

Political Will in Political Work

Joel Montgomery

University of Kent
Kent Business School
August 2022

Word Count: 79,990

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Management at the University of Kent, Canterbury.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 : Introduction	1
1.1 Aim of Research.....	1
1.1.1 Personal Interest	3
1.2 Research Problem.....	4
1.3 Political Will in Political Work.....	7
1.4 Contribution	11
1.5 Terminologies.....	13
1.6 Structure of the Thesis.....	16
Chapter 2 : Literature Review.....	20
2:1 Organisational Politics	21
2.1.1 Organisational Politics and Power.....	26
2.1.2 Organisational Politics in Political Work	32
2.2 The Construct of Political Will	35
2.2.1 Political Will as a Contested Term	35
2.2.2 Political Will as Collective	38
2.2.3 Political Will as Dispositional	41
2.2.4 Beyond Dispositions.....	47
2.3 A Social Cognitive Perspective on Political Will	48
2.4 The Content of Political Will	53
2.4.1 The Political Will Scale.....	60
2.4.2 Attitudinal Dimensions.....	63
2.5 Attribution Theory and Political Will	66
2.6 Summary of the Literature	68
Chapter 3 : Methodology	73
3.1 Research Philosophy	73
3.1.1 Dominant Paradigms in Organisational Politics.....	77
3.1.2 Induction & Phenomenology	78
3.1.3 Social Cognitive Theory and Attributions.....	81
3.2 Methodology of the Current Research	83
3.2.1 The Political Work Research Context	84
3.2.1.1 Local Councils.	86
3.2.2 Political Activity in Local Councils	91
3.2.3 Sampling Strategy.....	92

3.2.4 Interview Procedure.....	96
3.3 Analyses	99
3.3.1 Identifying the Source of Attributions.....	101
3.3.1.1 Extracting Attributions.....	102
3.3.2 Template Analysis	104
3.3.2.1 Phenomenology and Template Analysis.....	104
3.3.2.2 Conducting Template Analysis.....	105
Chapter 4A : The Dimensions of Political Will (Officers)	112
4A.1 Junior Office Template.....	115
4A.2 Summary of Junior Officers:.....	121
4A.3 Mid-Level Officer Template	124
4A.4 Summary of Mid-level Officers	131
4A.5 Senior Officer Template	133
4A.6 Summary of Senior Officers	143
4A.7 Summary of Officers' Political Will: The Role of Power.....	145
4A.7.1 Task to Strategy	146
4A.7.2 Defensive to Proactive	148
4A.7.3 Risk Averse to Risk Proficient	149
4A.8 Conclusion.....	150
Chapter 4B : The Dimensions of Political Will (Councillors).....	152
4B.1 Junior Councillors Template	154
4B.2 Summary of Junior Councillors:.....	161
4B.3 Mid-level Councillor Template:	164
4B.4 Summary of Mid-level Councillors:.....	170
4B.5 Template analysis of Senior Councillors.....	172
4B.6 Summary of Senior Councillors	179
4B.7 Summary of Councillors' Political Will: The Role of Power	181
4B.7.1 Efficiency to Influence.....	182
4B.7.2 Patron to Prestige	184
4B.7.3 Naïve to Nonchalant	185
4B.8 Discussion.....	186
Chapter 5 : Power Political Pathways.....	190
5.1 Social Cognitive Perspective on Power	191
5.2 Mapping Mental Models: Methodology	195
5.2.1 Power in Local Councils.....	195

5.2.1.1 Officers' Power	196
5.2.1.2 Councillors' Power	196
5.2.2 Phenomenology and Power Mental Models	198
5.2.2.1 Analytical Method of Power Mental Model Research.	199
5.2.2.2 Individuals' Mental Models	200
5.2.2.3 Method of Elicitation for Individual Power Mental Models	203
5.2.2.4 Shared Power Mental Models	208
5.2.2.5 Method of Elicitation for Shared Mental Models.	211
5.3 Power Political Pathway Findings	213
5.3.1 Power Political Pathways (Junior Officers).....	215
5.3.2 Power Political Pathways (Mid-Level Officers)	220
5.3.3 Power Political Pathways (Senior Officers)	223
5.3.4 Power Political Pathways (Junior Councillors).....	226
5.3.5 Power Political Pathways (Mid-level Councillors)	231
5.3.6 Power Political Pathways (Senior Councillors).....	235
5.4 Discussion of Power Political Pathways	239
5.5 Conclusion.....	243
Chapter 6: Discussion.....	245
6.1 Aims of Thesis	245
6.2 Summary of Findings.....	247
6.3 Theoretical Contributions.....	251
6.3.1 Contribution 1: The Social Cognitive Perspective on Political Will.....	251
6.3.2 Contribution 2: Inductive Phenomenology: Unveiling the Benevolent Reciprocity of Political Will	256
6.3.3 Contribution 3: Apolitical Figures in the Political Work Space: The Mutual Learning of OB and Political Science	260
6.3.4 Contribution 4: The Impact of Power on Political Will	263
6.4 Practical Implications.....	266
6.4.1 Councillors vs Officers – The need for better checks and balances	266
6.4.2 The Potential Employee Learning from Politicians	268
6.5 Limitations and Future Research.....	269
6.5.1 Political Representation.....	269
6.5.2 The Impact of Intersectionality.....	270
6.5.3 Longitudinal Data	271
6.6 Reflections.....	272

6.7 Conclusion.....	273
References.....	275
Appendix 1: Sampling of Local Councils	304
Appendix 2: Example of interviewee’s organisational diagram.....	305
Appendix 3: Full Interview Schedule.....	306
Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet.....	308
Appendix 5: University of Kent: Ethical Approval	311

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Definitions of Political Will.....	36
Table 2.2: The Dimensions of Political Will	53
Table 2.3: Characteristics of the Political Games Played in Organisations.....	56
Table 3.1: Overview of Key Philosophical Perspectives.....	76
Table 3.2: Sample of Officers and Councillors within Local Councils.....	95
Table 3.3: Junior Officers' Template Analysis Development	109
Table 4A.1: Junior, Mid-level and Senior Officers Template	114
Table 4A.2: Template for Junior Officers.....	115
Table 4A.3: Template for Mid-level Officers.....	125
Table 4A.4: Template for Senior Officers	134
Table 4B.1: Junior, Mid-level and Senior Councillors' Templates	153
Table 4B.2: Template for Junior Councillors	154
Table 4B.3: Template for Mid-level Councillors	164
Table 4B.4: Template for Senior Councillors.....	173
Table 5.1: Definitions of Social power	204
Table 5.2: Definitions of Political Activity.....	205

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: The Social Cognitive Triadic Reciprocity	48
Figure 2.2: The Padlock Model of Political Will.....	58
Figure 2.3: Treadway to Kapoutsis Model of Political Will.....	61
Figure 3.1: Hierarchical Structure of Leadership within Local Councils.....	90
Figure 3.2: Leeds Attribution Coding System Process.....	101
Figure 3.3: Example of Attribution Analysis.....	103
Figure 3.4: Foundational Steps of Method	104
Figure 3.5: Chief of Finance Thematic Coding	106
Figure 3.6: Head of IT Thematic Coding.....	106
Figure 4A.1: Overarching Dimensions of Officers' Political Will.....	146
Figure 4B.1: Councillors' Overarching Dimensions of Political Will	182
Figure 5.1: Individual Map within Elsworth et al., (2015)	202
Figure 5.2: Three Concepts of Power Pathways	204
Figure 5.3: Eliciting Power Pathway from Attribution.....	207
Figure 5.4: Example of Senior Officers' Individual PMM Map	208
Figure 5.5: Shared Map within Elsworth et al., (2015)	210
Figure 5.6: Example of Sankey Diagram.....	212
Figure 5.7: Shared Power Mental Models of all Sub-Samples.....	214
Figure 5.8: Junior Officers' Shared Power Mental Model	216
Figure 5.9: Mid-level Officers' Shared Power Mental Model	221
Figure 5.10: Senior Officers' Shared Power Mental Model.....	224
Figure 5.11: Junior Councillors' Shared Power Mental Model	227
Figure 5.12: Mid-level Councillors' Shared Power Mental Model.....	232
Figure 5.13: Senior Councillors' Shared Power Mental Model	236
Figure 6.1: The Political Will in Political Work Model	250

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking my supervisor, Dr Madeleine Wyatt for propelling a lost student and turning him into an academic. From the strategic guidance within my PhD to the care you provided at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a pleasure working with you from my master's onwards. I will always appreciate the faith you showed in selecting me to do a PhD with you, it still seems almost surreal.

To the staff and colleagues that have helped me along the way, from the professional services staff at Kent Business School who have taken time out of their day to sit down with me to help with my confidence, thank you. Additionally, to the academic staff who have helped enormously with my teaching ability to my personal development, I can never thank you enough. A big thank you to Professor Patricia Lewis for her insightful guidance on theoretical frameworks and Dr Carola Leicht for her support through doing a PhD in the pandemic. A special mention to Dr Sideeq Mohammed who has gone above and beyond to help with any question I've asked (and I've had many).

I am very grateful to my partner Kerry, who has put up with me working late at night during vital EastEnders episodes and us having a distinct lack of holidays and time off during the last four years. Your ability to take my mind off my studies has been just as important as the practical support you have provided ranging from support with the thesis to providing an ear for me to discuss issues or vent.

Finally, I need to thank my parents who have gone above and beyond to support my studies. They have not just helped financially, but practically (providing a space for me and Kerry to shield during this COVID-19 pandemic) and afforded plenty of encouragement along the way. Without all of these elements and without you, this would not have been possible.

Abstract

Little is known about why individuals engage in political activity within the workplace despite Mintzberg (1985) outlining political motivation, or will, as a central tenet of organisational politics. Where scholars have examined political will, their disciplines have impacted their conceptualisation, with political science and organisational behaviour (OB) treating political will at either the collective level (Post et al., 2010) or at the micro-individual level (Doldor, 2017; Kapoutsis et al., 2017) respectively. Therefore, this thesis presents two studies seeking to uncover interdisciplinary insights into political motivation.

Drawing on attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), both studies within this thesis stem from 60 qualitative semi-structured interviews that examine individuals' reasoning for political activity. Interviews were conducted within a context of political work: local councils throughout the U.K. with officers (n=30), who engage in more typical workplace politics, and councillors (n=30), whose role it is to be political. In the first study, attributional analysis was used to elicit the cause (i.e., motivation) of junior, mid-level and senior individuals' engagement in political activity. A key finding from this study was that power was important for the content of political motivation. Consequently, study two built on the findings of study one by adopting a unique social-cognitive mental mapping methodology to elicit the 'power mental models' of individuals and how these impacted political will.

Overall, findings from study one suggested that individuals' environment, contextuality and positionality are important to political will including the impact of seniority, suggesting political motivation is part of a process of social cognition. Study two went further and illustrates how power forebears political will, acting to shape or constrain motivation.

Implications of these insights from an interdisciplinary perspective are discussed in the final chapter, alongside directions for future research.

Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Aim of Research

“Man is either a political animal or an outcast like a bird which flies alone” (Aristotle, trans. 1985).

Aristotle (c. 384 B.C. to 322 B.C) summarises a reality that prevails in contemporary organisations: individuals must be willing to engage in political arenas to succeed. The political arena is detailed by Mintzberg (1985) as one of many systems of influence in organisations. Its defining element is that unlike the formal, explicit, and sanctioned system of authority; the political arena is technically illegitimate; it is not formally authorised or accepted. It is where members of an organisation at all levels play political games intending to secure a specific benefit such as resources and power. Whether one considers politics within organisations to be a negative force or a positive one, it is pervasive.

This research investigates individuals’ motivation to engage in the political arena, focusing on the concept of political will. This concept has different connotations according to the audience. To wider society, the term is synonymous with a *lack* of will from politicians to find solutions to crises such as war, disease, or poverty. To political scientists, the term relates to the ‘committed support’ of key decision-makers in governmental institutions towards a particular problem or policy (Post, Raile & Raile, 2010). Taking an organisational behaviour (OB) perspective, this thesis examines individuals’ willingness to engage in ‘office politics’ or political behaviour at work.

However, because of the different connotations of political will across disciplines, this thesis adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, combining and building on research in political science and in organisational behaviour to explore the political motivations of individuals in ‘political work’. This comprises individuals who work to deliver or support democratic government and can be elected or appointed (Silvester, Wyatt, Ellen & Ferris, 2021). Local councils within the United Kingdom provide a unique context to do this, as they comprise both elected politicians – *councillors*, and traditionally appointed public servants – *officers*. Therefore, political work offers the opportunity to disentangle the interdisciplinary complexity of political will as it allows analysis of the concept across political office work and governmental political domains.

Importantly, this context also enables an analysis of power and its impact on political will. Although power and politics have been considered synonymous or complimentary for hundreds of years (Machiavelli, trans. 2003), the relationship between power and individuals’ motivation to engage in political behaviour has rarely been explored. In the first analysis (reported in Chapters 4A and 4B), a key finding was the impact of actors’ seniority, or structural power (Brass, 2017) on the content of their political motivation. Consequently, it became important to explore power further looking beyond seniority to other forms of power including subjective notions of power. Therefore, this thesis will take a reflexive, novel approach to the impact of power on political will, reflecting on the mental representations of the hierarchies and different sources of power held by politicians and officers in the research sample. The findings answering both research questions are presented in Chapter 6, with the presentation of a Political Will in Political Work model.

In summary, the aims of this thesis are to:

- 1) Adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to investigate individuals' motivation to engage in organisational politics
- 2) Explore the context of political work to disentangle the interdisciplinary complexity of political will
- 3) Analyse the impact of power on political will

1.1.1 Personal Interest

Politics has always been a fundamental aspect of my University experience. I found the topic of politics fascinating from an early age. My admiration that politicians and governments could establish something as era-defining as the National Health Service to the secret deals exchanged between individuals and parties inspired me to choose politics for my undergraduate degree at the University of Kent. However, it was not until I studied my MSc in Human Resource Management that I realised the impact politics had on organisations. Using a quantitative methodology, my MSc dissertation examined whether the content of political candidates' goals before an election impacted their goal obtainment and vote share. I found that politicians who set office-seeking, ego-orientated goals gained a larger vote share than politicians who did not.

At this academic juncture, I realised the implications of politics within organisations, broadening my traditional governmental knowledge of politics and seeing the importance of politics outside of that sphere. Alongside, it led me to start to consider the individual motivations of politicians, seeing them less as abstract entities which have a significant influence on our lives and more as people whose job it is to do politics.

While conducting background reading for my MSc, I became familiar with the various definitions of political will from different disciplines, which sparked an interest in developing knowledge about the construct and content of political motivation. I also became aware of how little qualitative methodology there was in the field of organisational politics and the vital contribution qualitative research could make, enabling an in-depth analysis of the concept that has importance in both governmental and organisational realms. Political will permeates both of these and thus brings together two of my knowledge bases of politics and management, creating a fruitful blend to explore and contribute to the extant literature.

1.2 Research Problem

Mintzberg (1983, 1985) displayed how the organisation is a *political arena* that employees need to navigate successfully to flourish. It is often not the case that employees can simply fulfil their formal, sanctioned job role. Instead, all employees need to observe, understand and navigate the political arena, particularly as individuals develop and enact their hierarchical power. Although Mintzberg (1983, 1985) stipulated that political skill and political will were necessary to navigate organisations successfully, the vast majority (over 2,000 articles) of research has focused on political skill. In comparison, political will has received surprisingly little attention in the organisational literature (just 10 empirical articles) even though political will from its origin is considered just as important.

This inattentiveness has likely been exacerbated by a lack of agreement about what the construct is: a disposition, attitude, or intention? Within political science, political will is conceptualised at the group and collective level; the discipline actively neglects the utility of looking at individualised/micro-level motivations. Instead, political science rounds together

key decision-makers (politicians) and investigates their motivation to address policy issues such as climate change. Furthermore, as will become apparent in the following chapters, early OB literature treated political will as a dispositional antecedent to political activity, applying constructs such as the need for power, need for achievement (McClelland 1961, 1975), intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Machiavellianism (Christie & Geis, 1970). Whereas contemporary literature through academics such as Doldor (2017) has highlighted the attitudinal nature of political will. Theoretical propositions also suggest political motivation encompasses a level of prudence and assessment of risk; however, no empirical research has investigated whether these are important features of political will (Kapoutsis, Treadway, Bentley, 2017; Treadway, 2012). The research in this thesis addresses this gap by taking a social cognitive perspective to argue that individuals' interpretations of their surroundings may be important for their political motivation.

There is also considerable debate about the content of political will. Although the research into political will has suggested several frameworks, there have been few inductive studies to examine political will theory. Focusing more on whether politicians mobilise support for policy, political science has presented dimensions such as *resource sustenance*, *degree of analysis* and *participation* in political activity (Kpundeh & Dinino, 2006). OB research suggests political will includes attitudinal dimensions (*functional*, *ethical* and *emotional*: Doldor et al., 2013; 2017). Other theorists have proposed five dimensions including *concern for others* or *concern for self* (Treadway, 2012). More recent empirical work has found there may be two dimensions; individuals can have *self-serving* and/or *benevolent* inclinations. Problematically, there are disagreements about how these are measured and what precisely the benevolent dimension refers to (Blickle, Schutte & Wihler, 2018): Can individuals ever truly be benevolent in their political actions? In summary, there is a lack of agreement in the

extant literature and a need for inductive research to explore the content of political will.

Therefore, the research in this thesis is guided by the following question:

RQ1: What are the dimensions of political will in political work?

Secondly, a key finding emerging from the first analysis was that seniority, or the structural power that individuals hold impacts the content of their political motivation. Yet it seemed that power had a significant influence on individuals' political will that stretched beyond simply seniority. Therefore, building on the findings from the first analysis this thesis explores further the role of power on political will, which is important because power is a fundamental component of organisations and is consistently interrelated with politics, yet few studies have empirically linked the two. Politics has been defined as the exercise of power (Pfeffer, 1981), so it seems intuitive to believe that individuals' motivations for political acts will be affected by the power they hold. This is likely to include objective bases of power; for example, the hierarchical structure may preclude individuals at a low level to engage in some political behaviours because their role may not give them the status to influence others. It may also include different power sources, such as a politician's democratic mandate (French & Raven, 1959).

Importantly, this thesis not only examines objective power by examining different levels of seniority, it also investigates the influence of *perceived* power on political will. Exploring the mental representations individuals hold about their own power can help to provide insight into when and how individuals are willing to engage in organisational politics (Fiol, O'Connor & Aguinis, 2001). Thus, the impact of objective and subjective aspects of power

is an essential element of political will, which the current literature is largely inattentive to. To contribute to the extant literature, this thesis seeks to address this gap by answering the second research question:

RQ2: How does power impact political will?

1.3 Political Will in Political Work

This thesis examines political will in the context of **political work**, which, following Silvester et al. (2021), is defined as:

“Work undertaken by elected or appointed individuals whose roles exist to deliver, support or influence democratic government within local, national and international legislatures (e.g., MEPs, MPs, civil servants, parliamentary staff, and local government officers), or non-governmental organisations including member organisations, lobbyists and professional bodies engaged in political advocacy”

Because political workers include both politicians, whose political activity is legitimate and expected, and public servants, whose (office) political activity is illegitimate, political work provides a fruitful context for examining the tensions between the political science and OB conceptualisations of political will.

Despite the analytical potential of political work, the context has been largely ignored by OB literature (c.f. Silvester & Wyatt, 2018). This is surprising because there is a vast amount of employment within political work. For example, suppose we simply take the UK national legislature. In that case, there are 650 elected Members of Parliament (MP) and appointed researchers, officers, secretarial staff that support the MPs in their duties, be it parliamentary work or casework involving their constituencies. The Civil Service, for example, which is

the permanent branch of the state's administration and responsible for helping the elected government develop and implement policy as effectively as possible, employs 445,480 members of staff in the UK (Cabinet Office, 2019).

The current research examines political will in the political work context of local councils. Local councils are a vast employer: In 2019, local councils throughout the UK employed a total figure of 2.01 million individuals, including around 17,700 councillors, responsible for approximately a revenue expenditure of £94.5 billion (LGIU, 2021). These important figures highlight the massive societal impact of political work, which makes the lack of research in this context even more surprising. Political work is responsible for enormous funds, which affect constituents' lives at the national and local levels. Therefore, the analysis in this research can provide insightful findings for broader research and practice in political and organisational research domains.

Organisational scholars' lack of research into the political work space could be down to the belief that this area of work is fundamentally different from the traditional organisational sphere that is typically examined. It is undeniable that there are differences. The first of which is the conceptualisation of politics across the two contexts. Silvester (2008) notes how politics within organisations is often seen as something that should be minimised or even removed because it is perceived as divisive, harmful and a dark side of workplace behaviour. This contrasts with politicians whose job is to 'do politics.' When referring to these individuals, the perception is that their political activity is a legitimate and essential aspect of their role.

Second, politicians have a democratic mandate bestowed upon them by the democratic election process. Politicians, therefore, have the power to make decisions on behalf of and to the benefit of their constituents and wider society. This also includes the power to decide how to enact their role and what constitutes good performance (Silvester & Wyatt, 2015).

Therefore, applying traditional OB theory and HR management techniques to the study of politicians can seem contrary to the foundations of democracy. Organisational scholars have often veered away from studying political work because it has been considered too complex to provide insights into our understanding of traditional work. However, although there are differences between traditional organisations and political work, it is important to note that there are similarities which allow OB literature to inform our understanding of political work, and for political work to inform our understanding of traditional workspaces in return.

Knowledge from organisational research is relevant and important for political work. For example, political parties fulfil a similar function to Human Resource Management functions by attracting, recruiting and retaining individuals to ensure effective performance both at election time and in-office (Silvester, 2008; 2012). Silvester and Dykes (2007) noted that OB research could improve the selection of politicians to ensure elected representatives have greater diversity. They explain that political candidates must be selected by their political party before fighting for election. Their paper found that applying methods of competency analysis and using existing measures widely used in OB literature, such as cognitive ability, to predict good performance in the workplace, they were able to predict election outcomes. Building on this work, Silvester, Wyatt and Randall (2014) used OB techniques to map politicians' roles and examine the impact of politicians' personalities on performance. In an analysis of two hundred and thirty-one local politicians alongside performance ratings from colleagues and officers, Silvester et al. (2014) discovered that individuals held similar mental

models about the nature of political performance. For example, politicians who are seen as resilient and able to represent others were seen as good performers. This is important because political work is often contested and ambiguous, and despite being guided by different ideologies, Silvester's work shows that they hold a shared latent model of political performance.

Political work can also provide important insight into the functioning of traditional organisations. Political work was considered a valuable context for early management research, which can be seen through the work of Selznick (1949). Within this critical work, Selznick examined the informal and formal tenets of the Tennessee Valley Authority organisations. Like a local council in the U.K., this authority was a branch of the U.S. government at a localised level responsible for elements such as living standards of farmers, developing electrical power, controlling floods and improving navigation. Selznick found that officials played political games in this context, closely related to what Mintzberg (1985) termed 'sponsorship games' where individuals from the Authority reached out to external organisations. In this case, environmentalists offered them power (access to decision-making processes of the local authority) in exchange for loyalty (the environmentalists did not criticise the authority in public). This shows the importance of interpersonal politics and the critical insights researchers can gain when empirically examining spaces of political work. Selznick, used this political work context to show how over time the informal arena forms "unwritten laws" through organisational members' interpersonal relationships, which runs parallel with formal organisational structures and processes. This work is considered a fundamental foundation for modern organisational politics research (Ferris & Treadway, 2012).

More recently, Wyatt and Silvester (2018) demonstrated the advantages of studying the nature of political work for informing our understanding of traditional leadership. They examined the role of politicians personality in predicting leadership outcomes. Because politicians are elected, it was possible to separately examine how personality predicted the leadership emergence (i.e. election) and leadership effectiveness (i.e. in political office) of politicians within the same leadership role. Therefore, they contributed to leadership research by finding that traits had varying, and sometimes paradoxical, impact on different leadership outcomes. This contribution to OB and leadership literature was only possible because elections provide a consistent context where all leaders are elected at the same time under the same conditions. Consequently, this study highlights the advantages of studying political work for OB scholars.

Research has also highlighted that political work provides a context where the juxtaposition between governmental party politics and office-based politics is salient. In a local authority in Israel, Vinarski-Peretz and Kidron (2018) found that public servants engaged in political activity, including exploiting resources and self-serving behaviours to advance. Importantly, they also found that governmental party-politics in the form of a national election period affected the types of political behaviours public servants exhibited. This emphasises how important it is to explore the political work context to examine the interdependence of governmental political work and office politics in relation to political will.

