in the analysis, three regressions were first performed in which sex, age, organizational tenure, and dyadic tenure were entered as predictors for each of the communication process variables. None of these variables was found to be a significant predictor for directness, elaboration, or mutual concessions and they were therefore excluded from the hypothesis tests.

Appendix 1

Employee and Supervisor N-sizes by Division

Division	Employee N	Supervisor N
Parks & Recreation	11	6
Building Maintenance	7	2
Air and Water Quality	7	--
Building Inspection	5	2
Family Services	5	1
Waste Management	5	2
Community Corrections	4	--
Government Communications	4	1
Police	4	--
Planning	3	1
911	2	--
Adult Services	2	--
Computer Services	2	1
Human Resources	2	1
Revenue	2	--
Risk Management	2	--
Streets, Roads, Forests	2	1
Traffic	2	2
Youth Services	2	--
Council Clerk	1	1
DEEM	1	--
Engineering	1	1
Fire	1	2
Fleet Services	1	1
Law	1	--
Unknown	1	--
Total:	80	25

Appendix 2

Retained Scale Items, Reliabilities, and Factor Loadings

DIRECTNESS (SI α = .84)

I pretty much said what was on my mind.	.95
I was straightforward with what I wanted.	.82
I was frank in my discussion of the change.	.69
I was outspoken about what I wanted during this discussion.	.60

ELABORATION (SI α = .90)

Our discussion covered a lot of the fine points of the role issue.	.86
We discussed many of the technicalities involved in this change.	.85
We went into great detail during this discussion.	.83
We discussed this change in great depth.	.79

MUTUAL CONCESSIONS (SI α = .90)

We compromised over the nature of the role change.	.85
Both my supervisor and I made proposals for how the role should be changed.	.83
Concessions were made by both parties.	.78
There were tradeoffs made during this discussion.	.76
We exchanged a number of counter-offers.	.76

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING (SI α = .89)

I participate in decisions regarding work to be performed next when a given piece is completed.	.87
I participate in decisions regarding time limits and schedules.	.86
I participate in decisions regarding the order of performing work when several tasks are to be done.	.84
I participate in decisions regarding checking and redoing work.	.73

HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY (SI α = .89)

I have to ask my boss before I do almost anything.	.97
Any decision I make has to have my boss's approval.	.84
Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer.	.75

JOB CODIFICATION (SI α = .86)

People here are allowed to do almost as they please.	.87
Most people here make their own rules on the job.	.87

JOB SPECIFICITY (SI α = .80)

Everyone has a specific job to do.	.95
Whatever situation arises we have procedures to follow in dealing with it.	.72
This organization keeps written records of everyone's job performance.	.62

Appendix 2 (cont'd).

RULE OBSERVATION (SI α = .82)

The employees here are constantly being checked for rule violations.	.83
People here feel they are constantly being watched to see that they obey all the rules.	.83

LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE (SI α = .94)

I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job. ¹	.93
I admire my supervisor's professional skills. ¹	.88
I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job. ¹	.84
My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend. ²	.80
My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with. ²	.79
My supervisor would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others. ³	.78
I like my supervisor very much as a person. ²	.75
My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake. ³	.73
I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my supervisor's work goals. ⁴	.57

Note. ¹Originally included in the "Professional Respect" sub-scale for LMX .

²Originally included in the "Affect" sub-scale for LMX. ³Originally included in the "Loyalty" sub-scale for LMX. ⁴Originally included in the "Contribution" sub-scale for LMX.

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