1.4 Contribution

In summary, by conducting a qualitative investigation into political will and political work the current research makes the following contributions to extant theory and literature:

- 1) The research takes a social cognitive perspective. Drawing on attribution theory to examine the causal reasoning that underlies individuals' political activity means it is possible to demonstrate how environment, contextuality and positionality are important for political motivation. This extends current theorising because it indicates that political will is more of a social cognitive process, rather than a dispositional trait.
- 2) The research in this thesis takes an inductive, phenomenological stance by conducting interviews with political workers to explore the content of political will in depth. This contributes to existing research because thus far, of the little research that has examined political will, the work that has gained most traction has come from a positivist epistemology, seeking to confirm established theoretical models. Given the contested nature of the construct and content of political will, the current research addresses the need to explore the content inductively to generate theory.
- 3) The research was conducted in a political work context. By interviewing political workers in local councils this research explores the juxtaposition of those in traditional office roles (i.e., public servants) who may engage in office politics and those whose job it is to be political (i.e. councillors). This research therefore contributes to political will theory by exploring a context that brings together political science and micro-organisational politics notions of political will. Furthermore, this empirical focus allows for the research to look beyond a traditional organisational conceptualisation of power and extend theory by identifying how different forms of power (e.g., expertise of officers, democratic mandate of councillors) guide political will.

- 4) The research examines the impact of power on political will, a focus that was borne out of the findings from the first analysis. Few studies have considered power in the organisational political literature. Some authors have theorised power as important for deciding whether to enact political behaviour (Kapoutsis, 2016) and some empirical work has shown that seniority influences political maturation (Doldor, 2017). However, by analysing qualitative interviews to identify individual's power mental models (i.e., social cognitive representations of power), the current research shows how power can forebear political will, acting to shape and constrain individuals' motivations. Thereby, the current research contributes to extant theory by explicating a social cognitive process that shapes political will.

1.5 Terminologies

This section introduces the terms that are used throughout this thesis. Due to the nature of the project, there are numerous terms that are used differently across disciplines. Thus, it is important to ensure that the conceptualisations and definitions of key terms are made clear from the outset.

Political will

For the purposes of this research, political motivation and political will are used interchangeably. There are multiple perspectives on political will depending on the discipline. Throughout this research, when discussing political will it will be centred around the micro-level OB definition provided by Treadway (2012, p533):

“the motivation to engage in strategic, goal-directed behaviour that advances the personal agenda and objectives of the actor that inherently involves the risk of relational or reputational capital.”

By adopting this definition, this research prioritises the individual-level perspective but remains reflexive about the benevolent and collective aspects of political will encountered in macro-level political science work.

Political activity

In the extant literature, the general term to use when discussing the political activity of others is ‘political behaviours’ that are often loaded with self-serving, negative and undesirable connotations. This thesis takes the lead from Treadway (2012) who seeks to remove the value-laden definitions of political behaviour, treating them as neither negative nor positive but as an endemic feature of organisational life. Such a definition that is appropriate for the conceptualisation of political behaviours within this thesis is one provided by Gerald Ferris whereby political behaviour is defined as the “management of shared meaning” (Ferris, Fedor & King, 1994; Ferris, Ellen, Mcallister & Maher, 2019). This definition focuses on the subjective evaluations of meaning, instead of the view that meanings are inherent and objective properties of political situations. However, whilst it is important to outline a definition of ‘political behaviour’ for the purpose of the thesis the term is considered too narrow, and therefore **political activity** should be used as an umbrella term to incorporate numerous different political behaviours ranging from general political behaviours, such as *workplace political behaviours* which are informal and unsanctioned political behaviours of political workers (both officers and councillors) to enhance or protect

their individual or group's interests. Additionally, political activity can incorporate *governmental political behaviours* that are formalised and sanctioned political behaviours that are required and used by, in this context, local councillors as part of their political duties. More broadly, these behaviours are used by individuals of a governmental, who often hold party-political positions, such as local councillors, Members of Parliament, Members of the European Parliament, Lords within the House of Lords and other governmental institutions. These types of behaviours include politicking such as debating, scrutinising policy, campaigning and public speaking (Silvester, 2012).

Local Council

In the UK, a local council can be defined as “a form of geographical and political decentralisation, in which directly elected councils, created by and subordinate to Parliament, have partial autonomy to provide a wide variety of services through various direct and indirect means, funded in part by local taxation” (Wilson & Game, 2011, p13). These organisations are comprised of individuals that are responsible for the issues and requirements within their localised level. There are two main groups (1) an elected body of local councillors who decide the strategic policy and (2) a management body comprised of neutral, impartial officers to perform the daily running of the council. A more detailed breakdown of a local council can be found in Chapter 3 section 3.2.1.1.

Local Councillor/Politician

A politician is someone who is professionally involved in politics, within an elected office. In this thesis, the term politician will be used interchangeably with ‘local councillor’ or ‘councillor’ who are politicians at the local level. A deeper breakdown of the role of local councillors can be found in Chapter 3 section 3.2.1.1.

Officer

Officers within this thesis are permanent members of the staff within the local council, otherwise known as public servants. These individuals are employed to be impartial, neutral individuals with numerous different duties to ensure the smooth functioning of the council on a daily basis. For a detailed breakdown of the role of officers within local councils see Chapter 3 Section 3.2.1.1.

Power

Power is a complex and disputed term with many scholars and disciplines addressing different components of power which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. For the purpose of this thesis, power refers to (unless stated) “the ability or potential to influence” (Fiol et al., 2001, p224). As this definition refers to the potential to influence, instead of the use of influence tactics, power becomes a social construction that is interpreted by the individual, power is then perceptual in its nature. This will be explored in further detail in Chapter 2, section 2.6.2.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis will be structured as the following:

Chapter Two provides an overview of the relevant literature attached to the features of this doctoral thesis. This starts with an examination of the literature concerning the political arena within organisations, displaying that political activity has been treated as undesirable, neutral and in some regards, desirable. The chapter moves on to outline the empirical focus of research into organisational politics before outlining the central component of this thesis; political will. First, the nature of the political will construct is discussed and how it is treated differently both within and across disciplines. Then the content of political will is explored, presenting the various theoretical models and empirical work examining dimensions of political will. In this chapter, it is argued that a social cognitive perspective via attribution theory can shed light on the construct and its contents because it allows for individuals' perceptions of context and positionality to shape political motivation. Finally, the chapter will provide an overview of the intertwined literature of power, suggesting that to explore political will holistically one must examine the perceptions of power individuals hold and to do so, the literature into power mental models (Fiol et al., 2001) is crucial.

Chapter Three presents the methodological and epistemological foundations of this thesis. This starts by examining the dominant paradigms within organisational politics research, before moving onto the phenomenological, social cognitive and attributional theory perspectives that align to form the bases of this thesis. After this, the political work research context is introduced, specifically local councils which are the focus of this research are illustrated. The sample is presented, including a breakdown of the different groups of officers and councillors and a summary of how they were interviewed. Lastly, the analyses are explored, including the attributional analysis, template analysis and power mental models analysis which shape the findings in Chapters 4A, 4B and Chapter 5.

Chapter Four presents the template analysis seeking to answer the first research question: What are the dimensions of political will in political work? To do this, the chapter is broken into two sections, **Chapter 4A** displays the officers' template analysis including the junior, mid-level and senior officers and then breaks down in detail the thematic codes of their motivation in the same order. Chapter 4A concludes by presenting a model that summarises the dimensions of political will identified within the junior, mid-level and senior officer samples emphasising the role played by their seniority or structural power. The next section, **Chapter 4B** moves on to the councillors, presenting the template analysis of the junior, mid-level and senior and again, presenting all the thematic codes attached to the councillors' political will. Like the previous section, Chapter 4B concludes by providing a model that summarises the political will of junior, mid-level and senior councillors. It also demonstrates that their structural power (i.e., seniority) was a key finding within the template analysis chapters which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5. Chapter Four, therefore, links to contributions 1, 2 and 3 and the 4th contribution stemmed from the analyses from Chapter 5.

Chapter Five stemmed from a key finding for Chapter 4A and 4B, that power has a persuasive influence on political will. Therefore, this chapter introduces the second research question: How does power impact political will? Therefore, within this chapter, a novel power mental model mapping methodology is used to explore different aspects of power and their impact on political motivation more precisely. To start, pictorial representations of 'power political pathways' are displayed, showing the relationships between participants' power, political will and political activity. The chapter then moves on to outline the collective

or shared pathways of each sub-sample, displaying in detail the junior officers moving to the mid-level and then senior's before following the same format with the councillors. This chapter links to contributions 1, 2 and specifically 4 by extending political will theory to identify how perceptions of power across hierarchies either shape or constrain individuals' political will.

Chapter Six provides a discussion of the two studies that comprise this doctoral thesis and outlines the contributions made to extant literature. This is achieved by first providing a summary of the findings, establishing a conclusive Political Will in Political Work (PWPW) Model which brings together both studies. The chapter then moves on to outline the four contributions, which are broken down and discussed in detail. The chapter then moves on to discuss the practical implications this doctoral thesis has, concentrating on the dynamics of the roles of officers and the councillors and how this thesis draws attention to the controversial nature of some of their political activity. Lastly, the chapter finalises by discussing the limitations of both studies within this thesis and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

In most organisations, in most countries of the world, if you mention office or organisational politics, all employees will know what you are referring to. There will likely be an immediate reaction, where the majority will think of the negative connotations. Within the organisational political literature, there are two main branches, one of which follows these negative connotations, being the literature into the perceptions of organisational politics (POPs). The second dominant branch namely political skill, takes a different perspective, treating political activity as neutral in that it can be either good or bad. Within this chapter, the first section will outline these core branches of organisational politics. It will also outline why the political work space is a good context for an investigation to challenge the widely held perspective that political activity is negative given political activity for politicians is often considered a legitimate aspect of their role (Silvester, 2008).

Following on from the first section, the second will examine the construct of political will, the core focus of this doctoral thesis. Within the extant literature, political will is applied in different manners in wider society and across disciplines. Within political science, it is conceptualised as a collective construct, rounding together numerous key decision-makers whereas within organisational behaviour its focus is on the individual. Further, political will is often treated as a disposition, where scholars have applied dispositional proxies to investigate the motivation to engage in political behaviour. This section, however, will outline where the literature diverges from this dispositional tendency and moves beyond dispositions and will move on to highlight how a social cognitive perspective is useful for understanding political will and display how the context, environment and positionality affect individuals' political motivation.

Once this is established the chapter outlines how the content of political will within the organisational behaviour literature is varied and ambiguous. There are numerous empirical attempts at outlining the dimensions of political will within both political science and OB, however, these are varied and there is a considerable lack of clarity around the content of this political motivation. Therefore, the section moves on to outline attribution theory which is theoretical framework for this thesis and allows for an inductive qualitative perspective that seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding of the dimensions of political will.

Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining a summarisation of the literature applied throughout the chapter and brings to the fore the contributions that this thesis makes to the extant literature discussed.

2:1 Organisational Politics

In 1983, Mintzberg (1983, 1985) first characterised the organisation as a ‘political arena’, highlighting a system within organisations that is technically illegitimate or, more accurately, *alegitimate*. This is distinct from other more recognisable systems because a formal authority does not sanction it; it is not widely accepted and is not officially certified by the organisation. The political arena allows individuals to engage in behaviours, such as networking, influence tactics and impression management, that are not part of their formal job role and where individuals circumvent traditional power structures to achieve their goals. Mintzberg proposed that individuals would need to be politically willed (i.e. motivated) and politically skilled in order to successfully engage in political behaviour required to navigate the political arena.

Certainly, evidence suggests that workplace politics is pervasive: In a quantitative survey of 428 MBA students, Gandz and Murray (1980) found that 70 per cent agreed that workplace politics are common. Further, their research suggested that one needs to be a good ‘politician’ to succeed. In contrast, most participants found politics wrong, unfair, unhealthy and thus generally viewed politics unfavourably. Likewise, Buchanan (2008), surveyed 250 British managers from over 107 organisations and found that common political behaviours included building networks, using key players, bending the rules and self-promotion, whilst those less common were using misinformation, spreading rumours and keeping dirt files on individuals for blackmail purposes. Buchanan (2008) also suggested that most managers perceived these behaviours as ethical and necessary and stressed the importance of acting ruthlessly with a strong sense of reciprocity, emphasising what the authors call an attitude of ‘you stab my back, I’ll stab yours.’

This view of politics as “underhand” and “illegitimate” is mirrored in much of the OB literature on politics, which has focused on the negative or dark side of political behaviour (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Kapoutsis, 2016). The early literature considered politics a destructive force within organisations, which might allow individual actors to progress, but would ultimately inhibit organisational success at a collective level. As Silvester (2008) accurately points out, most definitions of political behaviour incorporate a self-serving component. For example, Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick and Mayes (1979, p 77) defines political behaviour as “Intentional acts of influence to **enhance or protect the self-interest** of individuals or groups.”

One of the two dominant branches of organisational politics literature follows this self-

serving and divisive view of political behaviour: research on perceived organisational politics (POPs), which has over three decades of empirical studies dating back to Gerald Ferris, Russ & Fandt (1989) seminal theory. Defined as “an individual’s subjective evaluation about the extent to which the work environment is characterised by co-workers and supervisors who demonstrate such self-serving behaviour” (Ferris, Harrell-Cook & Dulebohn, 2000, p.90), POPs research focuses on the negative outcomes of interpreting workplaces as political. For example, using the 12-item POPs scale (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991), studies have found POPs linked to decreased job satisfaction (Rosen, Levy & Hall, 2006), work engagement (Kane-Frieder, Hochwarter & Ferris, 2014), increased levels of job stress and tension (Vigoda, 2002; Hochwarter, Ferris, Laird, Treadway & Coleman-Gallagher, 2010), a depressed mood at work (Byrne, Kacmar, Stoner & Hochwarter, 2005) and turnover intentions (Chang, Rosen & Levy, 2009), and is higher in lower-level employees who lack power and are less likely to see politics as functional (Ferris, Frink, Galang, Zhou, Kacmar & Howard, 1996; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

POPs research has been vital for understanding that politics is perceptual and involves social cognitive processes that impact individuals’ reactions to their interpretation of the wider organisational environment. Yet, most work in this field has used the POPs scale as a one-off measure of political climate and focused on examining the antecedents, outcomes and the moderators and mediators of POPs quantitatively. More recently, theorists have called for research to examine individuals’ interpretation of discrete political events. This call is answered in this thesis by adopting inductive enquiry into individuals’ political experiences.

The second dominant branch of organisational politics literature is research on political skill. Both Mintzberg (1983, 1985) and Pfeffer (1981) believed that an actor's skill to enact political behaviour may be essential to achieve the specific goals they are seeking. It led them both to certify that political skill is an interpersonal savvy and style construct that could enable the actor to successfully secure resources and influence others within the organisation to ensure effectiveness (Munyon, Summers, Thompson & Ferris, 2015). However, the construct lay dormant for two decades until Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky and Hochwarter (2005) undertook empirical work on political skill by creating the 18-item Political Skill Inventory. This inventory has led to a large field of research into political skill within the management discipline that has been dominated by quantitative methodology. A recent meta-analysis found over 1,824 articles that have examined political skill (Munyon et al., 2015).

The concept of political skill was defined by Ferris et al. (2005, p.127) as "The ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organisational objectives." Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner and Hochwarter (2002) propose that individuals with high levels of political skill understand precisely what to do in different and ambiguous social situations, disguise their ulterior motives, and inspire trust and confidence. This means individuals with political skills can reach higher personal and career success levels because they choose and execute the correct political behaviours. For example, evidence shows that political skill predicts job performance (Munyon et al, 2015), training success (Liu, Ferris, Xu, Weitz & Perrewe, 2014), lower stress levels (Perrewe, Zellars, Ferris, Rossi & Kacmar, 2004) and career success (Todd, Harris, Harris & Wheeler, 2009).

Unlike the literature on POPs, research on political skill assumes that political behaviour is neutral and can cause positive or negative outcomes depending on how it is wielded. This admission has led to a growing area of research that considers politics as beneficial, associated with positive change, restoring justice and providing for followers (Ellen, Ferris & Buckley, 2013; Ellen, 2014) along with higher productivity and innovation (Landells & Albrecht, 2016), career advancement (Hochwarter, 2012) and decision making consensus (Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer, & Bettenhausen, 2008; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010; Kurchner-Hawkins & Miller, 2006).

Research on ‘leader political support’, for example, draws parallels with research on prosocial behaviour (i.e., performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organisation toward which it is directed; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986, p. 711). Ellen (2014, pp. 893) argues that leaders use political behaviours and power to provide, advocate and aid their followers by exposing them to networks, offering them developmental opportunities and the distribution of stretch assignments. Yet, despite the similarities between prosocial behaviour and leader political support, the former is most often based on altruistic or benevolent intentions. In contrast, leader political support draws on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which highlights the role of reciprocity. For example, Ellen et al. (2013) posited that when leaders use political behaviours on behalf of others, followers feel indebted and seek to repay their leaders through effort, commitment, and support for the leader in the future. Thus, unlike traditional conceptualisations of prosocial behaviour, positive political behaviour has closer ties to the original definitions of politics as self-serving because individuals are likely to expect beneficial outcomes in return (Silvester & Wyatt 2018). This calls into question whether political behaviours can ever be genuinely benevolent, as posited by political will theorists, and will be discussed in section 2.4.1.

2.1.1 Organisational Politics and Power

Power features heavily in the descriptions of organisational politics, however, few studies attempt to combine, empirically the concepts. In fact, it is staggering how few studies have incorporated power and politics together beyond measuring the trait-like ‘need for power’ as a dispositional proxy for political will (McClelland, 1961; Shaugnessy et al., 2017) especially considering organisational politics and power go hand in hand (Mintzberg, 1985), with Pfeffer (1981) even characterising organisational politics as ‘power in action.’ Power, therefore, remains largely absent from empirical research within organisational politics. This is surprising considering power is an enormous field of inquiry, and one can note references to power and politics dating back to Aristotle (300BC) and Niccolo Machiavelli (1500AD) who observed the impact of power and politics in organisational life. This section, therefore, provides an overview of how power has been treated in organisational literature.

Power is central to our understanding of society within the broader social science field, and the concept’s ubiquity is unquestionable. However, the scale of inquiry also makes it one of the most challenging concepts to make sense of within social science (Haugaard & Clegg, 2009). There are numerous accounts of what power is within society, and it is essential to acknowledge that none of these accounts and usage of the term ‘power’ is right or wrong. Haugaard and Clegg (2009), in their attempt to frame the field of power within social science, treat each concept of power as a conceptual tool, enabling the researcher to make sense of certain aspects of society.

Scholars such as Aristotle were the first to outline how legitimate and illegitimate power structures separated forms of political work. Aristotle posited that the monarchy, aristocracy

and polity were correct legitimate forms of power over society whilst tyranny, oligarchy and democracy were deviant or illegitimate forms of power (Aristotle, trans. 1985). Machiavelli reframed the conceptualisation of power, whereby power becomes something that is exercised over others, thus the strong control the weak within *The Prince*, a political treatise within the 16th century which argued that the ends could justify the means for the aims of princes and royals. Within Machiavelli's contribution, a Prince manipulates and controls society through subtle, well-considered acts. The Prince then must consider his loyal and disloyal followers and act strategically, determined, and purposeful to ensure he remains in power. If this means he must work deceitfully or cruelly to his loyal or disloyal followers, this is worthwhile if he retains his power (Machiavelli, trans. 2003). Other important notions of power can be noted through the work of Weber (1947), whose inquiry looked at *Herrschaft* and *Macht*. These refer to power (*Macht*), and although there is some controversy around the translation of *Herrschaft*, it generally refers to 'rule' or 'domination' with Weber perceiving power as legitimate or based upon the threat of violence. Weber positioned the individual as the locus of his definition of power, which many conceptualisations of power have built upon (Clegg et al., 2007; Haugaard & Clegg, 2009; Sturm & Antonakis, 2015).

Clegg et al. (2007) notes that power only gained sharp focus for organisational researchers in the post Second World War era. Since then, exploration has been significant, albeit; wide, varied and lacking a unified approach with various authors attempting to frame the field. For example, Fleming and Spicer (2014) sought to evaluate the concept of power in management studies, ordering the literature into a framework of four faces of power: *coercion* of others, *manipulation* of issues, *domination* via influence, and *subjectification* of an individuals' identity. These broad faces of power are similar to the wide range of political games that Mintzberg (1985) suggested (see section 2.4) and point to the connection between power,

political motivation and political action. There are also consistencies in how power is defined in organisations. First, power stems from the control of critical resources (Emerson, 1962; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977), second, power involves perceptions of social relationships, and third, power is situational and relative; some individuals will hold power in some situations and not others. This is important because existing political will research suggests a relatively stable desire to be political, yet adopting a power lens would mean that individuals' motivation to engage in political acts (i.e. power in action) will vary depending on the context.

Structural, Behavioural and Personal Power

Despite definitional consistencies, organizational research on power has typically been siloed into three distinct approaches (Brass, 2017): (1) the *structural approach*: evaluating the control of resources, (2) the *behavioural approach*: looking at the actor's power tactics, i.e. actors ability to use resources, and (3) the *personal sources of power*: such as individual characteristics like Machivellianism. This breakdown of the literature is helpful for this thesis as these categories of power mirror key components of social cognition, where individuals review their surroundings (environmental), consider their efficacy and ability (personal) and identify courses of action (behavioural).

According to the *structural approach*, to which Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983) subscribed, power derives from an actors' position within the hierarchy of an organisation; it favours the social system over the particularities of the individual, such as their personality or their behaviours. Within structural approaches, there are two kinds of positions that can increase or decrease ones' power: formal, the hierarchy, or informal; their network position (Brass, 2017). When discussing the formal, authors refer to the hierarchal role of the actor.

This definition from the OB literature differs slightly from the notion of structural power in political science, which focuses more on the power to “to decide how things shall be done, the power to shape frameworks within which states relate to each other, relate to people, or relate to corporate enterprises” (Strange, 1988, p. 25), or simply power to “change the rules of the game” (Krasner, 1985, p. 14). Within the OB literature, structural power increases when individuals gain promotions and reside in positions with increased seniority. Other members of the organisation accept the power of the position as power resides within the place they take, not the individual holding that position (Mintzberg 1983). This type of power was highlighted in experimental research like the controversial Milgram experiments. It was found that individuals can be manipulated into doing callous and severe acts based on the demands of legitimate authority (Milgram, 1965). Yet, although the formal hierarchal notions of power are perceived to be extremely important, researchers have often sought to investigate the informal rather than the formal. Informal structural approaches demonstrate how individuals’ centrality within the organisation is related to power. Suppose individuals have numerous colleagues who can be used for organisational purposes, often in reciprocal manners or have close ties to individuals who control resources. For example, Brass (1984) found that connections to four executives within an organisation who were powerful and connected to others were positively and significantly related to power. Informal structural power is far more complicated and nuanced than formal power. Complex mapping procedures are often used to capture individuals’ networks but may not represent the lived experience of network and power relationships in organisations.

When considering political will, it is important to acknowledge through this literature that structural approaches could well impact individuals’ political motivation through both formal and informal structural power. There is little doubt that hierarchy and formal power or formal

position will affect how individuals act; as Brass (1984, p. 518) states, “structure imposes the ultimate constraints on the individual.” This holds for political acts; for example, Doldor (2017, and Chapters 4A and 4B in this thesis) found that as managers move up the hierarchical ladder in organisations, those more senior were more likely to engage in a wide variety of political behaviours. Additionally, Buchanan (1999), through his idiographic case study of a single respondent, noted the importance of individuals’ *logic of action*, that is their cognitive schema that links actions to goals, a calculation of the individual that if I do X, the result will be Y, akin to social exchange theory, and is more prominent at senior levels. Further, structural power can provide legitimacy in political acts, for example, the political model of leadership proposed by Ammeter et al. (2002) suggests politics becomes more acceptable and perhaps even expected when in roles with greater levels of power.

The behavioural approach to power focuses on individuals’ strategies and tactics in organisations. Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) grouped these into six categories; *assertiveness*, *ingratiation*, *rationality*, *exchange*, *upward appeal* and *coalition formation*. Other inquiry such as Kilduff and Krackhardt (1994), advancing the power associated with the behaviour of coalition forming and on the basis that power is at least somewhat perceptual, found that having a prominent friend in an organisation was related to an individual’s reputation as a good performer. Most important to acknowledge is that the behavioural approach to power displays a wide range of behaviours that focus on the use of power that is most profitable to the individual as opposed to the organisation. This is where much of the organisational political literature sits because it has focused on ‘power in action’ and the use of behaviours (i.e., political activity) to achieve favourable gains for the actor, often perceived in a self-serving manner.

The third approach concentrates on actors' characteristics, traits and skills, which can be seen as *personal* sources of power (Brass, 2017). For example, Mintzberg (1983) indicates that individuals must have the will and skill to use their potential power and will need higher levels of energy and stamina to do so. As reviewed in section 2.2.3, dispositional traits such as Machiavellianism and Need for Power have been used as measures of the political will. Other research within the personal sources of power approach has noted characteristics such as self-confidence, extroversion, and ambition associated with power (Allen et al., 1979). French and Raven (1959) proposed one of the most accepted frameworks of personal power, outlining 'the bases of social power', seeking to highlight the relationship between the individual using power (O), and the person upon whom power is exerted (P). The authors proposed five bases of power:

1. Reward power: which refers to the perception of 'P' that 'O' has the ability to reward them
2. Coercive power: the perception of 'P' that 'O' can mediate punishments for them
3. Legitimate power¹: the perception by 'P' that 'O' has a legitimate right to influence them
4. Referent power: the identification of 'P' to 'O'
5. Expert power: the perception of 'P' on the expertise or extent of knowledge that 'O' has within a given area.

These bases of power have been linked to numerous leadership outcomes including the influence success of political figures (Gold & Raven, 1992), leaders' transactional and

¹ Legitimate power has cross-overs with structural power as this form of power will be influenced by the position of the actor within the organisation.

transformative leadership style (Barbuto, Fritz & Matkin, 2001), and organisational commitment (Pierro, Raven, Amato & Belanger, 2013) and are still applied widely across the OB literature (Elias, 2008).

Although the power literature can be broken into structural, behavioural and personal sources of power, there is significant cross-over. For example, studies that examine political skill (personal power) often examine political behaviour (behavioural power). Yet in practice, the research on organisational politics research rarely refers to concepts like political skill and behaviour as sources of power. Importantly, very few studies combine structural, behavioural and personal perspectives on power to examine how they interact. This is often because research on organisational politics takes a positivist perspective, which aims to generalise findings beyond the context of data collection. This means how individuals interpret and operate within their structural and environmental contexts has been overlooked. In this thesis, this is redressed by taking a social cognitive perspective on power which is outlined within Chapter 5, which comprises the second study of this thesis, the power political pathways.

2.1.2 Organisational Politics in Political Work

Despite more recent forays into the positive side of politics, there remains a widely held assumption that organisational politics is a negative and self-interested pursuit, which organisations need to monitor, reduce, or eradicate if possible. However, the context of political work challenges this assumption because while it includes individuals who might engage in illegitimate office politics (e.g., public, or civil servants), political workers also include politicians who may consider political behaviours as legitimate. As Silvester (2008)

argued, politics is work for politicians; it is not viewed as a deviant activity that is unacceptable or illicit but something necessary to enact their roles. These contradictory views of organisational politics are problematic for researchers but expanding the study of political motivation and activity to political work also presents a significant opportunity to further knowledge in both OB and political research fields.

A key determinant for how political activity is perceived in political work is a politician's 'democratic mandate' or the power they are bestowed by the electorate to take decisions on their behalf and to decide with relative freedom how they enact their role. This democratic mandate can be problematic; for example, when a sitting MP such as Fiona Onasanya was convicted of perverting the course of justice after lying to avoid a speeding ticket or when Margaret Ferrier MP refused to resign after breaking numerous COVID regulations, there are limited actions to remove them from their role as MP. Yet this power highlights how, unlike traditional workplaces, which are governed by human resource management (HRM) processes that implement sanctions and rules for political transgressions, workplace political behaviours in political work are more ambiguous and contested (Silvester, 2008).

There are, however, commonalities in how politicians are expected to behave and perform. Silvester et al. (2014) investigated behaviours required to work successfully in a political work context. They found officers and politicians in local councils shared latent constructs of performance. Their empirical study consisted of 231 local politicians who provided self-ratings on a political performance questionnaire, with 185 also receiving performance ratings from public service colleagues. They reported five dimensions of political performance; resilience, analytical skills, representing people, relating to others, and most important to this

thesis, politicking, which involved getting involved in ‘political blood sports’ and not always being open and honest in political dealings. Their findings suggest that even though political performance is ambiguous, political workers (officers and politicians) agree about good and bad performance behaviours for politicians and their need to engage in political behaviours (i.e., politicking) within local councils.

Of course, political behaviours are also required in traditional organisations, despite claims to the contrary. Silvester and Wyatt (2018) note that both politicians and business leaders *require* the ability to represent diverse interests, align agendas, operate within highly ambiguous environments and tread a careful path through stakeholders at multiple levels of the hierarchy. In other areas of research, figures such as Kwiatkowski (2012) highlight how politicians use their myriad of contacts (i.e., networking), understanding the politics of the workplace, being visible and sourcing a mentor to achieve their aims. These activities are inseparable from typical office-based organisational politics and highlight essential similarities between political and organisational work. Political work, therefore, presents a crucial context to further our understanding of organisational politics and how politics and power play out in organisations.

In summary, this section shows that since the organisational politics literature emerged in the mid-1980s, two strands of literature have dominated OB research. POPs research frames politics as negative and damaging to those who witness it, yet political skill research positions politics as neutral – positive or negative – and more recently, positive political research has built on this to examine the prosocial nature of political behaviour. This literature highlights that political activity is in the eye of the beholder and suggests that the

same behaviour can be regarded as prosocial, or underhand and Machiavellian depending on the actors' motives. Yet despite the importance of political motivation, Mintzberg's notion of political will has been bizarrely absent from the OB literature until recently. The use of quantitative static measurements of political climate and political skills have also meant that how individuals interpret discrete political events has been overlooked, meaning there has been little insight into the motivational processes that might dictate whether individuals' political activity is beneficial or detrimental to themselves and others, something that this thesis aims to address. In this thesis, it is argued that political work, which includes public servants who might engage in more standard office politics, and politicians whose work is politics, provides a setting where politics is legitimate/illegitimate, contested and ambiguous. Therefore, political work provides a valuable context that is methodologically useful for examining political motivation, a review of which is provided in the next section.

2.2 The Construct of Political Will

This next section outlines the extant literature into the construct of political will, the central focus of this doctoral thesis. Firstly, the section discusses the multiple conceptualisations and definitions towards the construct before moving onto the approaches that political science and management have taken. Lastly, this section will advocate for a social cognitive perspective into the political will construct, highlighting the advantages of social cognitive theory.

2.2.1 Political Will as a Contested Term

The motivation to engage in political activity has typically been regarded in organisational politics and the political science disciplines as 'political will'. However, political will as a construct has been contested across disciplines and broader society. Within the latter, when the public, media, or charities use the term, they often refer to a 'lack of will' to solve or assist crises throughout the world, including starvation, diseases, hunger, war, corruption, or

climate goals. An example of this can be seen by the former United Nations secretary-general who stated that ‘A lack of political will is holding back climate goal achievements’ (Tan, 2019). Because the most common application of political will in broader society is through a ‘lack of’ the concept, there has been little consideration of what political will actually is: There is no unified definition of the construct. This was noted by Hammergren (1998), who characterised political will as the “slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon [which is...] never defined except by its absence. It thus becomes the explanation for every policy failure” (1998, p12). Thompson, Staddon and Stapenhurst (2020, p135) also claim “it is almost a ‘ghost’ concept which only a few have attempted to define”. Yet, over the last forty years there have been several definitions, displayed in Table 2.1. The table starts by displaying the political science definitions of political will, which are overwhelmingly based at the collective level, that is, bounding key decision-makers (politicians) together as a unit of people engaged in a common pursuit of policy. It then moves on to the management definitions, which take an individual micro-level conceptualisation, focusing on *personal* resources and agendas. These differences are explored further in the following sections.

Table 2.1: Definitions of Political Will

Author	Year	Field	Definition
Hammergren	1998	Political Science	This is the slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon. It is the <i>sine qua non</i> of policy success which is never defined except by its absence.
Kpundeh	1998	Political science	Demonstrated credible intent of political actors (elected or appointed leaders, civil society watchdogs, stakeholder groups etc.) to attack perceived causes or effects...at a systematic level.”
Brinkerhoff	2000	Political Science	The commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives and to sustain the costs of these actions over time
Andrews	2004	Political science	Reform space = intersection of ability, authority and acceptance

Anderson, Branchflower, Moreno-Torres and Besancon	2005	Political science	Willingness as evidenced by commitment and inclusiveness
Rose and Greeley	2006	Political science	Sustained commitment of politicians and administrators to invest political resources to achieve specific objectives
Kpundeh and Dininino	2006	Political science	Incorporat[ing] the aspirations of individual leaders, a calculation of the benefits and costs that would result from changes in rules and behaviours, and belief in the ability to muster adequate support to overcome resistance to reforms
United Nations Development Programme	2008	Political Science	Demonstrated credible intent of political actors
Post et al.	2010	Political Science	The extent of committed support among key decision-makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem
Persson and Sjöstedt	2012	Political science	The will of leaders to initiate and sustain reform
Coffman and Beer	2015	Political Science	Willingness of policymakers to act in support of an issue or policy proposal.
Mintzberg	1983;1985	Management	Before engaging in political behaviour, individuals need to demonstrate their willingness or motivation to expend personal resources
Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar and Ferris	2005	Management	Actor's willingness to expend energy in the pursuit of political goals, and it is viewed as an essential precursor to engaging in political behaviour
Treadway	2012	Management	The motivation to engage in strategic, goal-directed behaviour that advances the personal agenda and objectives of the actor that inherently involves the risk of relational or reputational capital

Kapoutsis	2016	Management	The willingness of actors to invest valuable resources in advancing agendas and achieving personal and organizational objectives
Shaughnessy, Treadway, Breland, Perrewew	2017	Management	Consider Need for Power as political will
Maher, Gallagher, Rossi and Ferris	2018	Management	Motivation to act in a political manner

2.2.2 Political Will as Collective

Political science has typically conceptualised political will as the motivation held by a collective group of decision-makers, and thus political will is treated as a group-level construct. This is evidenced by definitions from Coffman and Beer (2015, p 13), who define political will as “Willingness of policymakers to act in support of an issue or policy proposal.” Within this definition, policymakers are a collective body within a political workspace rather than individual legislators. For example, Vogel and Henstra (2015) looked at local governments' climate adaption policies given the significant risk that climate change presents for communities. They affirmed that political will (posed as the collective willingness to take a course of action) is a critical component of public policy success and an essential condition for local adaption policy development.

One of the most wide-ranging and often applied definitions of political will within political science is Post et al. (2010, p659), who define political will as “the extent of committed support among key decision-makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem”. Within their article, Post et al., argued against the use of political will as an individual level concept because they believed the primary reason for exploring political will is that they were concerned about policy and political outcomes. Politics, for them, is a social collective and

thus will likely need a collective level of support to achieve change. They suggested that political will applied as an individual level construct is unhelpful unless the actor was a totalitarian dictator with absolute power to make decisions.

Ankamah and Khoda (2017) adapted the definition supplied by Post et al. (2010) by providing components for analysing political will when fighting corruption in public office, namely (1) *origin of the initiative*: are the advocates for change perceiving this issue as something that requires immediate attention? (2) *comprehension and extent of analysis*: both political leaders and bureaucrats need a holistic knowledge of the problem and the result of actions or inactions (3) *credible sanctions*: are there suitable mechanisms to hold public officials accountable for corruption and (4) *resource dedication and sustenance*: which is proposed as the most crucial component of political will in that there is a need for human resource capacity alongside adequate institutional and financial resources. All these components are considered essential aspects of political will, yet all are based at the group level.

Raile, Raile and Post (2018) differentiated between political will and *public will* for the analysis of policy-making efforts. Public will is when “a social system has a shared recognition of a particular problem and resolves to address the situation in a particular way through sustained action” (Raile, Raile, Salmon & Post, 2014, p. 105). Raile et al. (2018) argued that public and political will (adopting the definition of Post et al. (2010)) cross a meaningful threshold of utility when they express the intentionality of a collective of people. They offered that researchers seeking to bring about positive social change could use their political will and public will (PPW) approach by (1) identifying stakeholders (2) assessment

of stakeholder views of problem/solution (3) alignment of problem/solution understanding and (4) building of commitment/mutual accountability. Again, this research overlooks the role of an individual's motivation in the wider group.

There have been several criticisms of the political science perspective of political will. Persson and Sjöstedt (2012) suggest that political will is too often used as an 'error term,' that is, when leaders fail in their policy endeavours, it is because they lacked the political will (i.e., support). They argue that political science would benefit from looking beyond the collective and considering individuals' behaviour and contextual influences. The authors recommend using *principal-agent theory* (behaviour is guided by opportunity and incentive structures they face: [Braun and Guston, 2003]) to assess the micro-foundations of leadership behaviour and *state theory* (which provides insights into systemic factors shaping leadership behaviours: Bates, 2015; Kohli, 2004) to evaluate the structural factors that influence the behaviour of political leaders. Persson and Sjöstedt (2012) argued that political science needs to be concerned with context and causality as these are important influences on individuals' political will. When examining political will in the context of legislative oversights and corruption, Thompson et al. (2020), also stated there was a tendency "to focus too much on institutional structure and process, and not on culture and behaviour" (2012, p135). Additionally, they suggest that the building blocks of political will should be individual motivation, individual volunteerism, and the legislature's culture, arguing that the will to engage begins with individuals who populate or engage within legislative institutions. This contemporary critique of the political science collective, group-level perspective is vital because it suggests that in order to understand the political will of political workers there is a need to turn to the micro-level perspective of political will dominant in the OB literature, which is discussed next.

2.2.3 Political Will as Dispositional

In contrast to most political science perspectives, OB research has concentrated on exploring the political motivation of individuals within institutions. However, since Mintzberg (1983; 1985) proposed the interdependent concepts of political will and political skill for navigating the political arena in organisations, the latter has received the vast majority of scholarly attention (i.e., almost 2,000 articles: Munyon et al., 2015) whilst political will has received comparatively little (just ten empirical articles in the same time).

Early management research measured political will via proxies, treating the construct *as a trait or disposition* (cf. Ferris et al., 2019). Dispositions are defined as ‘tendencies to respond to situations, or classes of situations in a particular, predetermined manner’ (House, Shane & Herold, 1996, p. 205). Where dispositional antecedents to political behaviour have conceptualised political will, it has often been related to specific psychological needs such as the need for power, need for achievement (McClelland, 1961, 1975), intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Machiavellianism (Christie & Geis, 1970),

Need for power (NPow) is centred around the individual being motivated via a need to control, dominate and influence others, with Winter (1992, p301) defining it as “the desire to have an impact on other people, to affect their behaviour or emotion,” and this was found to correlate with engagement in political behaviour (Liu, Liu, Wu, 2010; Shaughnessy et al., 2017). For example, Liu et al. (2010) found empirical evidence to support the notion that political behaviours are motivated by the fulfilment of psychological needs by

operationalising need for achievement and need for power through a Chinese sample of 283 employee-supervisor dyads. The authors also found that the associations between the needs-based proxies of political will and political activity were stronger when individuals perceived higher levels of organisational politics. Further, Shaughnessy et al. (2017) study of 65 employees in a mental health facility in the United States investigated the relationship between political will (utilising need for power as a proxy) and performance as mediated by informal leadership status. They found that those high in political will were more likely to be recognised as informal leaders than individuals that were low in political will, with their performance contingent on their political skill.

The need for power motive has also been a compelling component of research into *political leadership*. It is often seen as a necessary factor of political success because politicians need effective influence tactics and skills (Winter, 2010). This line of inquiry has typically taken an at-a-distance method to establish that power motives are correlated with the personality of US presidents (Winter, 1987; 2005). In the United Kingdom, Rohrer (2014) used a similar methodology of an at-a-distance content analysis and Leadership trait analysis of British Prime Ministers (PMs). The author reported that PMs with power motivation were perceived by subject matter experts, including political scientists, as significantly more effective during their tenure in office, suggesting that need for power may be important in the context of political work.

Need for achievement (NAch) refers to the level at which individuals are motivated to achieve success when engaging in difficult tasks (Liu et al., 2010). Treating NAch as a proxy for political will, Treadway et al. (2005) suggested and empirically found evidence that NAch

was positively related to self-reported political behaviour, such as self-presentation to project competence. Winter (1987, 2005) suggested that achievement motivation often does not correlate well with a political environment, in this case, Presidents. He suggested that the bureaucracy and the rigidity of politics hampered achievement motivated individuals' success, arguing they are better suited to flexible business-like settings whereby they can use feedback to modify performance. This suggests that politicians who are motivated to achieve specific policies in office may be less successful than those who merely want to gain power, which is essential given that political science frames political will around the collective motivation to push through specific issues (e.g., climate change policy).

Moving away from McClelland's theory of needs, intrinsic motivation has also been used as a dispositional proxy of political will in the OB literature. Intrinsic motivation can be outlined as an inherent tendency to seek novel challenges, foster growth, demonstrate competence, and pursue interests in a goal-directed manner that is inherently rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Treadway et al., 2005). It was posed by Treadway et al. (2005) that self-determination theory, that is, the pursuit of intrinsic goals that fulfil individuals' need for autonomy, competence and relatedness, provides a theoretical link between intrinsic motivation and political behaviour. This is because political behaviour can be used to ensure others recognise individuals' competence through behaviours such as exemplification and building ones' reputation. The authors did indeed find a correlation between intrinsic motivation and political behaviour, providing another example of a dispositional proxy of political will.

Previous research has also found a relationship between Machiavellianism and the use of influence tactics (Grams & Rogers, 1990). Machiavellianism refers to the intention of an

actor to manipulate, deceive or exploit another individual to achieve their intended goals (Christie & Geis, 1970). Grams and Rogers's (1990) study consisting of 80 participants using an organisational simulation of individuals with both high and low Machiavellianism, found those with high scores were more likely to use non-rational forms of influence. Yet, research from Vecchio and Sussman (1991) indicated although Machiavellianism was related to attempts to stop the target of the political behaviour from performing various kinds of actions, they found no relationship between Machiavellianism and influence tactic choice. Thus, although Machiavellianism has been treated as a dispositional proxy of political will, it is inconclusive whether it is correlated with political behaviour (Treadway et al., 2005). Overall, however, the early political will literature found good support for the claim that political behaviours were motivated by the fulfilment of psychological needs and intrinsic drives which have been treated as proxies for political will (Liu et al., 2010).

Political science has also examined dispositional predictors of political engagement and activity, albeit separate from the research focusing on 'political will'. For example, Best (2011), building upon previous research in Germany, used a self-rated measure of the five-factor model of personality to compare the general public and members of the federal states' personality and Caprara, Francescato, Mebane, Sorace & Vecchione (2010) conducted a similar study with MPs in Italy. They both found that politicians had higher levels of extroversion, (i.e., sociable, gregarious), and openness to experience, (i.e., imagination, creativity, innovation), and lower levels of neuroticism, (i.e., were less anxious and impulsive) than the general public. Despite these findings, it is not possible to establish a causal link between personality and political engagement from these studies.

Other political research has drawn on Schwartz's Basic Human Values (1992) to examine what factors guide politicians. Personal values are defined as trans-situational abstract and broad goals that serve as guiding principles for individuals' lives. Like personality traits, values have been found to be stable over time and across contexts (Berzonsky, Cieciuch, Duriez & Soenens, 2011; Schwartz, 2005) but are theorised to be more proximal drives for action with a greater concern for morality (Arieli, Sagiv & Roccas, 2020). Schwartz (1992) proposed ten values that motivate people to express them in different ways: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. Placed on a wheel, values that are adjacent are expected to be compatible, whereas those in opposition are expected to conflict. For example, according to Schwarz's model, benevolence (expressing concern for others) conflicts with self-enhancement values that emphasise gaining power or resources.

Weinberg (2021) compared 106 MPs and 134 unsuccessful political candidates on Schwartz's (1992) values and found MPs were significantly more driven by benevolence to care for others and more driven by new experiences but less motivated to preserve traditions and secure stability within their own lives. Weinberg (2021) also found that those who scored highest on benevolence values were more likely to become an MP than those who attributed less importance to benevolence and that power values were strong predictors of being a parliamentary candidate or elected MP (Weinberg, 2021). Taken together, these findings suggest that successful political candidates may have different motivational characteristics than those not in politics and that, like findings from the OB literature, political ambition and engagement may be predicted by stable traits and values.

In a similar vein, research in political science has also sought to explore the ‘character’ of politicians. James Barber (1972), in his book ‘The Presidential Character’, suggested that the character of the US President is essential to whether they succeed or fail. Politicians who are thought to *lack character* are also perceived to be self-interested actors seeking the rewards and perks of office or what is termed office-motivated (Callander, 2008). Conversely, political candidates who *have character* are considered motivated to implement policy, termed policy-motivated and viewed as authentic and effortful when it comes to their political goals (Kartik & McAfee, 2007). As supposed wisdom assumes that voters will prefer policy-motivated individuals, not office-motivated, it is reported that self-serving office-motivated candidates often demonstrate considerable political skill by emulating policy-motivated candidates in their campaigns. This shows that political activity in the political workspace can be self-serving, mimicking findings in the management literature (Silvester & Wyatt, 2018). Yet, Callander’s (2008) study of electoral competition found that office-motivated individuals did not dominate elections. Thus, all is not lost against the backdrop of very low levels of political trust within our political leaders and their character consistently being drawn into question within the media.

As well as research on the motives of typical employees and politicians, a stream of research examines the motivation of public service workers, which is particularly relevant for the political work context of this thesis as many political workers are also public service workers. Public Service Motivation (PSM) is defined by Perry (1996, p6) as an “individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions.” Within the now, well-cited, public service motivation scale, Perry advanced four dimensions of motives for these individuals, which were (1) attraction to public policy-making, (2) commitment to the public interest, (3) compassion and (4) self-sacrifice. More broadly, the

scale has shown that public service employees are more motivated by intrinsic rewards (satisfaction from achieving/performing a task) over extrinsic rewards (higher salary, promotion, status), suggesting that individuals within the public sector are more intrinsically motivated whilst private sector individuals are more extrinsically motivated (Houston, 2000). However, the PSM literature is substantial and there are many competing definitions of PSM (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Wright & Pandey, 2008). Some have focused on individual predispositions (Carpenter, Doverspike, Miguel, 2012; Clerkin & Coggburn, 2012), whilst others have concentrated on institutional and ethical factors (Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Perry & Hondeghem 2008), and there is also debate about whether PSM is a disposition, belief, value or attitude (Bozeman & Su, 2015).

The tensions in the PSM literature mirror current debate on political will. As has been discussed, of the few empirical articles that have examined political will in OB, most have used dispositional proxies to measure political motivation (e.g., need for power, intrinsic motivation, Machiavellianism), and studies in political science have also focused on stable personality traits, values and aspects of ‘character’ to understand the actions that political actors take. More recently, OB theorists have begun to question this reliance on dispositions and suggested more nuanced examinations of the political will construct.

2.2.4 *Beyond Dispositions*

More recent management research has begun to recognise that political will may be more than a disposition. Kapoutsis et al. (2017), for example, who put forward the ‘Political Will Scale’ (PWS), suggested the construct is *largely* trait-like but suggested it may adapt over time and to different contexts (Blickle et al., 2018; Wyatt, Doldor & Tresh, 2022).

Theoretical work from Treadway (2012), which underlies the PWS, recognises the importance of risk, that is, the evaluation of the environment by the individual. Furthermore, political will is also posited as something which develops in relation to time and positionality. For instance, Doldor (2017) criticised the focus of political will research and its concentration on the nature and the dimensionality of political will and its outcomes. In her qualitative study within the private sector, she found evidence of political maturation; leaders' political will matures through three stages (see section 2.4.2). Thus, instead of merely a trait-like phenomenon, it is likely that political will develops in relation to the power and positionality of political actors.

These contributions to the political will literature across management and political science disciplines that varyingly treat political will as dispositional, 'trait-like' and something that can mature and adapt suggests that more work needs to be done to understand the construct of political will. Given recent developments in the political will literature that discuss the importance of individuals' responses to context and environment (Persson & Sjöstedt, 2012; Doldor, 2017), a social cognitive perspective on political will appears particularly fruitful.

2.3 A Social Cognitive Perspective on Political Will

Social cognitive theory, proposed by Bandura (1986, 1989, 2002), refers to a conceptual framework of motivation including triadic reciprocity of three influences: behavioural, environmental, and personal (seen in Figure 2.1). Central to this framework is the theory that individuals have agency and influence over their own lives.

Figure 2.1: The Social Cognitive Triadic Reciprocity

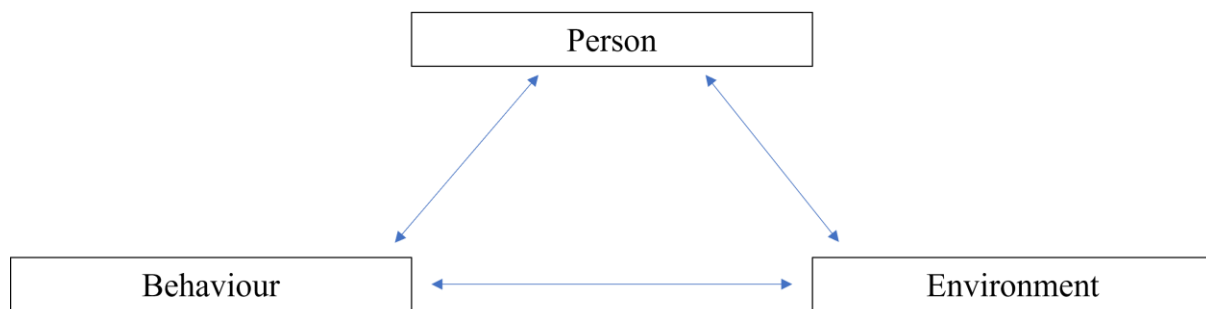


Figure 2.1 displays the triadic reciprocal relationship; each of these influences on human behaviour affects the other in a constant interplay. The *personal processes* above refer to individualised goals, perceptions, emotions, values, self-efficacy or attributions. Within this influence, goals can be significant, as they are motivational tools to energise. *Behavioural influences* are both motivational outcomes and influences on motivation and refer to actions to achieve their goals such as persistence and high levels of effort. Thus, those that are more motivated engage in activities (such as influence tactics) expend effort and persist. Lastly, *environmental factors* such as the external social context or socially modelled influences can significantly affect individuals' motivation.

Social cognitive theory proposes that motivation can be influenced by trait-like dispositions but also by how individuals interpret their environment and anticipate or reflect on their behaviour. Personal processes, behaviour and environmental influences work within a triadic relationship, and this helps people form their goals and intentions for action. The model suggests that political will may be shaped by the person, their emotions, values and cognitions, and environmental influences. A holistic inquiry of the construct of political will should concentrate on dispositional antecedents of political behaviour and examine how people understand and interpret their behaviours and the wider environment.

It is important to highlight that some of the OB literature within political will does recognise social cognitive components. Doldor (2013; 2017) proposed that an essential social-cognitive component of political will was an individual's attitude towards politics at work. Through qualitative interviews with managers in the private sector, Doldor introduced three attitudinal ambivalences: functional, ethical, and emotional. The functional dimension refers to the beliefs about politics' functional and dysfunctional outcomes, in essence, the benefits and downsides of political engagement. The ethical dimension relates to the beliefs about the moral aspects of politics; thus, the so-called 'right' and 'wrong' perceptions of political engagement. Lastly, the emotional dimension refers to the affective experience and the reactions associated with engagement in politics, for example, frustrating or interesting.

Beyond attitudes towards organisational politics, theorists have recognised that individuals are likely to engage in social cognitive processes to survey their environment to decide on political action. Treadway (2012) discusses the motivational buffer of risk, suggesting that individuals appraise their ability and the organisational culture. He points to the work of Morrison and Bies (1991), who suggested that employees would be more likely to seek feedback if they felt the cost of doing so would not damage their public image, suggesting a cognitive appraisal of the environment within which they find themselves. Additionally, some individuals are more likely to engage in influence behaviour because of their increased propensity to risk-taking (Howell & Higgins, 1990). This is alongside a model proposed by Harris, Maher and Ferris (2016), who suggested that too much political will can backfire, one can push too hard, risk too much and not get acceptable levels of return or even perhaps engage in extreme political behaviours. More recently, Wyatt et al. (2022) have shown that

individuals develop cognitive scripts that guide political behaviour, based on their experiences of organisations.

Most theoretical development on a social cognitive perspective of political will has been offered by Kapoutsis (2016) who introduced the notion of ‘political prudence’. He argued that the desire to expend valuable resources to gain various personal, organisational, and societal goals (i.e. political will) is likely regulated by an evaluation of risk, considering other courses of action, and assessing the potential effort expenditure. Kapoutsis (2016) suggested prudence should be seen through the lens of expectancy theory, which comprises three components (Vroom, 1964): (1) *Valence* suggests that individuals’ attractiveness, preference, value and desirability of the potential outcomes are important (Pranav & Bagga, 2014). Thus, when discussing political behaviour, individuals should consider how desirable and important the outcome is to themselves. (2) *Instrumentality*, which refers to the perception of an individual that a course of action is applicable or if other courses of action are necessary. Within politics, this means individuals may appraise the potential courses of action and choose the most relevant for the intended goal. (3) *Expectancy* is the subjective probability that the conscious effort will lead to the outcome that they find desirable. Kapoutsis (2016) suggests that if the individual concludes that the desired outcome only has a small chance of success, this may buffer their willingness to engage in political behaviour. However, the construct remains very loosely defined and empirical research to date has only considered prudence as a virtue to build character and enhance politically ethical behaviour rather than something that may also encourage self-serving or Machiavellian pursuits (Amah, 2022). There also remains considerable debate in the OB literature about whether factors such as risk or prudence act as antecedents and/or buffers to political will (Wyatt et al., 2022).

Political science has also recognised that individuals' expectations about their own and other's behaviour and the wider environment are important aspects of political will. For example, like Treadway (2012), Thompson et al. (2020) drew on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) to propose that political will is a combination of legislators' motivation and volunteerism but also organisational culture, where expectations of the prevalence and likelihood of extrinsic rewards such as career progression or power are important. Persson and Sjostedt (2012) also argue that the social contracts between the citizens and the state and thus the incentive and opportunity structures leaders face will play a substantial role in politicians' political will. Further to the incentive structures, Kpundeh and Dininio (2006, p. 41) define political will as "incorporat[ing] the aspirations of individual leaders, a calculation of the benefits and costs that would result from changes in rules and behaviours, and belief in the ability to muster adequate support to overcome resistance to reforms." This definition from political science echoes notions of political prudence and risk in the OB literature.

In summary, both OB and political science theorists recognise that political will is likely multifaceted. While most empirical work has focused on the dispositional predictors of political activity (e.g., values, needs for power or achievement, intrinsic motivation), there is growing recognition that social cognition is also important for political motivation. OB literature has identified attitudes, risk and prudence as potential forms of, or buffers for political motivation. Political science has begun to appreciate that the way in which policymakers assess their environment can dictate whether they perceive a 'space for action' (Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006) for political activity. This thesis, therefore, takes a social cognitive perspective on political will. Drawing on attribution theory, discussed in section

2.5, the research answers calls for more research on how individuals interpret their environment (Hochwarter, Rosen, Ferris, Ejaz & Maher, 2020) by examining the causal reasoning underlying discrete political events. In doing so this thesis extends theorising about how environment, context and positionality are important for political motivation.

2.4 The Content of Political Will

After reviewing the *construct* of political will, this next section will review the research into the *content* of political will, investigating why people may engage in political behaviour. There is a lack of agreement into the content and dimensionality of political will both within disciplines and across disciplines, which is represented by the disparity in the various dimensions outlined in Table 2.2. The following section will examine these models in turn, first examining research in political science before moving onto contemporary debates in the OB literature.

Table 2.2: The Dimensions of Political Will

Author	Year	Field	Dimensions
Kpundeh & Dinino	2006	Political Science	(1) Domestic origin of initiative (2) High degree of analysis (3) High degree of participation (4) Inclusion of prevention, education, sanctions (5) Dedication of adequate resources (6) Objective monitoring and evaluation
Ankamah & Khoda	2017	Political science	(1) Origin of initiative (2) Comprehension and extent of analysis (3) Credible sanctions (4) Resource dedication and sustenance

Treadway	2012	Management	(1) Instrumental (2) Relational (3) Concern for self (4) Concern for others (5) Risk
Doldor	2013; 2017	Management	(1) Functional (2) Ethical (3) Emotional
Kapoutsis	2017	Management	(1) Self-serving (2) Benevolent

As noted previously, in political science, political will is generally regarded more in its absence than its presence (Hammergren, 1998). For example, within policy discourse, Persson and Sjöstedt (2012) suggest that the literature resorts to retrospective, simplistic arguments that leaders who fail to achieve the goals they stated, in fact, never had political will to begin with. Further, Thompson et al. (2020) recognise that a lack of political will is a perpetrator of poorly performing ethics initiatives when considering legislators and corruption. Yet despite many studies in political science assessing political will by its absence, several attempts have been made to outline its dimensions.

Political will has often been a central theme in the study of curbing corruption. Kpundeh and Dininio (2006) suggested six indicators can serve as demonstrations of political will in this context. These were (1) *domestic origin of initiative*: do the key decision-makers perceive corruption as an issue or are they being influenced to perceive it as an issue (2) *high degree of analysis*: does the regime understand the complexities of the corruption issue (3) *high level of participation*: have the key decision makers adapted a strategy which includes multiple key stakeholders (4) *inclusion of prevention: education and sanctions* have the regime considered others methods other than punishment as this has been seen as ineffective (5) *dedication of*

adequate resources: have the key decision-makers formulated enough resources and (6)

objective monitoring and evaluation: are key decision-makers open and accountable, providing information of success or failure to the public? Further studies such as Ankamah and Khoda (2017) have applied similar indicators; origin of the initiative, comprehension and extent of analysis, credible sanctions and resource dedication and sustenance to an empirical study in Singapore and Bangladesh. Using political science outcomes measures such as the Transparency International's Corruption Perception index amongst others, the paper found that political will does has a positive influence on government's anti-corruption efforts. Although suggesting that political will alone may not be sufficient, it was a necessary condition to fight corruption.

Although the dimensions of political will within Kpundeh and Dininio (2006) and Ankamah and Khoda (2017) do consider personal processes, such as attitudes (i.e., whether corruption is a concern), knowledge (i.e., of corruption and its interventions), intentions (i.e., setting a strategy) and self-regulatory mechanisms (i.e., monitoring and evaluation), they focus primarily on the steps a leader needs to take to successfully engage in activities that might curb corruption for the collective. In doing so, this work aligns more with a leaders' political efficacy for leading collective political activity (in regimes, countries or societies). It does not consider the individual leaders' *personal* motivations or their reasoning for wanting to curb corruption, which is problematic and marks a distinction between the management literature, which has given greater focus to individuals' personal desire for political engagement.

The management literature on political will is built upon the characterisation by Mintzberg (1983, 1985) of the organisation as a political arena, and his assertion that members had to be

both politically skilled and politically willed in order to be successful. The political games, presented in Table 2.3, that can be enacted within organisations display how wide-ranging political activities can be; they penetrate all divisions within organisations. For Mintzberg, politics involves actors from all elements of the organisation, from chief executives to line managers, to unskilled operators, whereby all these individuals have the opportunity to negate traditional power structures. Mintzberg also went on to outline the reasons *why* individuals play ‘political games’ within organisations. In essence, this was one of the first theorising’s on organisational political will and included resisting authority, attempting to change the organisation to building power. These rather aggressive motivations (e.g., to defeat rivals) also reflect the perspective on organisational politics at the time as being Machiavellian and divisive.

Table 2.3: Characteristics of the Political Games Played in Organisations

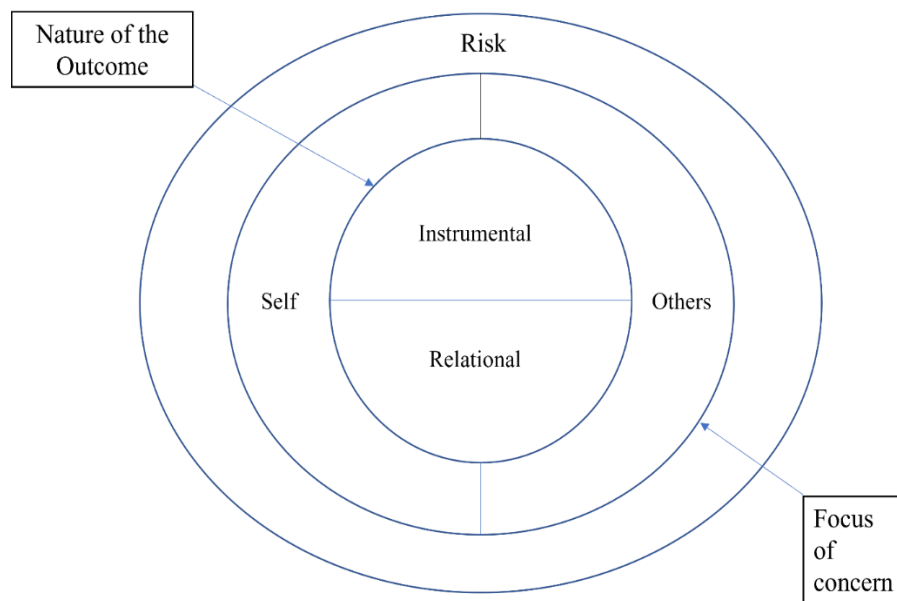
Power Game	Main Players	Reasons played	Relationship to other systems of influence
Insurgency	Unskilled operators (in large groups), lower level managers and sometimes professionals (singly or in small groups)	To resist authority (or other legitimate power)	Antagonistic to legitimate systems
Counter Insurgency	Senior managers	To counter resistance to authority	Coexistence with legitimate systems
Sponsorship	Any subordinate or junior, usually managers, personal staff, or younger professionals	To build power bases (with superiors or seniors)	Coexistent with authority or expertise
Alliance building	Line managers	To build power base (with peers)	Substitutable for legitimate systems, or else coexistent with authority or expertise
Empire building	Line managers	To build power base (with subordinates)	Coexistent with authority or expertise; sometimes substitutable for legitimate systems

Budgeting	Line managers	To build power base (with resources)	Coexistent with authority or expertise
Expertise	Operators and staff specialists	To build power base (with real or feigned knowledge and skills)	Coexistent with expertise, or substitutable for it
Lording	Unskilled operators and their managers (sometimes professionals)	To build power base (usually with authority, especially bureaucratic rules)	Coexistent with authority (or expertise or ideology)
Line vs staff	Line managers and staff analysts (sometimes support staff)	To defeat rivals	Coexistent with authority for line, antagonistic to it for staff
Rival camps	Any alliances or empires, usually in middle line	To defeat rivals	Substitutable for legitimate systems
Whistle Blowing	Usually lower level operators or analysts	To effect organisational change	Antagonistic to legitimate system
Young Turks²	Usually higher level line managers and/or staffers, sometimes professional operators	To effect organisational change	Antagonistic to legitimate systems

Despite Mintzberg's theorising on political reasoning in the mid-1980s, political will was not picked up by OB researchers until the mid-2000s with the empirical work discussed in section 2.2. It was not until 2012 that Treadway sought to theoretically advance the concept and clarify the 'poorly understood term' at the individual level of analysis (Treadway, 2012, p530). He developed a multi-dimensional framework of political will, known as the padlock model, which proposed five dimensions: instrumental, relational, concern for self, concern for others and risk (see Figure 2.2). The first four dimensions are considered to be distinguished upon two axes: (1) target of concern which reflects the competing drives of concern, that is, concern for self and concern for others and (2) outcome, which incorporates the instrumental or relational dimensions. These dimensions are explored below.

² This term stems from a political reform movement attempting a replacement of the Ottoman Empire by progressive liberals. The term has since become synonymous with progressive members of organisations or political parties which are seeking a radical reform of such institution.

Figure 2.2: The Padlock Model of Political Will



The instrumental dimension of political will suggests that individuals are self-interested actors; how they behave is shaped solely by a need to please their own goals and desires. This is akin to the majority of the organisational political literature, which considers political actors to be self-interested and self-motivated. Treadway (2012) proposed this dimension is linked to needs for power (i.e., to gain influence and control), achievement (i.e., to seek mastery over environment) and intrinsic motivation (i.e., need for competence and relatedness). He also proposed that it links to social exchange theory because while individuals will seek the maximisation of personal benefit, reciprocity will oblige individuals to seek a balance.

The relational dimension in the framework acknowledges the importance of the relationships employees form with their “supervisors, co-workers, company, or network of precursors to political behaviour” (Treadway, 2012, p539), so is in contrast to the economic and practical nature of the instrumental dimension. This dimension emphasises that relationships carry meaning by producing internal definitions of self and signalling one's character and

reputation to others. Thus, the relational dimension is an essential aspect of political will because it recognises the power of relationships to mould political behaviour.

The ‘concern for self’ dimension concentrates on individuals’ identity in the pursuit of political behaviours. Treadway (2012) proposed this dimension is linked to self-esteem and self-enhancement, defined as “the desire or observed reality of seeing oneself and by extension one’s actions, traits, and attitudes in the most positive light” (Pfeffer & Fong’ 2005, p374) and argued they are driving forces for the acquisition of power and influence.

The ‘concern for others’ dimension is argued to be a collective, communally based concept that can benefit others, yet importantly, it is not merely an altruistic motive. Treadway (2012) acknowledges that this dimension is similar to McClelland’s ‘socialised power motivation’, which can be described as the motivation to gain power for the benefit or improvement of others and is theoretically linked to organisational citizenship behaviours, such as civil virtue (Graham & Van Dyne, 2006) and Ellen’s concept of leader political support (Ellen, 2013; 2014; 2016). The concern for others dimension mirrors the political science literature on political will: It suggests that political will is aimed at the benefit of others; in the political science discipline, political will is the execution of the power to bring about a change for good. However, the difference is that Treadway positions it at the individual- rather than group-level, whereas political science conceptualises political will as multiple key decision-makers who are bound together and are driven for this communal betterment.

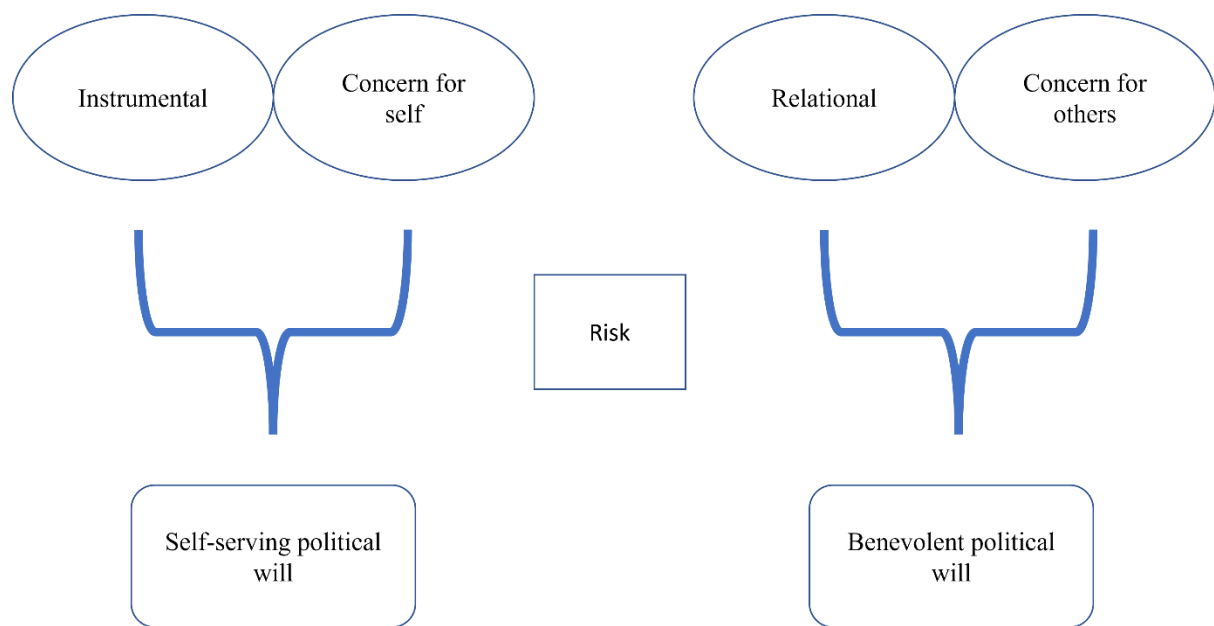
As discussed in section 2.3, the Personal Risk dimension highlights a cognitive regulator of political behaviour. The dimension suggests individuals appraise their ability and situations to

determine the level of risk, or potential for negative personal outcomes, associated with political behaviour. Therefore, risk is proposed as a critical regulatory buffer when individuals consider acting politically.

2.4.1 The Political Will Scale

To provide an empirical test of the padlock model, Kapoutsis et al. (2017) developed a Political Will Scale (PWS) similarly to the Political Skill Inventory (PSI: Ferris et al., 2005). The authors took the five dimensions from Treadway's (2012) multi-dimensional framework and used them to guide item generation. The scale development was achieved through a quantitative, cross-national and multi-sample investigation from Undergraduates in America, alumni in Greece to employees in the transport industry. They found that a two-factor structure fits the data best when conducting a factor analysis followed by confirmatory factor analysis. They labelled the two dimensions as self-serving and benevolent. These two dimensions incorporate the previous five, as shown in Figure 2.3. Notably, the authors argue that political will should be treated as an affective state, whereby individuals have stable and dominant drivers of political will but are also heavily influenced by situational characteristics, highlighting the importance of social cognition.

Figure 2.3: Treadway to Kapoutsis Model of Political Will



The self-serving dimension encompasses the ‘instrumental’ and ‘concern for self’ dimensions of Treadway’s (2012) framework. This dimension is therefore characterised by the actor seeking instrumental gain. When validating the scale, the authors found this dimension was closely associated with McClelland’s need for achievement and need for power but was not related to the need for affiliation and only partially related to intrinsic motivation. The benevolent dimension captures a motivation to pursue the common or collective good. Kapoutsis et al. (2017) states that their data supports the assertion that political behaviour may be described as self-sacrificing, where the individual is looking to improve the position of others or the group. The researchers found this dimension was closely associated with the need for affiliation and intrinsic motivation but not related to the need for power and only marginally related to the need for achievement.

This measure is an important development for the political will literature; it has brought some much-needed empirical validation to the political will construct within management. It has also attempted to provide a holistic view of the content of the motivation to engage in political behaviour, incorporating both self-serving and benevolent dimensions, building on recent theoretical and empirical research that shows politics can be used to increase team cohesion, and provide resources for others rather than for merely self-serving gains (Ellen, 2013).

However, there has been controversy regarding the notion of benevolent political will proposed by Kapoutsis et al. (2017) as the authors provide conflicting definitions of this dimension. Initially, they describe political will as a “multidimensional construct consisting of both self-serving and *altruistic motives*” (2017, p2254), alongside proposing that their data “supported two emergent themes, benevolent and self-serving, that reflect the over-arching themes of Treadway’s work: that political behaviour may be both self-serving and self-sacrificing” (2017, p2274). They also treat benevolence as more of a community-based phenomenon: “self-serving is a type of self-focused motivation, while benevolent is a type of other- and organisation-focused motivation” (2017, p2273). However, they also suggest that benevolence is related to reciprocity: “Benevolent political will, it seems, embraces more tactics [than self-serving] that benefit the target of influence (e.g., reasonably explaining an argument, showing facts or data, exchanging benefits and *building reciprocity*) beyond mere ingratiation” (2017, p2274). This was further noted by Blickle et al. (2018) who highlighted that two of the benevolent items (“when I am right, I am willing to act politically” and “I would use political tactics to improve my working conditions”) are highly heterogeneous and

potentially unrelated to benevolence toward others. Blickle et al. (2018) also challenged the relationship between benevolence and altruism, and in their study, they found no link between the two. It is also unclear how exclusive the dimensions are: Can someone be motivated by self-serving and benevolent dimensions simultaneously? Therefore, despite the assertion from Kapoutsis et al. (2017) that individuals can have self-serving or benevolent motives, there is debate about how the dimensions work together and the altruistic and self-sacrificing nature of benevolent political will

2.4.2 Attitudinal Dimensions

In contrast to the majority of the political will research, which is positivist and quantitative, Doldor (2013, 2017) draws on qualitative interviews to outline three dimensions to political will; functional ethical and emotional. Within these attitudinal dimensions, functional refers to beliefs of outcomes (functional or dysfunctional), ethical refers to moral aspects (right or wrong), and emotional refers to affective experience such as frustrating or interesting. Examining political will through the lens of gender in organisations, Doldor found that woman's experience in politics was fundamentally different from the male political journey, particularly because of masculine organisational cultures. For example, when it comes to the functional considerations, some women engaged in masculine political practices for increased personal visibility, networking opportunities and coalition forming for functional benefits. When considering the ethical attitudinal dimensions, women differed from their male counterparts by discussing politics' victimising nature and consequences. The third dimension of emotion saw differences regarding gender as some women found political engagement as emotionally draining because of the perceived masculine norms of political activity.

Following the significant development of the attitudinal dimensions, Doldor (2017) explored political skill and will's political maturation through semi-structured interviews with 38 leaders within two global organisations. This was achieved by breaking down the sample by seniority, assessed via the participant's job grade, title and personal role description into three levels. These levels consisted of junior leaders (emerging leaders with team/project management responsibility), mid-level leaders (with department/programme management responsibility) and senior leaders (established leaders with division/country or global responsibilities).

Focusing on the political maturation of political will, Doldor (2017) builds a three-stage model. Stage one is Naivete and Discovery, where individuals move from obliviousness to a basic understanding of the political arena. This stage is marked by attitudes of political behaviour being driven by self-interest, unlikely to produce positive outcomes and a low willingness to engage in politics. Stage two is Coping and Endurance, where individuals start to accept politics as enduring in organisations, start to consider politics as more functional and individuals meet politics with ambivalence: Politics is seen as functional and dysfunctional, right and/or wrong, pleasant and/or stressful. Stage three is Leveraging and Proficiency, where individuals are political in a pragmatic and emotionally detached manner and see politics as important for leadership.

Importantly, Doldor's qualitative investigation makes two key contributions to the political will literature: (1) the way in which individuals perceive politics is very likely to influence their motivations to engage in politics. If individuals develop attitudes that suggest politics is dysfunctional or unethical, they may be less likely to be involved in political situations. (2)

political will is likely to develop/mature over the course of ones' career. Intuitively, leaders are likely to adapt and mature their motivation, given more knowledge and experience within the system of politics in organisations. From this perspective, the environmental process is important for individuals' political will. However, despite demonstrating the importance of individuals' lived political experiences, Doldor's work focuses on politics as a self-serving act and does not acknowledge the benevolent or collective nature of political will. This leaves open various vital questions, such as do people become more/less self-serving or more/less benevolent over time?

In summary, both political science and OB have made moves to explain the content of political will. Political science has focused on the steps individuals need to take to achieve political change and focuses far less on individuals' personal motivations. In contrast, OB literature has presented three key models of personal political will: Treadway's (2012) Padlock model, Kapoutsis et al. (2017) two-factor political will scale and Doldor's (2013; 2017) attitudinal dimensions. Despite these recent advancements, the content of political will remains contested in terms of the number and nature of dimensions, and whether benevolent political will is selfless or reciprocal. Current theory also falls short of identifying a more comprehensive range of factors that may influence individuals' social cognition concerning political behaviour, such as perceptions of power, the context they find themselves within, their perception of the organisational culture, their position within their hierarchy of the organisation, their mental representation of the reputation they have with colleagues or a more nuanced understanding of the evaluation of risk individuals undertake. The inductive qualitative stance taken in this thesis addresses these issues. Using qualitative interviews with political workers from three different levels of seniority, the current research gains insights from interviewees about how their perceptions of the environment, seniority and power shape

their political motives. In doing so this research identifies a more nuanced set of dimensions of political will in political work outlined within Chapters 4A and 4B. In order to make this contribution, the current research draws on attribution theory as a theoretical framework.

2.5 Attribution Theory and Political Will

According to attribution theory, individuals engage in a sensemaking process when encountering novel, surprising or threatening events (i.e., political activity). During this process of sensemaking, individuals produce causal attributions which refer to explanations we make concerning the behaviour of ourselves, the behaviour of others, or even the events we observe or hear about. In this thesis, attributions are defined as “a statement that refers to a causal relationship where the speaker implies that a specific outcome (for example, I developed my network) is a consequence of a particular cause (for example, because I wanted to learn more about the organisation)” (Silvester, 2004, p.231). These are relevant to political activity because they concern ambiguous and surprising events, which politics in the workplace often is, with multiple different interpretations of individuals’ actions and motivations.

Attributions are important for motivation because the causal explanations individuals make about their experiences help channel motivation to engage in similar activity in the future. This is the basic premise of Weiner’s (1985) attributional theory of motivation, which suggests that the causal attributions individuals make for their or others’ successes and failures affect future motivation and behaviour. To provide more depth, Weiner’s (1985) proposed that causal explanations reflect a number of dimensions which have psychological consequences. For example, the locus of causality dimension refers to the perception of the individual that the outcome was caused by their own actions. An internal attribution would

mean the individual believes the self was the cause of the outcome, an external would indicate the individual attributes environmental characteristics to the outcome. The locus, therefore, has psychological consequences such as an influence on self-esteem or pride. The stability dimension refers to whether individuals perceive the cause of the outcome to be stable over time or changeable and has psychological outcomes such as future hope or future hopelessness. Lastly, the controllability dimension refers to the individuals' perception around the control they had over the outcome, and this can have psychological consequences such as feelings of shame and guilt. Therefore, the attributions individuals make when encountering novel and surprising events (i.e., like engaging in political activity) can have future motivational and behavioural consequences.

In line with Weiner's attributional theory of motivation, behavioural reasoning theory (Westaby, 2005) proposes that the causal explanations or reasoning individuals make for their behaviour link peoples' beliefs, motives, intentions, and behaviour. This suggests that causal attributions, or reasons for political activity can be a motivational driver for individuals' intentions to engage in political activity and future political behaviour. It is therefore proposed in this thesis that political will is a cognitive and motivational process where attributions represent political reasoning or motivation and are more proximal to political activity than more stable values, or political will as conceptualised by Kapoutsis et al. (2017) and Treadway (2012) but are more distal than intentions.

Existing research recognises the importance of attributions with research from scholars such as Martinko, Gundlach & Douglas (2002) proposing the importance of attributions in behaviours closely related to workplace politics. In their paper, they proposed that the

attributions individuals make concerning workplace events are a primary factor in motivating both the emotions and behaviours that result in counterproductive workplace behaviours. For example, in their model, they proposed that individuals making internal/stable attributions can lead to guilt and shame and therefore ‘self-destructive’ counterproductive behaviours such as absenteeism, passivity and lower performance. Other research has recognised the importance of attributions for leadership with scholars such as McCormick and Martinko (2004) who proposed that the causal reasoning processes that leaders go through affect the perceptions of goals, self-efficacy and leadership task schema which affects the leader’s selection of strategies and therefore the enactment of behaviours. Furthermore, within the political work context, Silvester and Wyatt (2018) suggest causal reasoning provides insight into how individuals interpret the political landscape. More recently, Wyatt et al. (2022) found causal reasoning for workplace politics events impacted the development of employees’ political scripts or mental schemas that guided their political activity.

Therefore, this thesis adopts attribution theory as a theoretical framework to uncover the causal reasonings of individuals’ political activity which can shed important light on the social cognitive process of political motivation.

2.6 Summary of the Literature

In summary, the majority of the literature on organizational politics tends to view politics as either negative or neutral. One dominant strand focuses on the perceptions of organizational politics, conceptualizing it as a self-interested and detrimental phenomenon. This strand employs a quantitative methodology, using a 12-item POPS scale to assess the negative outcomes of politics, such as decreased job satisfaction or turnover interventions (Rosen, Levy & Hall, 2006; Chang, Rosen & Levy, 2009). Another strand also utilizes a quantitative

approach, using an 18-item scale to evaluate the political skill of actors. This strand treats politics as a neutral activity, and research has shown that political skills can lead to positive outcomes such as training and career success (Todd, Harris, Harris & Wheeler, 2009; Liu, Ferris, Xu, Weitz & Perrewe, 2014). While most literature on organisational politics views it negatively or neutrally, some contemporary research recognizes the potential positives of political behaviour. For example, leader political support theory (Ellen, 2017) suggests that leaders use political behaviours for the benefit of their followers. This highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the role of politics in organisational settings through a more diverse range of research methods.

Additionally, whilst empirical attention within OP has been focused on the political climate and skill of the actor, the motivation to engage in organisational politics, whilst considered equally vital for forty years (Mintzberg, 1985) has received little attention. Plagued by competing definitions from OB, political science and broader society, there are scholarly disputes whether political will is a collective phenomenon or an individual one. The predominant view within political science is that political will at the individual level is not a valuable avenue for research because individuals will need a collective base of support to influence the political arenas that political scientists investigate, politicians. Yet, the OB literature has demonstrated the utility of an individual focus (Treadway, 2012; Kapoutsis et al. 2017) in how employees select political tactics and develop political motivation over time (Doldor, 2017) and these factors are equally important for office-based workers and politicians. It is therefore argued in this thesis that an individual-level perspective on political will is important for understanding the complexities of political work. This empirical focus is theoretically important because not only does this grow the management learning from politics which has been found to be fruitful (Silvester, 2008; Weinberg, 2021) it also

looks beyond the traditional organisational conceptualisation of power and explains how power guides political will in a management context (officers) and political will in a political context (councillors). This means that this thesis offers power as an explanation of why political will may be different in two disciplines.

The content of political will is also contested in the literature. Political science construct treats political will as inherently beneficial; it is concerned with the collective good and is rarely self-serving. However, within the management literature, it is predominately self-serving. The goal of ones' political will is to benefit oneself; indeed, there are some benevolent motivations to be political. However, questions are raised over whether political will can genuinely be altruistic alongside the question of what benevolent political will truly is (Blickle, 2018). With multiple frameworks outlining different dimensions, greater clarity is required to understand the content of political will. This thesis, ergo, takes an inductive and phenomenological stance through qualitative interviews to further our understanding of the content of political will. Such an approach was highlighted by Doldor (2017) as a fruitful avenue to provide insights however, this research considered motivation for a wide range of political activity, rather than focusing on the self-serving element of politics at work.

The nature of political will as a construct is also debated. Most empirical research in OB has treated it as dispositional and trait-like and used proxies such as Machiavellianism in measurement models. More recently theorists (Treadway, 2012) have proposed it remains stable but maybe malleable over time. Work on political will as a collection of attitudes has also suggested it is a construct that matures over time (Doldor, 2017). The literature also

points to but has not empirically explored, the importance of social cognition in political will. Concepts such as risk and political prudence demonstrate how the wider context, positionality and power may be important for the development of individuals' political will. This thesis, extends this line of inquiry by advancing a social cognitive perspective on political will. Through the use of attribution theory, examining the causes of political activity and thus identifying the causal reasoning i.e. the why of political activity, demonstrating that the environment, the contextuality and the positionality are essential for political motivation. Therefore, indicating that the construct may be more of a social cognitive process.

Despite power being a consistent descriptor within organisational politics, it is rarely studied in conjunction with politics in empirical research. Although some research measures the trait-like "need for power" as a dispositional proxy for the motivation to engage in politics (McClelland, 1961; Shaugnessy et al., 2017), power remains largely absent from empirical inquiry within organisational politics. This is surprising, given that OP and power are closely intertwined (Mintzberg, 1985). In order to address this gap in the literature, this thesis examines the impact of power on political will through an analysis of qualitative interviews. The research identifies social cognitive representations of power, known as "power mental models," which demonstrate how power can influence political will by either shaping or constraining individuals' motivations.

As a result, this thesis addresses two research questions. The first research question is: 'What are the dimensions of political will in political work?' To answer this question, a template analysis is applied. Additionally, the extracted attributions are used as a basis for power

mental models, which are used to answer the second research question: 'How does power impact political will?'

In conclusion, this chapter has introduced the organisational political literature with its two main branches of perceptions of organisational politics and political skill which have different perspectives into the connotations of political behaviour. The former takes a negative and self-serving view, whereas political skill takes a neutral conception. Given this, this thesis argues that the political work space can challenge these assumptions given politics in this environment is often considered legitimate. The chapter has outlined the construct and content of political will, inspecting how the construct has often been treated as dispositional and the content is ambiguous and lacks clarity and therefore argues that a social cognitive perspective can be useful to develop a more nuanced understanding of political will, aided by attribution theory, this thesis' theoretical framework. The chapter concluded by summarising the extant literature and outlining the contributions that this doctoral thesis makes to the extant literature discussed.

The next chapter of this thesis, consequently, outlines how the empirical studies within this thesis were established to address the first research questions (RQ1) What are the dimensions of political will in political work. Within this chapter, the dominant paradigms within existing research are considered whilst shedding light on the philosophical perspectives underpinning the methodology that comprises this thesis.

Chapter 3 : Methodology

This chapter introduces the epistemological and methodological considerations of this research. First, the chapter provides an overview of research paradigms and their relevance for this research. The chapter outlines how the organisational politics literature has been dominated by positivist epistemology and introduces the important role of phenomenological enquiry to examine how individuals interpret the political arena. It is argued that a phenomenological perspective is informative for studies guided by social cognitive theory because both emphasise how individuals interpret personal, environmental and behavioural cues. Second, the chapter outlines the methodology, introducing the empirical focus of the political work research context: officers and councillors of a local council. Third and finally, the chapter outlines the analyses undertaken within this thesis, displaying the phenomenological linkages between the attribution-based template analysis in Chapter 4.

3.1 Research Philosophy

When conducting research, three central components need to align to form a comprehensive exploration: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. *Ontology* is one of the oldest branches of philosophy which dates back to Aristotle, and it refers to the study of being, that is, of what exists or indeed, does not exist; in essence, it is looking at the nature and structure of reality (Guarino, Obeicle, Staab, 2009). *Epistemology*, however, looks at the nature of knowledge, what form does knowledge take, and how is this knowledge validated? The central features of epistemology are questions such as “What is knowledge”, “What things do we, in fact, know?”, “Can we be sure that we have any knowledge?” (Ladyman, 2007). With many branches of philosophy, there is no correct answer to these questions; different branches of philosophical thought will approach them differently. Lastly, *methodology* refers

to the appropriate methods for acquiring knowledge, which should align with the epistemology discussed previously. The methodology becomes a set of rules and procedures which researchers do or should follow (Godfrey-Smith, 2003).

The branches of philosophy within social science often range from positivist to interpretivist with other branches such as critical realism (Archer, Bhaskar & Collier, 2013), pragmatism (James, 2020) and postmodernism (Boyne & Rattansi, 2017). This section will concentrate on the two dominant strands of positivist and interpretivist enquiry. These two strands vary based on their ontological, epistemological and thus their methodological beliefs. Table 3.1 displays the differences in these regards and outlines how the theoretical framework, i.e., social cognitive and attribution theory in this thesis, maps onto these perspectives and beliefs. Furthermore, ontologically, positivists believe in an independent, objective reality which researchers should seek to uncover and observe. Interpretivists believe that realities only exist in the form of meanings, interpretations, and constructions created by individuals. Thus, the world and the reality we experience are always interpreted.

The ontological assumptions of the branch of philosophy a researcher positions themselves with should lead directly to epistemology and methodology. For positivists, epistemology is centrally concerned with creating generalisable, law-like regularities through objective observations of the social world. This is typically achieved methodologically through large sample sizes and quantitative methodologies. For interpretivists, epistemology is centrally concerned with individuals' meanings and thus interpretations of the world; even single idiographic cases are helpful to researchers because single interpretations of the world contain rich, insightful data. These two branches of philosophy alongside the theoretical

perspectives adopted in the current research are outlined in Table 3.1. As will become apparent in the next section, the previous literature within the fields of organisational politics and political will has primarily adopted a positivist epistemology. This thesis argues that to advance the literature on political motivation, inductive research is necessary to explore the interpretation of political workers.

Table 3.1: Overview of Key Philosophical Perspectives

	Positivist	Interpretivist	Phenomenology	Social Cognitive Theory	Attribution theory
Ontology	The real social world can be discovered and exists within an independent domain. For science to observe this independent, discoverable world, one must objectively use observations and measurements.	Humans do not have direct access to the external (real) world. Reality is in the form of meanings and constructions; it is subjective and constructed by humans. The world humans experience is interpreted.	Reject the concepts of objective research and instead seek to explore the person and human behaviour. These individuals reflect the society in which they live within.	Bandura (1989)³ social cognitive theorists stipulate we learn through our own experiences and observing the behaviour of others. Humans then are central to the theory, and their own agency is an important underlying assumption.	Researchers take a predominantly positivist approach, indicating they seek an independent, discoverable domain. Some researchers take an interpretivist stance, using qualitative data to interpret the experience of individuals.
Epistemology	Based on objectivism. Science should be value-free, whereby the researcher is separated, detached, impartial. Knowledge should be gained through observations and measurements. Theories are produced and confirmed through falsification or induction.	Knowledge is subjective; we can only access individuals' meanings and interpretations of the world. Knowledge or the truth is centrally based on the authenticity of interpretation.	Phenomenology seeks to formulate a condition to objectively study things that are normally regarded as subjective; it seeks to be as scientific as possible in its approach. There is divergence. Husserl believed researchers should seek to establish and then describe the 'knowledge of essences.' The foundation for knowledge stems from the essence of phenomena. Heidegger, however, differs in his epistemological approach, whereby instead of description, researchers should be entirely interpretivist. Interpretation is not something a researcher can simply choose; it's an integral aspect of their research.	As a branch of psychology, this is typically positivist; however, it can be approached with an interpretivist perspective.	Traditionally this has been positivist, treating causal attributions as private and internal phenomena, and thus researchers have advocated a quantitative approach. However, (Silvester 2004)⁴ highlighted attribution theory can stem from an interpretivist perspective that considers language and communication as a dynamic and creative process.
Methodology	Based on statistical, quantitative methods with large sample sizes, seeking generalisable statistics and mathematical models from the data.	Inductive, qualitative methods with small sample sizes. Hermeneutic observations are concerned with understanding, often based on interpretation or dialogue.	Qualitative. They are often either descriptive methodologies if stemming from the work of Husserl or interpretative if stemming from the work of Heidegger.	Social cognitive methodologies are often quantitative in their approach because they usually stem from the field of psychology. Qualitative elicitation of Power mental models (see chapter 5) are an example of social cognitive methodologies. Underlying assumptions of power mental models stems from social cognitive theory.	Traditionally this has been quantitative, using questionnaires and behavioural vignettes. However, when advocating an interpretivist position, researchers have used qualitative methods such as the Leeds Attributional Coding System (LACS).

³ Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American psychologist*, 44(9), 1175.

⁴ Silvester, J. (2004). Attributional coding. In C. Cassell, & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (pp. 228-241). SAGE Publications Ltd

3.1.1 Dominant Paradigms in Organisational Politics

To ensure that this thesis is positioned in an intellectually comprehensible manner, the ontological and epistemological positions of previous research are important to consider, so the positives and limitations of the extant literature are reflected in the methodological choices of this thesis. There is a preference for positivist, quantitative studies within the organisational political field, producing generalisable and law-like regularities. This positivist approach is epitomised by questionnaires and large-scale studies that produce measurement scales that can be used for future researchers to continue the positivist and quantitative investigation into the various political constructs. For example, over 1,824 studies into the political skill construct (Munyon et al., 2015) are overwhelmingly positivist and quantitatively based. The size of this research field can largely be explained by the proliferation of the Political Skill Inventory, an 18-item scale developed by Ferris et al. (2005). Likewise, when considering perceptions of organisational politics, a 12 item POP's scale (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) has dominated enquiry. For political motivation, Kapoutsis et al. (2017) developed an 8-item scale of political will, which was an attempt to accelerate the literature concerning the construct, again encouraging researchers to follow the positivist tradition and use the scale for future studies. Lastly, although there is no unifying definition and thus no agreed-upon measure of political behaviour (Ferris et al., 2019), a six-item scale has been commonly used to measure individual political activity (Treadway et al., 2005). Therefore, the current literature is dominated by quantitative methodologies, albeit, there are a handful of qualitative papers that examine organisational politics (Buchanan 1999, Doldor, 2017; Wyatt & Silvester, 2018; Wyatt et al, 2022).

There are many advantages to the positivist quantitative methods that dominate organisational politics. For example, researchers can produce large-scale studies with large sample sizes that can produce generalisable results, sometimes on a representative basis. Additionally, the role of the researcher is fundamentally different. Researchers are independent and distant from the participant, seeking objective, statistically based results without the researchers' supposed bias on the participant and the findings. However, to advance the literature into the concept of political will, adopting a different methodological choice can be a useful tool, instead of continuing the conservative positivist approach, investigating minor variations of theoretical models (Cassell & Symon, 2004). An interpretivist, qualitative methodology to political will can offer innovative, creative and insightful research that can underline a critical eye on existing literature. When wanting to establish the dimensions of political will in political work (Research Question 1), using a quantitative methodology seeking objective knowledge with the researcher at a distance, only serves to confirm existing theoretical models. However, advocating for qualitative methods with a phenomenological perspective, this study can access individuals' interpretations, meanings and constructions related to their motivation to engage in political activity. The following section will outline the epistemology and methodology of the research within this thesis, starting with the inductive phenomenology and then how this relates to social cognitive theory and attributional theory in the current research.

3.1.2 Induction & Phenomenology

Whereas deductive analysis focuses on confirming data consistency with existing assumptions, theories, or hypotheses.; inductive analysis interprets raw data to uncover underlying themes, enabling theory to emerge organically, unrestricted by deductive

methodologies (Thomas, 2006). This approach is essential in investigating political will due to the contested nature of the construct and its content, necessitating the need to go back at this early stage of theoretical development and inductively generate concepts and themes. This approach aligns particularly well with phenomenology, as both aim to observe and uncover underlying themes from raw data. Phenomenology however, as will become evident, specifically focuses on explicitly describing the lived experience of individuals.

Phenomenology is a complex philosophical movement to define or outline because it has several themes. Philosophers who have adopted phenomenological positions have diverse interests, a different understanding of issues, and interpretations of the method within phenomenology. At its broadest, one could position phenomenology as a “radical way of doing philosophy” (Moran, 2002, p4) whereby the attempt is to study phenomena, that is, “anything that appears to someone in their conscious experience” (Gill, 2014, p.3). Founders of phenomenology such as Husserl and later Heidegger wanted to ensure philosophical enquiry was investigating the lived experience, exploring the life of the living human subject. Phenomenology (particularly for Husserl) was to carefully describe things as they appear to the conscious mind of the human subject. However, phenomenology does have several themes, with the most significant disparity between Husserl, who advanced a descriptive account and Heidegger suggesting an interpretivist approach to phenomenology.

Husserl is considered the founder of the phenomenological movement; he sought an alternative to traditional methods used by the natural sciences. Instead of the objective reality that natural sciences seek to outline, Husserl posited that only our experience of the world, our subjective human experience, is knowable. His work aims to describe phenomena and thus informs descriptive phenomenological methodologies, where researchers seek to

describe the essence of experiences. This descriptive method has been termed ‘reduction’; Husserl believed researchers should seek transcendental reduction, possibly the most controversial element of his approach. Husserl believed researchers should seek to suspend their assumptions concerning the phenomena because research requires an epoche or bracketing. The phenomenologist becomes free from everyday assumptions within the epoche and disconnected from everyday life (Gill, 2014). Following this reduction, the researcher should seek to isolate ‘essences’ which are ever-changing features and structures of phenomena and describe these essences as precisely as possible. These essences for Husserl are the *foundation of knowledge*. This assumption of the epoche has gathered substantial criticism and marks a distinct difference between Husserl and Heidegger.

Heidegger developed an alternative to Husserl’s descriptive phenomenology, advocating and inspiring an interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Heidegger rejected components of Husserlian phenomenology (Moran, 2000, p.20), particularly in his seminal treatise *Being and Time* (1962). Instead of the epoche, which Heidegger criticised as something that was not possible to achieve, Heidegger believed that “phenomenology is the science of the being of entities – ontology” (Heidegger, 1996, p.33). This meant that Heidegger’s phenomenology marked an epistemological difference, where he focused on the *Dasein*, i.e., the *human experience of being*. For Heidegger, human beings are inseparable from the world we live in and exist. Our relationship to the world is interpretive and relational, suggesting that we are always within a context. If this is the case, we must consider elements such as individuals’ culture, history, and language as everyone lives in a culturally and historically conditioned environment. To explore this, Heidegger posited that interpretation is central; it is not a choice; interpretation *is essential for researchers*.

This thesis builds upon Heidegger's phenomenological perspective of interpretation alongside social cognitive theory and attribution analysis and thus adopts a qualitative methodology to explore individuals' political will. The phenomenological inquiry seeks to explore the conscious experience of the individual. This links to social cognitive theory as the underlying assumption of social cognitive theory is that the agency of the individual stems from individuals' interpretations of their environment, behaviour, and personal processes. In addition, the attributional analysis identifies a form of social cognition by eliciting the causal explanations individuals make concerning a particular phenomenon using either a positivist or interpretivist epistemological position. This thesis, as explained in the following section, adopts the latter.

3.1.3 Social Cognitive Theory and Attributions

As discussed in section chapter 2 section 2.3, social cognitive theory posits triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1986) whereby the person, the environment and the behaviour all interact and affect one another. Scholars such as Gallagher (2012) and Zahavi (2011) have argued for a phenomenological inquiry into social cognition on the basis that it helps to explain the full diversity of personal-level cognition. Thus, an examination into the reasoning and conscious experience of the individual is essential when evaluating how individuals make sense of their social environment. Stemming from a social cognitive perspective is attributional theory (Heider, 1958), which evaluates how individuals engage in a sensemaking process when they come across a surprising, novel, or perhaps threatening event. Notably, the 'founding father' of attribution theory, Heider, built this theory upon phenomenological epistemological assumptions (Rogers, 2011).

The concept of attributions aligns with the work of Heider and Kelley, who posited that individuals try to be rational and attempt to guide their actions through naïve psychological beliefs (Graham & Folkes, 1990). In essence, individuals search for understanding, seeking to comprehend why events occur and why other people acted in a certain way to seek what can be described as mastery. This links well with phenomenological epistemology as attribution theory is concerned with how people know things, and phenomenology seeks to explore individuals' conscious, lived experience and thus their explanations for phenomena.

Traditionally, attributions have been studied from a positivist position because these attributions have been conceptualised as internal, private phenomena (Silvester, 2004). Because of this assumption, attribution theory has adopted chiefly a quantitative methodology, using questionnaires and behavioural vignettes. The former has been the most common method of investigation into causal attributions and include the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ: Peterson, Semmel, Von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky & Seligman, 1982) and the Occupational Attributional Style Questionnaire (OASQ: Furnham, Sadka & Brewin, 1992). These questionnaires require participants to consider numerous hypothetical events, identify the possible causes for these events and rate them on a series of causal dimensions. However, this assumption that attributions are private, internal phenomena is not conclusive. When individuals seek to make sense of the world to master their environment, they also need to share their understanding to interact successfully with other people (Silvester & Chapman, 1997). Indeed, being able to make sense of ones' environment and communicate that sensemaking process has been displayed as vital in organisations, particularly in crises or times of change (Weick, 1988). In this public sense, these attributions align more with an interpretivist epistemological focus, whereby language is treated as dynamic and creative. Attributions from this stance are termed *communicated* attributions,

which are essential because they can persuade others to adopt this view of causal reality. Thus, other individuals learn different perspectives concerning the cause of events that they have not observed themselves.

.

Therefore, qualitative data can extract communicated attributions, including interviews, conversations, team meetings, speeches, company reports, letters, and even emails (Silvester, 2004). These attributions will then be able to uncover key insights into how individuals make sense of their political environment and their causal motivations within the political arena. The quantitative perspective of attributions does not seek to explore the individual's lived experience, and respondents have little or no freedom to impart their knowledge, meaning, or relevance of the attribution to the researcher. The qualitative perspective of attributions, however, allows for the interviewee to provide contextuality, their lived experience and thus their meaning to the researcher, thus fitting a phenomenological epistemology and providing a valuable way to investigate the research questions concerning the dimensions of political will (RQ1) and the influence of individuals' mental representations of power (RQ2: see Chapter 5). Therefore, to address the research questions posed in this thesis, a *qualitative* methodology is adopted to examine the attributions or motivational reasoning behind the political activity. The methodology is outlined in the next section.

3.2 Methodology of the Current Research

This section introduces the participants, procedure and analyses taken to address the research questions in this current research. Before examining the sampling strategy, it is first essential to present the research context.

3.2.1 The Political Work Research Context

This thesis is positioned within the political work context, which can be defined as, “Work undertaken by elected or appointed individuals whose roles exist to deliver, support or influence democratic government within local, national and international legislatures (e.g., MEPs, MPs, civil servants, parliamentary staff, local government officers), inter-governmental organisations (e.g., United Nations), or non-governmental organisations engaged in political advocacy, including lobbyists, member organisations and professional bodies (e.g., International Sports Federations)” (Silvester et al., 2021). Despite being a large field of work, management and organisational psychology have been largely absent from the study of politicians and political workers. Instead, they have left research to political scientists who take a macro rather than a micro perspective on issues such as motivation and behaviour. However, OB scholars could garner essential insights from the political work space, which spans across most countries globally. For example, political behaviours are critical for politicians and the ability to perform them successfully, i.e., political skill. Gaining insights from individuals whose job it is to behave politically and whose performance within their role is vital to their career success could further the literature into OB’s study of political motivation and activity. Likewise, OB studies can also provide insights to aid the development of the political work space. For example, building on a wealth of management and leadership literature, organisational scholars can shed light on the micro-level behaviours of political leaders and guide how politicians may be developed to perform successfully. Thus, OB scholars must explore the political work space and politicians for the betterment of both.

Where there have been contributions into the political workspace as discussed in chapter 1 section 1.3, research from industrial and organisational psychology has applied techniques to conduct competency modelling on the role of politicians to establish shared mental models of performance in political roles (Silvester et al., 2014). Other pieces of research have drawn upon trait theory to find factors such as personality and cognitive ability to predict political performance (Wyatt & Silvester, 2018). Researchers have also identified that work stress is a salient concern for politicians, which may affect their performance in office (Weinberg, 2017; Flinders, Weinberg, Weinberg, Geddes & Kwiatkowski, 2018).

As well as politicians, political work also concerns those individuals whose roles exist to deliver, support or influence democratic government within local, national and international legislatures (Silvester et al., 2021). There has been significant management research in this domain, particularly in a civil service context. For example, researchers have looked at workplace diversity in the UK civil service and English local authorities (Andrews & Ashworth, 2013; 2015), whereas other researchers have looked at the vital role the apolitical civil service plays in intergovernmental relations in the case of a post-devolution UK (Parry, 2012). However, rarely, do scholars look centrally at the political nature of the work. It is even rarer that scholars seek to investigate both the party-political component of political work and the apolitical side; examining the *political nature* of both of these components is near absent from academic inquiry.

It is likely that the lack of inquiry into the political nature of political work is at least partially due to the difficulty of gaining access to politicians and other individuals inside of the political work context. Politicians are public-facing individuals who are generally cautious

around divulging information to anyone that could be used against them. Simonton (1998), for example, details how difficult it is to get access to politicians to understand their decision making. This is in addition to another difficulty when seeking to gain access, in that politicians are very busy individuals who work significant hours. Searing (1994) details the years it took for him to conduct his research into political roles; the relationships he had to build to gain access, the very early mornings, late evenings and numerous places up and down the country he had to meet his potential interviewees at various locations such as country homes, hallways or terraces. For many academics, such an ad hoc schedule is not possible and far too expensive to consider. Additionally, methodologies have recently been criticised for holding up critical time for MP's and their offices. For example, a study by Kings College London and the London School of Economics was criticised across political parties after sending fake emails to investigate the link between voters and constituents through an email experiment (Allegretti, 2021). When considering the civil service, similar issues arise both within the national government and local government, particularly when research has *any* notion to the 'political.' It is a primary function of the role of these individuals to remain apolitical and even when one talks through in detail that a study is not breaching any of their required neutrality, the term is still one which can put members of the civil service on edge which makes access difficult.

3.2.1.1 Local Councils. Despite the challenges of recruiting political workers to interview, the current research was conducted in the context of U.K. local governments, which comprise political workers as public servants and politicians. Local councils are responsible for the affairs of a town, county, or district instead of the central government. The term 'local council' incorporates community, neighbourhood, parish, and town councils under the same umbrella. They are responsible for improving the well-being of their communities and seek to

provide the best possible services for their region. These local councils are prevalent throughout the U.K., where 398 principal councils consist of; 24 county councils⁵, 181 district councils⁶ and 193 unitary councils⁷. If one considers parish, town, community, neighbourhood and village councils, approximately 11,930 local councils in the U.K. (LGIU, 2021).

Within Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, there are only unitary, single-tier councils, whereas these are less prevalent within England. These unitary councils provide all services for the constituencies. Within England, local councils are sometimes divided into tiers, whereby the county council is considered the upper tier, the district council the lower tier. Each is responsible for different services. For example, County councils cover the entire county and provide around 80% of the services such as adult social care, children's services or highways. Whereas District councils cover a smaller area within the county, providing localised services such as housing, local planning, and waste collection. This current research includes employees within both upper-tier and lower-tier councils. Incorporating different structures of local councils was considered essential to create a well-rounded picture of the local council context. All councils have a similar prerogative: to provide services for their communities and to serve the individuals within their areas. The political workers in these councils are the focus of this study and comprise Councillors and Officers, and these roles will be outlined in the following sections.

⁵ County councils are responsible for services for the whole of a county in the UK

⁶ District councils are responsible for a smaller, specific area of the county

⁷ Unitary councils are responsible for the entire local services of the county all within one council rather than dividing responsibility into district councils

Councillors

Councillors are political workers elected to represent constituents within a specific geographical location, generally for four years, when they can then stand for re-election. Councillors generally focus on the strategic direction of policy, normally within party political bases. Like national government representatives, local government councillors are typically members of political parties such as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats, independents, and others. One can observe resident groups such as housing associations at a local level.

Although all councillors are elected on the same basis to serve the ward that they stood to represent, councillors do form a hierarchy within local councils, as shown in Figure 3.1. The top of the hierarchy is typically the *leader of the council* or *elected Mayor*. Then depending on the organisation of the council, there are *cabinet members* or *heads of committee*, contingent on whether the council has adopted a cabinet or committee system to conduct itself within. Below that are individuals such as *leaders of the opposition*, which have more status and information gathering opportunities than others, similar to that of *vice-chairs of committees*. In addition, one can position *experienced councillors* above *first-term councillors*. This is because there is little formal training for councillors, so in councillors' first term in office, they need to engage in a period of learning and develop familiarity with the role on the job. With seniority comes a more extensive network, and they often create more knowledge about the role

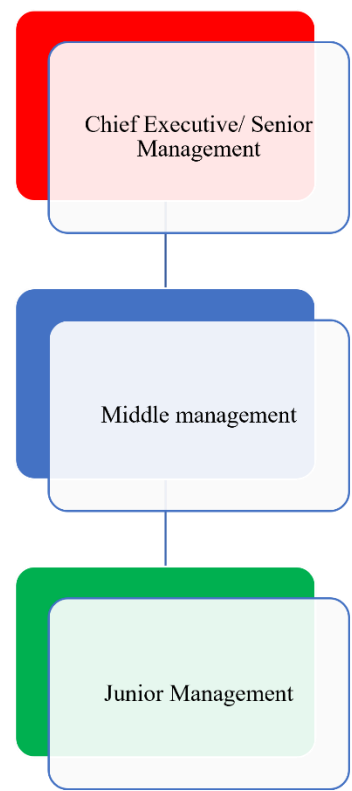
Officers

Officers are public servants and political workers who have the responsibility within the council to implement the policies of councillors and perform the daily running of the council.

Alongside the day-to-day management of the council, some officers are expected to provide unbiased, professional advice and support to councillors as they are often specialists in their specific departments. For example, a finance department is likely to have individuals with expertise in finance and accountancy. The officer component of the council is like a traditional, bureaucratic hierarchy which can be seen in Figure 3.1. Within local councils, there will often be a Chief Executive who oversees the management of their local council. The organisational structure flows down to several heads of departments or strategic directors within a senior management team and then other layers of management teams depending on the size of the council and/or department. All these individuals hold differing levels of power through their office and their job role, but generally, the higher one climbs the bureaucratic structure, the more power individuals hold.

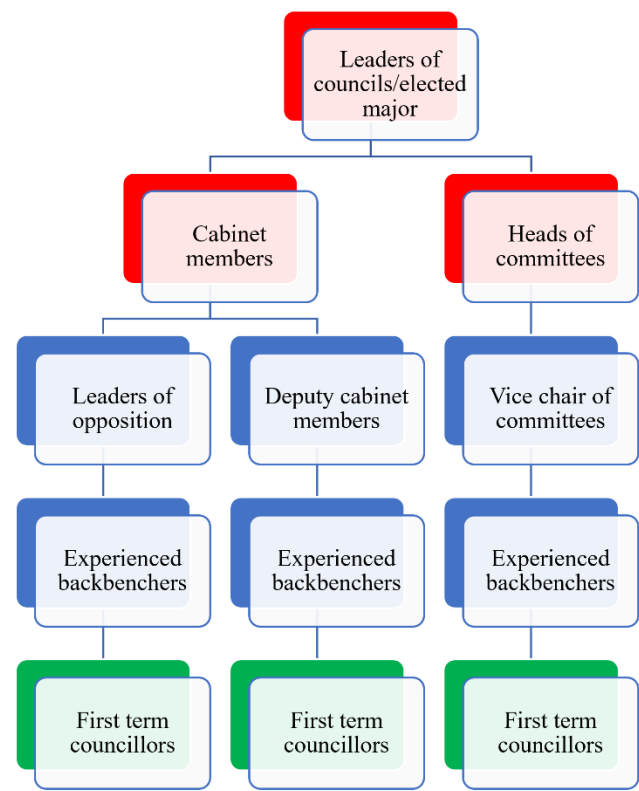
Figure 3.1: Hierarchical Structure of Leadership within Local Councils

Officers



Junior sample, Mid-level sample, Senior sample

Councillors



Junior sample, Mid-level sample, Senior sample

3.2.2 Political Activity in Local Councils

Despite being political workers, officers must be neutral, unbiased and apolitical. So, an understandable question would be, why is this study investigating individuals that must not be engaged in politics? This is a legitimate question; however, although officers do not engage in governmental political activity associated with political parties and traditional government, they participate in the organisational political arena like most other workers. They are likely to engage in workplace political activity. For example, Buchanan (2008) found that most British managers perceived political behaviours as necessary and ethical within organisations. Thus, officers are likely to engage in influence tactics such as self-promotion, supplication or perhaps ingratiation, and other political behaviours such as networking, image building, selective application of important information, or an exchange of favours.

In contrast, Councillors must perform politics, as politics *is their job* (Silvester, 2008). This includes governmental political activity associated with party, electoral and governmental politics. Yet, the politics these individuals enact is also like the workplace political activity associated with the officers. Councillors will need to influence, persuade, network at an individual level to succeed within their role. Silvester et al. (2014) found ‘politicking’ was an essential component of political performance which comprised engaging in secrecy and deception in the politician role. In an analysis of the councillor role using interviews with 32 councillors and 21 officers, Silvester (2013) mapped the role of a local councillor and developed the Political Skills Toolkit suggesting there are six areas of political activity that a local councillor should seek to develop. Firstly, *local leadership* is essential; councillors must engage with their community members. *Partnership working* is vital; building relationships with officers, peers or community groups, therefore, requires political action such as

networking. *Communication skills*, councillors need to have excellent communication across different settings. *Political understanding*, for example, councillors need to ensure they develop and promote a political vision; this requires governmental political activity, which is unlikely to be seen within traditional workplaces. *Scrutiny and challenge* need to ensure they effectively provide a constructive challenge both inside and outside the council. Lastly, *regulating and monitoring* refers more to the judicial process whereby councillors must understand legal responsibility and protocols when scrutinising. These core political skills highlight how important it is for local councillors to effectively engage in governmental and workplace political activities.

3.2.3 Sampling Strategy

The current research adopts a qualitative methodology, and the aim was to sample at least 60 political workers to allow experiences of individuals across different roles and levels of seniority to be captured, with Table 3.2 presenting a breakdown of the sample used. 60 interviews were considered a viable, albeit comprehensive sample size for this thesis. Although as Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) suggest, saturation is a useful conceptual tool, it does, however, provide practical guidance for robust research prior to data collection. Therefore, 60 was considered enough to offer a rounded picture of the interpretations of figures within local councils and enough for the sub-samples to be comprehensive enough to isolate important themes. This was therefore in line with research indicating that the mean average within PhD projects was 31 interviewees with the average of PhD's taking a phenomenological approach being 25 (Mason, 2010). Additionally, breaking down the hierarchical structure into different groups follows studies that have examined seniority and the maturation of political behaviours in traditional organisations. For example, Doldor

(2017) examined how political will and skill developed in junior, mid-level and senior-level managers. The research indicated that political will developed and matured based on the position one held within the hierarchy. Therefore, it was essential to interview the various hierarchical levels within local council structures, from chief executives to junior management and leaders of councils to first-term councillors to capture different levels of power. Only interviewing individuals at a lower or senior level would neglect critical literature findings that political will matures based on seniority. Sampling by seniority means this research examines formal sources of power, as well as perceived differences in power across the sample.

The sample therefore comprised $N=60$ interviewees, with equal numbers across the two samples i.e. 30 officers and 30 councillors. Individually, these were divided into three levels of seniority, with 10 junior officers, 10 junior councillors, 10 mid-level officers and 10 mid-level councillors and finally 10 senior officers and 10 senior councillors. The hierarchical groupings are based upon a thorough analysis of the structure of councils through in-depth discussions with key figures at numerous councils and analysis of governmental factsheets outlining the make-up of local authorities throughout the U.K (LGIU, 2021). For example, discussions were held with subject matter experts from three different local councils with figures including a long term Head of Finance, a leader of a council with over 20 years experience within local councils and a retired Chief executive with over 40 years of experience across the hierarchy.

For Officers, the groupings range from *junior officers* ($n=10$) consisting of employees such as cabinet policy advisors and lower-tier managers with team responsibility. *Mid-level officers* ($n=10$) include heads of departments, and the most *senior* ($n=10$), such as chief

executives, have responsibility for the management of the council. For Councillors, it was also important that different forms of hierarchical power were sampled. As seen in Table 3.2 the groups ranged from *junior level* ($n=10$) which consists of first-term councillors to *mid-level* ($n=10$) which consist of councillors with experience, vice-chairs of committees or opposition leaders. *Senior-level councillors* ($n=10$) consist of individuals such as leaders or mayors of the council, heads of committees and cabinet members. Table 3.2 also provides the gender, age and political affiliation where appropriate of the interviewees in this study.

Table 3.2: Sample of Officers and Councillors within Local Councils

Officers					Councillors				
	Description	Sample Size	Gender	Average Age	Description	Sample Size	Gender	Average Age	Party
Junior Level	Emerging managers within local government, generally with a level of team management responsibility	10	6 F 4 M	36	Newly elected local councillors, whereby this will be the first time they were elected	10	5 F 5 M	50	3 Conservative 3 Labour 4 Liberal Democrats
Mid-level Level	Middle management, with higher levels of responsibility as managing teams but not placed on the senior management team.	10	7 F 3 M	53	Councillors who have a raised profile. This includes leaders of opposition parties, vice chair of committees and experienced backbenchers	10	4 F 6 M	53	3 Conservative 3 Liberal democrats 2 Labour 2 Independent
Senior Level	Individuals within the senior management team of local councils. This includes Chief Executives to strategic directors and heads of departments placed on the senior management team.	10	2 F 8 M	59	Senior councillors, leaders or elected mayors. Individuals are responsible for the overall performance of the council and have strategic oversight of the direction of the council.	10	5 F 5 M	65	6 Conservative 1 Labour 2 Liberal democrats 1 Resident association ⁸

⁸ Residents association is a small localised set of councillors who have formed a group comprised of residents within the community

Across both officers and councillors, gaining access was a challenging endeavour that lasted over a year and involved sending more than 534 emails to potential interviewees across the UK. For the officer sample, recruitment was largely gained through snowball sampling starting with three personal connections. Fortunately, interviewees often had colleagues at different councils who they thought would be suitable for the research design of this thesis and would pass on their details or ask them personally if they would be interested in being an interviewee. For the councillors, although a snowballing method was applied, it also took a significant bulk of the 534 emails as councillors did not have as many connections outside of their district. Instead, the recruitment access involved seeking out the publicly accessible information of councillors in various wards across the UK and sending them an email seeking their voluntary involvement. Some weeks I would receive no replies from over 20 emails, other weeks I would send out 10 and get 8 or 9 interviews. This demonstrates the difficulty of gaining access to political workers and particularly high profile participants such as leaders of councils and chief executives within political work, substantiating accounts by other researchers in this field including Professor Silvester, Professor Simonton and Dr Weinberg.

Despite the constraints of snowball sampling, it was possible to achieve a sample from a mixture of political parties which was important to reduce the potential for ideological bias. This meant the sample incorporated 21 officers from district councils 9 officers from county councils, 16 councillors from district councils and 14 from county councils. As indicated in Appendix 1, these local councils were located across Southern England, from Kent to Devon, as well as in the North, from Warwickshire to Nottingham.

3.2.4 Interview Procedure

Kvale (2012, p. 1) poses a fundamentally important question when considering using interviews in qualitative research, “if you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk with them?” Qualitative interviews are an omnipresent method within the social sciences seeking to explore an unlimited number of investigations across numerous fields of disciplines within academia and outside, with interviews being a key resource for practitioners. Within this research, interviews were considered essential given the ability to allow for the interviewee to outline their lived experience and their interpretation of their political will in line with a phenomenological inquiry. Although there are an enormous number of types and variants of interviews, to allow the interviewees to provide enough context and autonomy to discuss elements that they believed were important, semi-structured interviews were the variant of interviews applied. Within these semi-structured interviews, the Critical Incidence Technique (CIT: Flanagan, 1954; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson & Maglio, 2005) was applied which is a flexible approach without a rigid set of procedures seeking to collect direct observations of human behaviour to form a functional description of an activity. Thus, it asks participants to discuss specific incidents in order to elicit behaviours and motivations. Thus, within this thesis, CIT was applied to elicit attributions for specific political activity, a method that has been successfully applied within the extant literature (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015; Wyatt, Doldor and Tresh, 2022).

The interviews themselves were conducted after gaining ethical approval through the Kent Business School Research Ethics Advisory Group (REAG), with the interviewees being voluntarily recruited with full knowledge and consent concerning the study, the recording within the interview and transcription afterwards and were made aware of their absolute anonymity. This meant that once the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, the recording of the interview (which was either face-to-face or online) was deleted and any

references made within the transcription that could potentially identify them or others were anonymised and this data was stored in line with GDPR. The 60 interviews that made up the data of this thesis had a range of length, with the shortest interview lasting 35 minutes and the longest interview lasting over an hour and 35 minutes, with an average of one hour.

The first 20 interviews were conducted before the COVID-19 lockdown within the United Kingdom in 2020 and thus were face-to-face across councils within the Southeast of England. These interviews were used to gain knowledge of the specific organisational structure within the local council. Interviewers were asked to draw an organisational chart from their perspective and where they believed they would be placed within the organisation's hierarchy as can be seen within Appendix (2). This was useful in the face-to-face interviews as the interviewees found they could point to other areas and departments of the local council and highlight political activity between the departments whilst talking. However, once the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the research was forced to move online this was no longer viable or a useful tool because the interviewees were unable to illustratively display their organisational diagram to the researcher through the webcam facility (people were still getting to grips with video conferencing and few participants would be able to master screen sharing/whiteboard methods to facilitate the discussion of these hierarchy drawings). The use of these participant-drawn charts was therefore abandoned as they formed a barrier for the flow of discussion. Although this was disappointing, the quality of the answers provided to the questions was not hampered by this small change in the preparation and execution of the interviews. The questions posed to the interviewees remained the same throughout the 60 interviews and included CIT examples such as; (1) *Can you tell me about a time you were motivated to engage in any form of political activity?* (2) *What are the main organisational political issues within the local council you have experienced as a local councillor? Could*

you give me one of two specific examples of these issues? These CIT questions were central to uncover the casual attributions respondents made concerning their political activity within their job roles and would take a substantial proportion of the interview whereby they would consider their activity and break down their motivations in significant detail. See Appendix (3) for the full interview schedule.

Once transcribed verbatim, the interviews form 723 pages of qualitative data which forms the foundation of both studies in this thesis. The next section provides a detailed account of how this data was analysed.

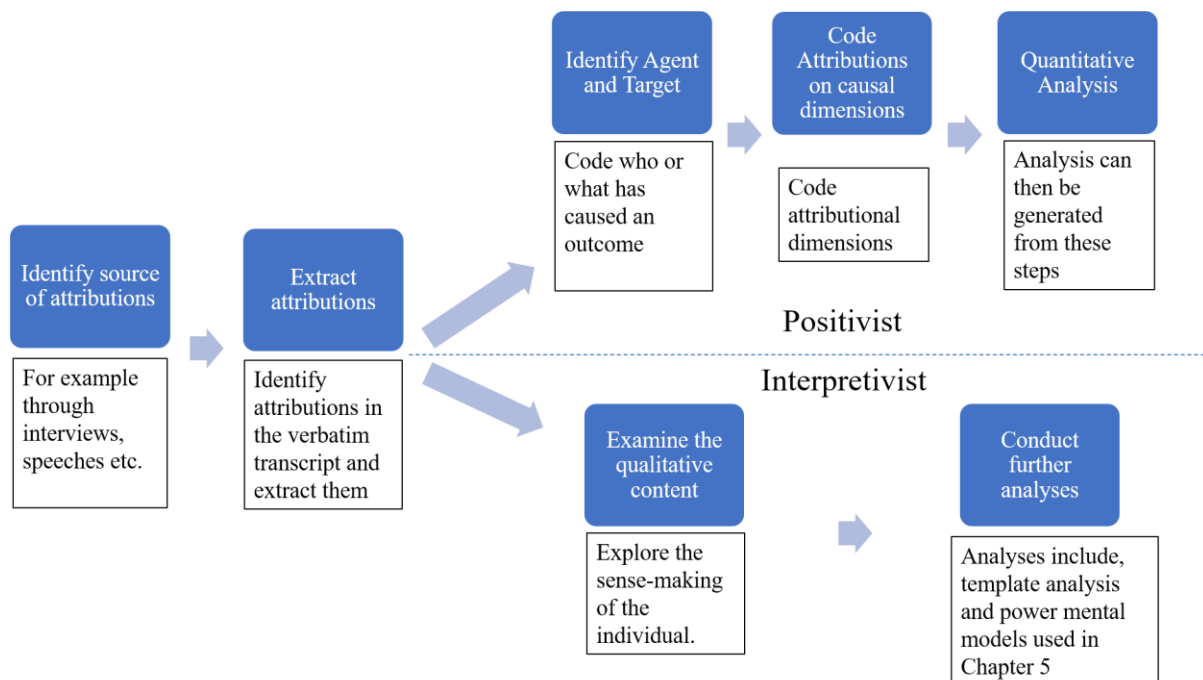
3.3 Analyses

The Leeds Attributional Coding System (LACS: Munton, Silvester, Stratton & Hanks, 1999) was used to analyse the interview data, a form of analysis previously used in a wide range of research to explore communicated attributions. For example, the LACS has been used in clinical settings (Brewin et al., 1991; Todd & Watts, 2005; Bogaard & Embregts, 2020) and non-clinical management settings (Silvester, Anderson & Paterson, 1999; Silvester, Anderson-Gough, Anderson & Mohamed, 2002; Plank, 2011). Within a clinical setting, Bogaard (2020) took interview data from 19 support staff using the LACS process to investigate the attributions they made regarding challenging behaviour exhibited by individuals with intellectual disabilities. Their results indicated that support staff should be trained to recognise how their attributions influence the existence and maintenance of challenging behaviour.

The LACS typically involves a five-stage process seen in Figure 3.2: (1) the researcher identifies the source of their attributions, (i.e. interview data), (2) the researcher goes through the data and extracts the attributions pertaining to their inquiry (3) they identify the agent, which relates to who or what has caused an outcome, and target, or who is affected by the outcome (4) they assign quantitative codes to the attributions based on each causal dimensions and (5) they analyse the codes statistically. Steps (4) and (5) are adopted by those following a positivist epistemology. For example, Silvester et al. (1999) performed statistical analysis using the LACS analysis incorporating over 1230 attributional statements, studying organisational culture and culture change within a multi-national manufacturing organisation and were able to find statistical differences in the explanations made by managers, trainers and trainees.

Importantly though, attributions can be used with different epistemologies and in this thesis, which is guided by interpretivism and phenomenological enquiry, the researcher seeks to examine the qualitative data without coding it into quantitative dimensions (i.e. the lower half of Figure 3.2). The current research follows the lead from studies such as Wyatt and Silvester (2015) who argue that coding the dimensions of attributions can lead to a “narrow, mechanistic interpretation of individuals’ experiences” (2015, p1251). Quantitatively coding attributions does not correspond with a phenomenological epistemology that seeks to place the human and their interpretation at the centre of analysis. Instead, concentrating on the qualitative *content* of the participants’ attributions ensures that the essence of these communicated attributions is not lost through coding their dimensions. This is more in line with phenomenology because it allows for the interpretation of the interviewee to remain at the core of the analysis rather than diverting their data into predefined quantitative attributional dimensions.

Figure 3.2: Leeds Attribution Coding System Process



3.3.1 Identifying the Source of Attributions

Within this thesis, communicated attributions are extracted from semi-structured interviews, where attributions concerned the perceived causes of interviewees' political activity (see chapter 2: Section 2.5). Eliciting the attributions from the interviewees' perspective is imperative, and thus all attributions related to the political activity were extracted; even those where the explanations seemed highly unlikely or perhaps even wrong were extracted for later coding because it is not for the researcher to judge the interviewee's perspective; their lived experience and beliefs are what is essential. Antaki (1994) terms this 'hearable as' whereby the researcher must accept the causal reality of the interviewee and not rely upon his or her perception of reality. Qualitative interviews are likely to result in multiple attributions per participant (e.g. 1-2 attributions per minute: Silvester, 2004).

3.3.1.1 Extracting Attributions. Attributions were extracted by reading through the interview transcripts and identifying each causal attribution. In this study an attribution was defined as “a statement that refers to a causal relationship where the speaker implies that a specific outcome (for example, I formed alliances [sic]) is a consequence of a particular cause (for example, because I was motivated to future-proof my career [sic])” (Silvester, 2004, p231).” Once identified, the cause is underlined, and an arrow (</>) is placed to indicate the direction of the outcome. A slash(/) is then used, indicating where the outcome ends. Figure 3.3 below shows a causal attribution extracted from an interview transcript. The participant discussed their networking and produced a causal attribution related to that political activity. In this instance, the cause was “*if you do a good job and you’re operating in the authority, and you are servicing the board*”, and the outcome was “*Then you are going to get recognised more than if you are operating in a more discrete area.*” The participant suggests that because they are doing a good job, operating within the authority, servicing hierarchal members of the organisation (cause), they are recognised more than the average employee (outcome).

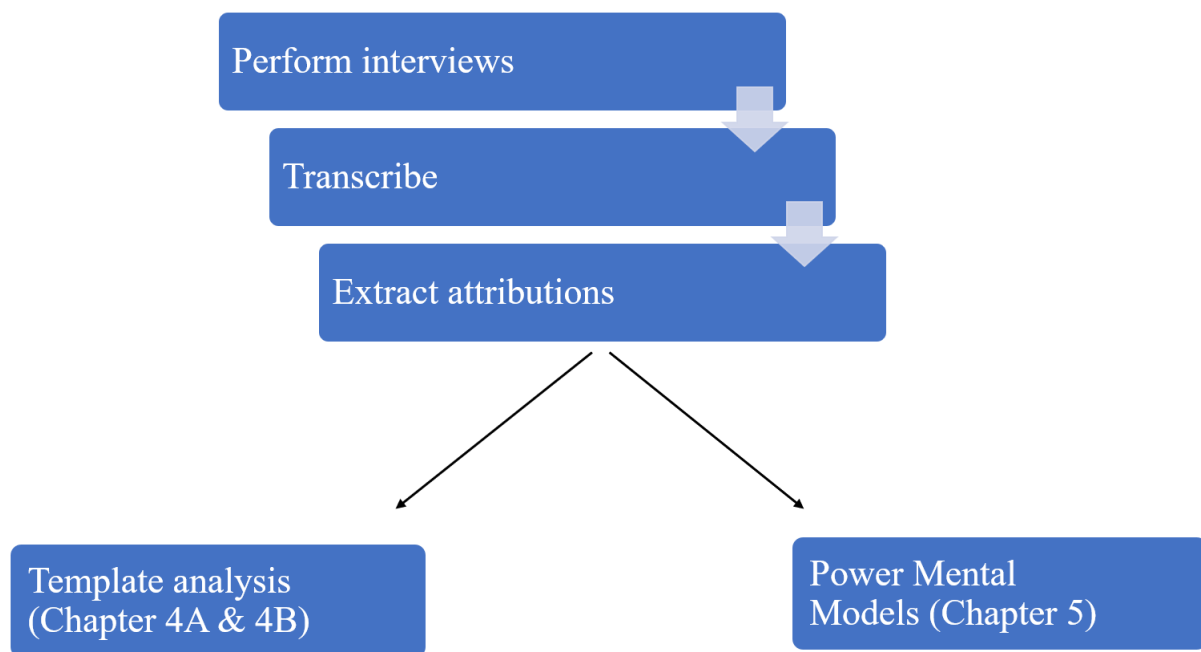
Figure 3.3: Example of Attribution Analysis

INT: How have networks informed your work?

P3: Yeah, yeah. So, the network of colleagues, one of my roles was to provide a secretariat service to the management team, so, again, I can sound a bit pompous here, but I'll do it. / If you do a good job, and you're operating in the authority, and you are servicing the board, so to speak, > then you are going to get recognised more than if you are operating in a more discrete area. So yes, you would./

Attribution analysis allows this study to highlight and generate individuals' perspectives, their sense-making activity and their causal attributions related to the complex and dynamic political arena of a local council. It formulates an analytical platform on which to build, which can be seen in Figure 3.4 which outlines how other forms of analysis can be used to further examine the extracted attributions. In this thesis, extracted attributions were analysed in two ways. First, template analysis was used to address the first research question (RQ1: What are the dimensions of political will in political work?), and then the extracted attributions were used as a basis for power mental models, to answer the second research question (RQ2: How does power impact political will).

Figure 3.4: Foundational Steps of Method



3.3.2 Template Analysis

To investigate the dimensions of political will in political work the interview data collected was analysed using template analysis (TA), the results of which are presented in Chapter 4. Template analysis is a particular method of thematic analysis that seeks to emphasise the use of hierarchal coding within the process of analysing textual data such as interviews, focus groups, diary entries or open-ended questions within written questionnaires to name a few (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley & King, 2015).

3.3.2.1 Phenomenology and Template Analysis. Epistemologically, template analysis is not bound by any particular philosophy, rather it allows for a flexible approach to the needs of the study's philosophical underpinnings. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that thematic analysis can be applied to numerous approaches, it is, however, reliant on the researcher to be explicit and upfront about their epistemological assumptions. In this thesis, the philosophical underpinnings are phenomenological. King (2004) encouraged researchers who take a

phenomenological approach to use template analysis as this thematic analysis makes it possible to maintain that the experience of the interviewees is real and that the researcher can make sense of their reported experience (King & Brooks, 2017).

The template analysis within this study stems from a phenomenological perspective via the use of attributions extracted concerning individuals' political will and political activity. This is a tried and tested form of analysis. For example, Wyatt and Silvester (2015) explored the leadership journeys of minority ethnic employees by using attributions extracted from semi-structured interviews with senior managers to identify a template of hierarchical facilitators and barriers of career progression using the causal explanations made. This methodology links well with phenomenological epistemology because it places the interpretation of the interviewees lived experience centrally, and their core essence of phenomena remains central to the findings of researchers applying this analysis.

3.3.2.2 Conducting Template Analysis

Identifying Level of Analysis and assigning codes

The first step in the template analysis process is to identify the level of analysis i.e. whether content is taken at sentence, paragraph or interview-level. In this research, the level of analysis was the causal attribution, which allowed the motivation for political activity (i.e. the cause) to be isolated from the behaviour or political activity itself (i.e. outcome). Although it was possible to extract just the attributional causes in isolation and group them into template codes, the qualitative data made it possible to also scan the broader context of the attributions to enhance the richness of thematic codes.

An example of such can be seen below, whereby within the senior officer sub-sample the attribution is displayed and the thematic code is located on the right-hand side within the comments section of Microsoft Word. For example, to provide two examples within the senior sub-sample, it started to become clear that there was a theme around being motivated to represent the team through political means. In Figure 3.5 below, the chief of finance outlined this and a thematic code was added to the right hand side of the extracted attribution. Additionally, Figure 3.6 displays how the same code was formed across transcripts as thus it was becoming evident that team representation was a motivator to engage in political activity across transcripts. Subsequently, this code was evident in a number of the transcripts through the template analysis and therefore made the senior officer template analysis seen in chapter 4.

Figure 3.5: Chief of Finance Thematic Coding

/We had to push strongly for what we individually believed and that there isn't an acquiescence of a department, that a department head had to fight for resources, fight for his area and <ensure his area isn't reduced more than any other areas because that's his sphere of influence and that's what he wants.

 **Joel Montgomery**
Team representation

Figure 3.6: Head of IT Thematic Coding

In my last job [Head of IT] a lot of my time was taken up with trying to make sure the department, that I felt very responsible for, was supported fairly by the higher-ups so that meant a lot of politics behind the scenes and that could lead to some friction across the top team/

 **Joel Montgomery**
Team representation

Developing Initial Templates

The second step was to sort the codes in order to develop an initial template within one of the sub-samples, The first sub-sample analysed was the junior officers. The researcher was particularly familiar with the data from the junior officers as they were the interviews completed nearest to the attribution analysis and therefore the researcher was ‘close’ to the data.

First, a preliminary template was developed based upon the data from three interviewees. As Table 3.3 below displays, this was a very early and incomplete template, however, it was the foundation to orient the rest of the junior officer sample. Indeed, Table 3.3 demonstrates how the table was more developed at seven transcripts. Moving from three to seven interviewees, data provided significantly more detailed codes as the themes started emerging with more clarity.

Between transcripts seven to ten, it was important to re-read through the whole sub-sample; themes had largely already emerged and so at this stage codes were added, edited or removed where appropriate, based on the entire sub-sample of 10 junior officers. For example, as notable within Table 3.3 below, (1.3) *Staff management* and (3.2) *Deferential* were added, as it became clear this was a thematic code that was salient across the sample. Additionally, subcodes such as (2.2.1) *Emotional support* and (2.2.2) *Trust* were added, as these third-order codes provided greater insight into these officers’ political will. At this stage, there were no codes deemed appropriate to delete within this sub-sample. However, in other samples, this would have been the case if it was felt that the thematic code was not particularly salient across the sample.

A key challenge in this process was ensuring that the themes represented *motivations* and not behaviours. Despite coding at the level of the attributional cause, at times, there was considerable overlap between how interviewees discussed their behaviour and motivation. The most prominent example of this is (2) *Networking*, which was difficult to categorise at the start of the analysis because although interviewees were discussing networking as a motive, it is also a behaviour and largely considered to be a behaviour within the literature. However, this was resolved via the assistance of attributional theory, which allowed the analysis to break down what *the interviewee* considered a motivator and a behaviour. Through breaking down their causal reasoning, it was clear that multiple interviewees were positioning networking as the political motive, and the political behaviour was consistently different. For example, they discussed the will to network. Thus, they engaged in behaviours such as controlling their image, creating alliances, standing up to and for individuals, alongside political behaviours such as selectively providing and/or withholding information.

Whilst attribution theory provided a theoretical and practical utility within the coding process, this was further aided through a consistent sense-checking process within the research supervisor for this project. To have an additional expert eye on the codes throughout the template analysis, such ‘quality checks’ are recommended by King & Brooks (2017) to ensure the reliability and validity of the codes assigned.

Table 3.3: Junior Officers' Template Analysis Development

Template analysis at (n=3)	Template analysis at (n=7)	Template analysis at (n=10)	Finalised Junior Officer template
1. Job role 1.1 Professional 1.2 Efficiency	1. Role performance 1.1 Professionalism 1.2 Efficiency	1. Role performance 1.1. Professionalism 1.2. Efficiency 1.3. Staff management	1. Role performance 1.1. Professionalism 1.2. Efficiency 1.3. Staff management
2. Networking 2.1 Friendship 2.2 Support	2. Networking 2.1 Friendship 2.2 Support network	2. Networking 2.1. Friendship 2.2.1 Emotional support 2.2. Support network 2.2.2. Trust	2. Networking 2.1. Friendship 2.1.1. Emotional support 2.2. Support network 2.2.1. Trust
3. Learn political arena 3.1 Avoid being difficult 3.2 Avoid being a rebel	3. Conformity 3.1 Learn Political culture 3.1.1 Political actors 3.1.2 Power 3.2 Avoid being a rebel 3.3 Avoid being difficult	3. Conformity to self 3.1. Learn political culture 3.1.1 Political actors 3.1.2 Power 3.2. Deferential 3.3. Avoid being a rebel 3.4. Avoid being seen as difficult	3. Conform to future-proof 3.1. Learn political culture 3.1.1. Political actors 3.1.2. Power 3.2. Deferential 3.2.1. Avoid being a rebel 3.2.2. Avoid being seen as difficult
4. Display strengths	4. Personal control 4.1 Career control 4.2 Display strengths (exemplification)	4. Personal control 4.1. Career control 4.2. Display strengths (exemplification)	4. Establish personal control 4.1. Career control 4.2. Display strengths (exemplification)

Blue = New/adapted codes

The final stage of the junior-office template was to reflexively read through all the data, alongside the final template seen in Table 3.3 column three, and ensure that all codes were placed hierarchically accurate. As one can note within the last column displaying the finalised table, some minor changes were made within the process. For example, it was evident that (3.3) *Avoid being a rebel* alongside (3.3) *Avoid being seen as difficult* were actually a third-order code and should be positioned under (3.1) *Deferential*. This made more sense because individuals were motivated to be deferential, and this encompassed the motivation to not be seen as a rebel and/or difficult. This is why this final stage was vital to ensure the finalised template for each sub-sample was accurate.

Creating the templates for the remaining sub-samples

For each sub-sample including both officers and councillors, this research applied the same approach – assigning thematic codes to the extracted attributional causes, ordering them into hierarchical templates and reflexively reading and re-reading through the transcripts until a final template was established. After the initial (i.e. junior officer) template was coded, the only difference when creating the remaining five templates in the officer sample was that the coding process was reflexive around the similarities and differences from previous templates. For example, there were similar groupings of political will themes across the sub-samples in that they morph and mature across seniority levels. However, similarities in templates were largely seen within rather than between political worker samples, for example, whereas the officers claimed political neutrality, the councillors were overtly political, and therefore the codes assigned varied more widely between the two samples than those across the levels of seniority in the same group of political workers.

Summary

In summary, this chapter has outlined the epistemological and methodological approach this thesis takes: a social cognitive perspective, which allows for a phenomenological epistemology to access individuals' lived experience of the political arena and their motivations within it. This meant that the sample within this thesis consisted of 60 individuals, 30 of which were councillors and 30 officers across the hierarchy of this political work space. Data was collected from these individuals through qualitative interviews using a critical incidence technique and attribution theory (a social cognitive theory) was used to elicit the causal attributions individuals made concerning their political activity, which enables the research to pinpoint the motivation to engage in political behaviour. The next chapter (chapter 4) presents the findings of the template analysis to address RQ1, concerning the dimensions that comprise individuals' political will within political work.

Chapter 4A : The Dimensions of Political Will (Officers)

This chapter presents the findings of the template analysis seeking to answer the first research question central to this thesis: *What are the dimensions of political will in political work?* The findings are presented in two sub-chapters, the first, **Chapter 4A** presents the template analysis of the junior, mid-level and senior officers. **Chapter 4B** moves onto the councillor sample, presenting the template analysis of the junior, mid-level and senior template analysis. Each chapter concludes by discussing the key overarching themes of political will in these samples and therefore providing two models of political will in political work across samples, addressing RQ1. Chapters 4A and 4B contribute to the literature by adopting an inductive and phenomenological stance, and thus providing a holistic investigation into the content of political will which is needed to provide a more in-depth and nuanced account of the construct. The findings presented in Chapters 4A and 4B demonstrate how the environment, contextuality and positionality are important for political motivation, displaying that the political will construct may be more of a social cognitive process than a static dispositional variable. Importantly, by examining the political will of officers and councillors across three different levels of seniority, a key finding from the analyses is the role of power on political will, which is then explored in greater depth in Chapter 5. Finally, by comparing the political will of officers in traditional office roles, to councillors, whose job it is to be political, this study also helps marry the political science and organisational behaviour notions of political motivation.

The current chapter (4A) focuses on officers' political will because they represent the empirical focus of the organisational politics literature; they are traditional employees without a democratic mandate bestowed upon them. This chapter starts by providing Table

4A.1 which shows all three officers' templates and then outlines each template in more detail, starting with the junior officers (JOs) before moving on to the mid-level officers (MOs) and finally the senior officers (SOs). The chapter finishes with the presentation of a model (see Figure 4A.1) that summarises the overarching dimensions of political will identified across the three samples, a discussion of the contribution to political will theory and the role of power on political will.

Table 4A.1: Junior, Mid-level and Senior Officers Template

Junior Officers		Mid-level Officers		Senior Officers	
1.	Role performance	1.	Role performance	1.	Relationship management
1.1.	Professionalism	1.1.	Professionalism	1.1.	Maintaining constitutional roles
1.2.	Efficiency	1.2.	Efficiency	1.1.1.	Maintaining officer impartiality
1.3.	Staff management	1.3.	Staff management	1.1.2.	Maintaining political mandate
		1.3.1.	Task performance	1.2.	Staff management
		1.3.2.	Staff wellbeing	1.2.1.	Team representation
				1.2.2.	Team resources
				1.2.3.	Staff wellbeing
2.	Networking	2.	Networking	2.	Networking
2.1.	Friendship	2.1.	Instrumental internal relationships	2.1.	Instrumental internal relationships
2.1.1	Emotional support	2.2.	Support mechanisms	2.1.1.	Operational delivery
2.2.	Support network	2.3.	To gather intelligence	2.1.2.	To gather intelligence
2.2.1.	Trust			2.2.	Share knowledge externally
				2.3.	Empowerment/mentoring of others
				2.3.1.	To give back
				2.3.2.	Potential reciprocity
3.	<i>Conform to future-proof</i>	3.	<i>Achieve Voice</i>	3.	<i>Strategic Voice</i>
3.1.	<i>Learn political culture</i>	3.1.	<i>Knowledge confidence</i>	3.1.	<i>Knowledge certainty</i>
3.1.1.	<i>Political actors</i>	3.2.	<i>Picking your battles</i>	3.1.1.	<i>Expertise</i>
3.1.2.	<i>Power</i>	3.3.	<i>Strategic deference</i>	3.1.2.	<i>Obstinate opinion</i>
3.2.	<i>Deferential</i>			3.2.	<i>Picking your battles</i>
3.2.1.	<i>Avoid being a rebel</i>			3.3.	<i>Considered Challenge</i>
3.2.2.	<i>Avoid being seen as difficult</i>				
4.	Establish personal control	4.	Establish influence	4.	Leveraging influence
4.1.	Career control	4.1.	Personal influence	4.1.	Personal influence
4.2.	Display strengths (exemplification)	4.1.1.	Display professionalism (exemplification)	4.1.1.	Display professionalism (exemplification)
		4.1.2.	Career reputation	4.1.2.	Career reputation
		4.2.	Team influence	4.2.	Team influence
		4.2.1.	Influencing the team	4.2.1.	Supporting the team
		4.2.2.	Leveraging the team	4.2.2.	Leveraging the team
				5.	Policy influence
				5.1.	Personal beliefs
				5.2.	National political agenda
				5.3.	Local government model

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

4A.1 Junior Office Template

This section will outline the thematic analysis of the Junior Officers (JO) within the council seen in Table 4A.2 below. As previously stated, Junior Officers (n=10) consist of emerging individuals throughout the local council who have team management responsibilities. This ranges from HR services, democratic services, project managers to cabinet policy advisors.

Table 4A.2: Template for Junior Officers

-
1. Role performance
 - 1.1. Professionalism
 - 1.2. Efficiency
 - 1.3. Staff management
 2. Networking
 - 2.1. Friendship
 - 2.1.1 Emotional support
 - 2.2. Support network
 - 2.2.1. Trust
 3. *Conform to future-proof*
 - 3.1. *Learn political culture*
 - 3.1.1. *Political actors*
 - 3.1.2. *Power*
 - 3.2. *Deferential*
 - 3.2.1. *Avoid being a rebel*
 - 3.2.2. *Avoid being seen as difficult*
 4. Establish control
 - 4.1. Career control
 - 4.2. Display strengths (exemplification)
-

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

At the junior level, participants were motivated to engage in politics because political behaviours were seen as integral to their ability to accomplish tasks and perform in their role (1. *Role performance JO*). Participants made external, uncontrollable causal explanations for political activity, attributing it to their wider cultural environment and requirements for *Professionalism (1.1 JO)* and *Efficiency (1.2 JO)* in the role, as explained by Catherine:

“I suppose, for me, office politics is, I guess, intertwined with the role that I have and about the professionalism of that role and supposedly ensuring that for me, office politics is about being able to conduct my job properly, efficiently. And I suppose getting the most out of business arrangements if you like, as well, it's how effectively I might work and how effectively I get my staff to work that's always my main concern.”
(Catherine, F, P36, JO)

Instead of perceiving political behaviour as illegitimate, these motivations suggests that individuals perceive acting politically as a necessary aspect of their role. Catherine also mentions an emergence of a small but still prevalent political will here, *Staff management* (1.3 JO). Although this appeared in some interviews, it was not overly commonplace throughout the junior officer sample.

The second higher code was *Networking* (2 JO), albeit usually considered a political behaviour in the wider OB literature, was a motivator for the Junior Officers. As stipulated in chapter 3 section 3.3, attribution theory enabled the analysis to isolate the motivation (cause), which was networking, and different outcomes (i.e., political behaviours) to networking were observed across the sample. The motivation to network was reported by JOs' to develop *Friendship* (2.1 JO) and *Emotional support* (2.1.1 JO). Josh, an independent reviewing officer, demonstrates this:

“I go to work, and I have a little support network, and those are friends who share my values, I don't network for my job or anything.” (Josh, M, P28, JO)

Networking was also motivated by a protective element of a *Support network* (2.2 JO) based around communal *Trust* (2.2.1 JO).

“In local governments, we act as sort of our own confidential support network. It's always good to talk to people you can trust.” (Chris, M, P35, JO)

The junior officers reported being politically motivated by protection to form a career cushion to support their current work and aid their future progression by developing coalitions they could rely on. These were not necessarily strategic career-oriented coalitions; they were instead motivated to form friendships and support networks.

Being motivated to engage in political activity to protect and defend oneself was also apparent in the third higher-order code (*3 Conform to future-proof JO*). This code describes how junior officers sought to learn about the political landscape and develop their knowledge of the political arena whilst navigating it. Their relative lack of experience and thus a lack of a holistic understanding of the political arena within their organisation led to individuals wanting to ensure they were not perceived negatively. To achieve this, they sought to *Learn the political culture* (*3.1 JO*), the actors within it (*3.1.1 Political actors JO*) and the power dynamics at play (*3.1.2 Power JO*). Charlotte, a cabinet policy advisor, acknowledges this:

“Yeah, it is almost like a drama thing, like an active play in the office because you almost have to play and act differently around certain people. When you go to work, you don't want to have to do that, but almost it turns into that. So, I have a manager now who I know the PAs absolutely hate, so with her; I'm really friendly and approachable because she's my manager, so I do everything she asks me to do, but then when I'm with the PA's they go. 'Oh, you know she's so ungrateful, and it's just like, you have to listen and smile along, you don't want to have to make out you're siding with your manager because they are your colleagues as well also it is like you have to put on a false pretence with different people it is really difficult.” (Charlotte, F, P29, JO)

Charlotte demonstrates the reality of reading the political landscape within the local council and identifying the motivation of others (3.1.1 *Political Actors JO*). She has had to integrate and act differently around specific individuals to avoid being seen in a negative light by actors with differing levels of power in relation to herself. For example, the PAs are colleagues, whereas the manager has a legitimate level of control over Charlotte (3.1.2 *Power JO*). The JOs' perceived that understanding the formal and informal power dynamics was essential to their development.

Alongside the political will to *learn* about the broader power structures, interviewees reported being motivated to *respond* to that knowledge by wanting to conform, to show deference and respect to more powerful others (3.2 *Deferential JO*). Their motivation was a desire to fit in and not be perceived as a nonconforming (3.2.1 *Avoid being a rebel JO*); they were *not* motivated to be seen as someone with astute insights and opinions. Instead, their motivation was to be seen as someone who does not 'rock the boat'. For example, Gemma, an independent reviewing officer, stipulated:

"So, I guess I'm acting politically in this sense by not saying something you've got to choose not to say. You've got to choose, make a conscious decision to not question or to question simply in an exceptionally positive way or risk being perceived as someone who is not promotion material. [...] I do that all the time, every single day; I do it in every single team meeting that I see where managers are present. Because you have got to, you have got to walk the walk. A well-functioning authority is one where you can challenge, where you can speak openly, we can have some really useful dialogue. I don't think this one is in a place at all. The pace of change is somewhere where you, you have to do, and I do, only speak positively, only challenge

in a very... I do challenge but challenge in a very positive and respectful manner. I'm also terrible because I only really do that when the important people are in the room; if important people are not in the room, I'm far more likely to be negative and to be much more aggressive in my stance; I don't think so much about how I'm saying things." (Gemma, F, P6, JO)

This example summarises how JOs felt they must politically subvert their own opinion to conform because the risk of stepping out is too high. Junior officers do not perceive the council to be a space to challenge or give their opinion. Lily emphasises this, a service team manager who shows how being seen as difficult (3.2.2 *Avoid being seen as difficult JO*) can be detrimental to ones' career.

"If they view me positively, I am more likely to get promoted. It's a self-serving thing; it makes my life easier, it fulfils so many aims. I.e. I am more likely to get the job I'm going for [...]. It is a constant win-win; if you ever put yourself in a position where you are viewed as being difficult or disruptive, it just makes your entire life harder." (Lily, F, P60, JO)

Lily demonstrates here how one must act politically by filtering the challenges made to others, motivated by protection, to ensure that your image adheres to management's expectations.

Instead of common perceptions that politics is predominately about furthering oneself or furthering their resources, interviewees reported motivation from a neutral ambition to establish a sense of control in the face of workplace politics (4.0 *Establish personal control JO*; 4.1 *Career control JO*). This is highlighted particularly well by Elliot, a democratic services officer.

“I think where all this is leading, making office politics as establishing a place where you are in the maximum amount of control, and controlling your destiny or maximum control and playing to your strengths... That’s what I’ve done anyway, either subconsciously or deliberately; I have enacted office politics to try and establish a bit more control for myself. I suppose a bit more resilience and protection for myself rather than see yourself being pushed down a road where you are responsible for a function you are not particularly comfortable with. You don’t want to be left where you are dispensable, so this is important. So, you try and make yourself less indispensable to the organisation, and I think this comes down to trying to be in control.” (Elliot, M, P3, JO)

Although this is still a somewhat self-serving political motivation, it certainly is not a Machiavellian, ruthless desire to engage in politics. Instead, this code was about ensuring that one is not dispensable or moved into detrimental areas to one’s career. Such political activity was motivated by *protection*, not the *gain* of resources.

These previous codes have highlighted a passive, defensive engagement within the political arena. However, some junior councillors were also cognisant of the need to step out and be more politically proactive to display their strengths and build their image within the organisation. Within this aspect of template analysis, these individuals were particularly keen to ensure that senior individuals were aware of their strengths (4.2 *Display strengths – exemplification JO*). Harriet, a democratic services officer, shows this:

“In my dealings with people, I try and see that I can be helpful to them, by showing what I’m good at but erm, I would push that, I would go the extra mile, even if it means doing extra work at home and stuff. I would sell myself is what I would say;

I'm not sure if you think about that as office politics, selling myself... So I suppose office politics there would be, you are trying to engineer a situation where the organisation operates around you" (Harriet, F, P44, JO)

Importantly, this was not always for pure self-promotion and instant promotional opportunities, but to highlight to key figures within the organisation their merit and worth. Therefore, politics was perceived as a mechanism to amplify and shine a spotlight on their legitimate and sanctioned task performance rather than illegitimate or devious aims.

4A.2 Summary of Junior Officers:

The JO sample's political will was functional, and for the job, they were motivated to use informally sanctioned political behaviour to enhance their *Role performance (1 JO)* which suggests that this samples' political will was self-serving because it was seeking to achieve a higher level of task performance for themselves. Junior officers therefore considered political behaviours as ethical, something which was acceptable to take advantage of. This is in stark contrast to the evidence provided by Doldor (2017), which highlighted that Junior managers saw politics as both dysfunctional and unethical. Yet, whereas Doldor (2017), interviewed 38 leaders in two global UK-based organisations within the hi-tech sector and fast consumer goods sector, the focus of this PhD is the political workspace and local councils. Within the political body of local councils, there seems to be little difference between organisational politics and the party politics they would perceive daily and to cast party politics as ethical and organisational politics as unethical would be a contradiction for these political workers. These findings therefore indicate that context plays a vital role in the formation of individuals' political motivation.

However, the JO sample did show the innocence found in junior samples in other organisational politics research. Perceptions of organisational politics (POP) literature suggests those at lower levels are less likely to engage in politics themselves, and thus regard the politics of more senior staff as threatening (Ferris et al., 1996). Doldor's (2017) also found that individuals at lower levels of an organisation demonstrate naivety when it comes to political motivation and skill. Likewise, within this sample, codes such as *Networking (2 JO)* for *Friendship (2.1 JO)* and *Emotional support (2.1.1 JO)* show that junior officers were more motivated by prosocial friendship rather than instrumental gain, suggesting that positionality is very important for political motivation.

The junior officer sample also highlighted important nuances in the notion of self-serving political will. Both within the existing political will scale (Kapoutsis et al., 2017) and the predominant perspective within organisational politics, it is often deemed that individuals' self-serving motivation is a Machiavellian pursuit, seeking resources for immediate personalised gain through subtle and deviant acts which negatively affect someone else or the organisation. However, this data suggests that individuals can be motivated for the self in other ways including for the role and as a form of protection.

Codes that focused on defence and protection included *Conform to future-proof (3 JO)*, *Deferential (3.2 JO)* and *Establish Personal control (4 JO)*. Junior officers were motivated to avoid confrontation, not stand out from the crowd, and fit into the organisation rather than leverage their position. This is very important because most research within organisational politics shows politics as a proactive phenomenon. However, politics can be motivated by a defensive component seeking to protect oneself without necessarily infringing on others or

gaining resources at the expense of another. This mirrors early research on political behaviour which highlights that individuals may engage in activity that preserves the status quo, avoids unwanted demand or reduces perceived threat (Ashworth & Lee, 1990). However, few studies have examined politics as a protective function, and this aspect of political will has not features in any theorising around the concept.

These defensive and protective codes are self-serving because they are beneficial for the individual but not in the negative, harmful conceptualisation of self-serving acts within the extant literature. Instead, the motivation is to protect themselves and enhance the possibility of future career incentives without the detriment of others. Therefore, if this data suggests that the thematic codes of the JOs' do not fit concisely with self-serving motivation, then the question arises whether it fits with the opposite concept proposed by Kapoutsis et al. (2017) of benevolence. Within the data, JOs' did not mention engaging in political behaviours for others, be it their managers, colleagues, peers or the organisation and thus to this regard, there was very little evidence to suggest motivation attributed to the community or others. This indicates that although JOs' were more self-serving in their motivation than benevolent, the connotations of the self-serving motivation within the literature does not perfectly absorb the political will of the JO sample within this research.

Additionally, the defensive nature of the political will of the junior officers illustrated how highly attuned these individuals regarded the risks of politics. Their political will included evaluations of risk, whether it was the council as a whole and how well it functions, their perception of their line manager or other powerful actors around them. This links directly to the work of Treadway (2012), who first conceptualised the dimension of risk within political

will (see chapter 2, section 2.4); therefore, this study has found empirical evidence that risk is undoubtedly an essential factor in political will.

In summary, the junior officer's political will was marked by a functional approach, driven to engage in politics to fulfil the tasks of the job role, alongside a defensive drive to engage in the political arena to protect themselves. In this sense, the junior officers within the political workspace can be labelled as *defensive do-ers*.

4A.3 Mid-Level Officer Template

Mid-level officers (MOs) consisted of individuals ($n=10$) with higher levels of responsibility than their junior colleagues, with team and project management duties; however, they were not on the senior management team of the local council. The following section will outline the findings of this sample's template before providing a summary account of the mid-level officer's themes. Within the template seen in Table 4A.3 below, there were four higher-order codes and some similarities between the JO and MO sample. For example, *Role performance* (1 MO) and *Networking* (2 MO) remained the first and second higher-order codes and were critical themes within the mid-level officers. However, new areas emerged within the higher-order codes: *Achieve voice* (3 MO) and *Establish influence* (4 MO). This is alongside new regions within the second-order codes throughout the template, which will be discussed in detail within the next section.

Table 4A.3: Template for Mid-level Officers

1. Role performance
1.1. Professionalism
1.2. Efficiency
1.3. Staff management
1.3.1 Task Performance
1.3.2 Staff Wellbeing
2. Networking
2.1. Instrumental internal relationships
2.2. Support Mechanisms
2.3. To gather intelligence
3. Achieve Voice
3.1. Knowledge Confidence
3.2. <i>Picking your battles</i>
3.3. <i>Strategic Deference</i>
4. Establish influence
4.1. Personal Influence
4.1.1 Display Professionalism (Exemplification)
4.1.2 Career Reputation
4.2. Team Influence
4.2.1 Influencing the Team
4.2.2 Leveraging the Team

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

In line with the JO template, the first higher-order code for the MO template was *Role performance (1 MO)*, demonstrating that, like JOs, politics is an essential aspect of the job role and its implementation. *Professionalism (1.1 MO)* and *Efficiency (1.2 MO)* were still crucial for the MOs'. However, unlike junior officers, mid-level officers reported being motivated by *Task performance (1.3.1 MO)*; there was a considerable increase in the saliency of their motivation to use politics for *Staff management (1.3 MO)*. For example, Sandra, a customer and support services manager, discussed how the COVID crisis meant she was motivated to find new ways to support her team's wellbeing (*1.3.2 Staff wellbeing MO*) through attempts to network and influence her staff members socially:

“It's more problematic because I'd say that I would speak on average to most of my team at some point during the week, every week. Now I'm doing Zoom meetings, but I have to say it's not the same as seeing somebody on a one to one and just standing by the desk and asking them how their day is going. You get more, more real-time feedback from that than in a zoom meeting. I mean, I've actually stopped doing most of the corporate stuff. And it's just how are you? How's the week going? What's everyone watched on telly and everything, just so you know, get them to start talking and that, and then we'll, then we find out the ones who, you know, are lonely because of social isolation, and need a bit more support than ones whose kids are driving them absolutely, so they can't cope with them any longer. And then, you know, and stuff like that. I mean, to get the best out of people, you often have to, you know, be willing to do stuff like that. Yeah, I mean, sometimes you're a manager, sometimes you're a therapist, whichever.” (Sandra, F, P38, MO)

This quote is an example of how individuals' motivations can be multi-faceted. She is motivated to support her team's well-being, going above and beyond the parameters of a transactional manager and attempting to support them on a personal level. However, she also mentions how this is important to get the best out of her staff and ensure that they perform reasonably.

Following on from the Junior officers who used networking for emotional wellbeing, mid-level officers also emphasised *Networking (2 MO)*. The difference, however, was the concentration on networking for the execution of their job role (*2.1 Instrumental internal relationships MO*), which Woody outlines:

“When I'm finding things a bit tough [to fulfil their job role]. I've built a relationship with people, so having a network of colleagues, not only my own services throughout is, it's enormously beneficial. Yes, I have benefited from it.” (Woody, M, P41, MO)

Whilst mid-level officers were still concerned with gaining emotional and wellbeing support (2.2 Support Mechanisms MO), they also reported a more self-serving instrumental drive to develop network ties across the council *To gather intelligence* (2.3 MO), a vital component within local councils, particularly for some departments such as HR. Although this was similar to efficiency (*Efficiency 1.2 MO*), this code specifically concerned forming meaningful relationships to gather information necessary to enact tasks within the role. This was different from the JO codes involving *Learn political culture* (3.1 JO) because mid-level officers were more concerned with organisational information rather than learning the broader landscape. As Janice, a Human Resource Manager points out:

“[Networking] is really useful, because it's handy for sharing information and finding out what everyone is doing. Sometimes you get so engrossed in what you're doing in your job; you don't see what everybody else is doing. Or you presume that you know what others are doing or thinking, and especially in HR because we provide a service to the other service areas. So, it's useful for us to know what's important to them, what's happening” (Janice, F, P37, MO)

In contrast to the JOs, the MOs' reported being bolder in political activity and were motivated for their voice to be heard (3 Achieve voice MO). For example, there was a level of confidence that their council knowledge (3.1 Knowledge confidence MO) and expertise should be acknowledged within the authorities' hierarchy. However, as one can note within the interview with Fiona, a Corporate Group Accountant, there is no ruthless pursuit to get one's way.

“So I think it’s good that you should be able to have your say and you might have somebody, your line manager at the end of the day it’s their responsibility, their decision, if they choose to do a different decision, to not do what you would have suggested, that’s fine, as long as you have been able to put your point across and explained why. They don’t always do that, and you expect that.... You are always going to have different opinions of people, and I think as long as those decisions are considered, even if it’s turned down, you know, you’ve been able to say it.” (Fiona, F, P32, MO)

Voicing one’s opinions was considered necessary by this sample. Still, they were also aware of the risks and the importance of being measured and sensitive to the council’s political climate. Phillip, a Finance Manager, summarises this balance in the following passage (3.2 *Picking your battles MO*):

“I always tried to adapt rather than to fight. Because I adapted, it didn’t help me. It didn’t help me in climbing the ladder because whenever one of the senior managers or councillors said, I disagree, Phillip, I believe so and so, I tended to go, ‘yeah, alright then’ rather than argue and fight. It’s a strange place the council because you’ve got the councillors who are politicians and talk a damn good game but generally don’t really know what they’re talking about, and if they spend all day long telling me that black is white, I end up thinking, ‘I couldn’t give a monkeys either way mate about what you say.’ Life is too short for that.” (Phillip, M, P31, MO)

In this excerpt, Phillip acknowledges that although he would ensure that his opinion and expertise was voiced, he was not motivated to push back or use political behaviours to ensure that his advice was acted upon. Phillip points out two audiences in this example: his superiors and the local councillors. Phillip did not seek to push his point with either group

(3.3 *Strategic deference MO*) because he did not believe he would be able to change their minds, or win the argument, even if he firmly thought that he was right. This is notable as it suggests that officers are becoming more conscious of their ability to influence the direction of the council agenda even though it is not the place of officers to attempt to influence the decisions that councillors are responsible for based on their perceptions. As we saw in the JOs' codes (3.2.1 *Avoid being a rebel JO*) and (3.2.2 *Avoid being seen as difficult JO*), they were motivated to *avoid* giving their opinion to ensure they were not seen as problematic or a rebel. Instead, the MOs emphasised providing their views, albeit tactically.

Moving from the JO to MO, the higher-order code concerning control power (4 *Establish personal control JO*) developed to broader influence (4 *Establish influence MO*) across the council. This *Personal influence* (4.1 MO) can be demonstrated by Woody, who discussed how he was motivated to engage in political activity such as controlling one's image to establish a personal reputation as an expert in his 'branch' of work, which is something he has always been inspired by.

"On that particular subject [housing], I would always be seen as the go-to person, by Councillors and the Executive and the Directors. People will listen to me when I talk about affordable housing because they know I know what I'm talking about. I've done it, I've delivered it. I've been through a number of governments and had so many housing ministers that you could shake a stick at, so they know, on that subject, that I am the authority within the Council and can speak about that [...] I wouldn't have anyone else talk about housing, to me, it's my branch and I'll make sure it will keep that way until I retire in a couple of months (Woody, M, P41, MO)

Furthermore, mid-level officers held the perception that it was necessary to display professionalism (4.1.1 *Display professionalism exemplification MO*), to strategically show exemplification within the organisation and perhaps at this stage, more expansive and surrounding councils that interact with their primary employer. This was different to the JOs' who were motivated to display their strengths to the individuals closely associated with them. Within the MO sample, this was at a more sophisticated level, seeking to reach members of the organisation outside of their immediate team. Thus, it became observable that interviewees were galvanised to pursue a *Career reputation (4.1.2 MO)*. For example, Sophia, a communications manager, states:

"I think of the way that I work co-operatively. You end up working with a range of people, and you can influence the way things are happening. Because if you're hopefully respected in your profession, that gives you influence as well. And you should be the person that they go to, to ask about whatever it is they want to ask about because you are the professional regardless of your status. You are a professional!"
(Sophia, F, MO, P33)

Interviewees also reported being motivated to influence their team rather than simply gaining personal influence within the organisation, as described by Alecia, a Benefits and Customer service manager (4.2 *Team influence MO*):

"I think, I think a lot of people would see it see [politics] as a fairly negative sort of form of human behaviour. But that's not always the case. It can be positive. If you're a bit sneaky, you can use it to your advantage because, you know, the influences, you know, the people with it. I mean, I have about 65 staff. Yeah, I know the ones that people will listen to, to get over something [to the wider team]. So, if you're a bit clever about it, you can sow a seed with particular [influential] people. And by the

time it actually all comes out, you're halfway there to achieving your dream; I get control over, my team and I don't get the worst of it, right?" (Alecia, F, P42, MO)

Alecia, within this passage, demonstrates her impulse to both influence members of her team through political behaviours (4.2.1 *Influencing the team MO*) and her motivation to leverage her team (4.2.2 *Leveraging the team MO*) for her benefit and the benefit of the organisation without her reputation being damaged because the team perceived Alecia as the influencing party.

4A.4 Summary of Mid-level Officers

Like the junior offices, mid-level officers were still motivated by functional political aims, and they did not perceive any ethical or emotional qualms concerning their involvement with politics. This is slightly different to previous research into political maturation, where mid-level managers in the private sector felt conflicted with their attitudes towards politics: while they started to note positive outcomes (i.e., performing a task) politics was often seen as inauthentic (Doldor, 2017). However, compared to JOs, MOs were more focused on instrumental gain. For example, whereas JOs were motivated to network for prosocial friendship (*Friendship, 2.1 JO*), the MOs were less naïve about the importance of instrumental networking (*Instrumental internal relationships, 2.1 MO*), suggesting that positionality and power (i.e., more seniority) are vital for understanding the nature of political motivation and that politics may be more normalised in political work compared to traditional managerial samples.

MOs were also motivated to engage in politics for others and the wider collective. Both Treadway (2012), who introduced 'concern for others as a dimension of political will (see chapter 2 section 2.4) and Kapoutsis et al, (2017), who empirically examined the benevolent

dimension of political will, established that politics is not always motivated for the self but can be for others. This can be seen within the additions of third-order codes under *Staff management (1.3)* being *Task performance (1.3.1)* and, importantly, *Staff-Wellbeing (1.3.2)*. However, this does not seem to represent an altruistic motive to engage in politics; instead, it closely mirrors a reciprocal exchange. For example, if one takes code *Staff-Wellbeing (1.3.2)*, there is a political will to engage in politics for others but there was also a recognition that this involvement would also be helpful for themselves as a manager, as the employees will be more productive. This evidence then suggests that political will corresponds well with leader political support, which is a *reciprocal* betterment used by leaders to address the needs of their followers (Ellen et al., 2013). This data therefore displays that increased seniority and responsibility is associated with motives to engage in political behaviour for the benefit of others, further highlighting the impact of context, environment and positionality.

The mid-level officers' template also shows a move away from the defensive motivation seen within the JOs (e.g., *Conform to future-proof (3 JO)* and *Deferential (3.2 JO)*) to become more proactive, with codes such as *Achieve voice (3 MO)* and *Establish influence (4 MO)*. Instead of being motivated to engage in politics for protection, these codes are driven towards the instrumental benefit, seeking, and becoming more aware of reputational and personal gain. Both JOs and MOs were therefore held self-serving motives, but the content of them was very different suggesting that self-serving political motivation is more nuanced than previously theorised. MOs notion of risk was also more complex, assessing risks on a more case-by-case basis than JOs and seeking to find opportunities to use political behaviour for their benefit. For example, whereas the JOs were driven to be *Deferential (3.2 JO)*, motivated to *Avoid being a rebel (3.2.1 JO)* and *Avoid being seen as difficult (3.2.2 JO)*, the MOs understood the context and the boundaries that they could push with codes such as *Picking*

your battles (3.2 MO) and Strategic deference (3.3 MO). This finding echoes the cognitive evaluation proposed in the political prudence concept in the OB literature (Kapoutsis, 2016).

Therefore, in summary, the MOs did start to display motivation that concerned others and could be considered benevolent. However, this motivation was facilitated and forced by the hierarchy and the bureaucratic necessity given the increased responsibility of the middle managers. The move from defensive to proactive political motivation was salient, whereby officers were now seeking self-serving instrumental benefits such as reputational and personalised gains rather than simply protecting themselves. This was now possible because of their experience of the political landscape and case-by-case evaluation of the risk, which marked a considerable change from the JOs, who were far more uniform in their approach. This suggests that whilst the JOs' can be labelled as the 'defensive do-ers', the mid-level officers can be labelled as the *savvy self-servers*.

4A.5 Senior Officer Template

The senior officers (n=10) were all within the senior management team of various local councils. Their posts consisted of Chief Executives, Heads and Directors of departments such as HR, planning, IT, finance and assorted others. The template comprised five higher-order codes seen in Table 4A.4 below. Some of these codes are similar to the previous templates, with additions relating to their greater power and influence. However, as you can see in Table 4A.4, there was an additional higher-order code of *Policy influence (5 SO)*, which will be further explored after outlining the first four higher-order codes. This additional higher-order code alongside the multiple additions of second and third-order codes represents that the SO template is far more detailed than the previous JO and MO sample, suggesting that political

activity is more complex with a more comprehensive range of motivations when at the most senior level.

Table 4A.4: Template for Senior Officers

-
1. Relationship management
 - 1.1. Maintaining constitutional roles
 - 1.1.1 Maintaining officer impartiality
 - 1.1.2 Maintaining political mandate
 - 1.2. Staff management
 - 1.2.1 Team representation
 - 1.2.2 Team Resources
 - 1.2.3 Staff Wellbeing
 2. Networking
 - 2.1. Internal instrumental relationships
 - 2.1.1 Operational Delivery
 - 2.1.2 To gather intelligence
 - 2.2. Share knowledge externally
 - 2.3. Empowerment/mentoring of others
 - 2.3.1 To give back
 - 2.3.2 Potential reciprocity
 3. Strategic Voice
 - 3.1. Knowledge Confidence
 - 3.1.1 Expertise
 - 3.1.2 Obstinate opinion
 - 3.2. *Picking your battles*
 - 3.3. *Considered Challenge*
 4. Leverage influence
 - 4.1. Personal Influence
 - 4.1.1 Display Professionalism (exemplification)
 - 4.1.2 Career Reputation
 - 4.2. Team Influence
 - 4.2.1 Supporting the team
 - 4.2.2 Leveraging the team
 5. Policy influence
 - 5.1 Personal beliefs
 - 5.2 National political agenda
 - 5.3 Local government model
-

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

The first thematic analysis at the senior level highlighted how senior officers political will became more about strategic *Relationship management (1 SO)*, which was in contrast to the JOs and MOs who were concerned with completing their day-to-day tasks (*Role performance 1 JO & 1 Role performance MO*). For example, Bob, a local council chief executive, talked about how he was compelled to use politics to maintain separation between the council's differing factions, particularly with different political behaviours such as influence tactics, such as ingratiation. In this sense, *Maintaining constitutional roles (1.1 SO)*, ensured officers and councillors understood the boundaries of their roles and thus reduced the possibility of overlap and conflict:

“Basically, this is the interface between the Members, the decision-makers, and the staff. There’s 400 staff here, and making sure we run as head of paid service; I run the staff, and Members make the strategic decisions on policy and budget framework. So, it’s keeping Members out of the day-to-day and making sure the staff work to the political priorities that the members have as their political mandate.” (Bob, M, P20, SO)

Additionally, given their elevated position within the organisation, there were sub-functions of their role where they were spurred to ensure their job was carried out to an acceptable level. This is illustrated by Charlton, the Head of Legal within a local council who was also the Monitoring Officer⁹, responsible for ensuring the interactions and relationships within the councillors and officers were kept within the code of conduct (*1.1.1 Maintaining officer impartiality SO*) and maintaining the political mandate of councillors (*1.1.2 Maintaining political mandate SO*). Although this was a sanctioned aspect of their role and had official responsibility, it motivated them to engage in political activity such as mild intimidation.

⁹ A monitoring officer is normally the Head of legal or democratic services within a local council and is appointed to ensure the relationships between councillors and officers remain professional.

Within the quote seen below, Charlton documented a faltering relationship between a councillor and a senior officer within the local council, with the councillor coming close to crossing the acceptable boundaries of a challenging professional relationship.

“When you think that or when you find out via communication, something is, it’s kicking off, but not quite yet, you have to actually invite them [councillors] in for a friendly chat and say, “Look, this is where the line is. This is where you are now. This is what happens if you go beyond that line. Do we understand each other?” And you do it in a friendly way, but you have to leave them with the impression that you do that and you do it at your own risk.” (Charlton, M, P13, SO)

As with the JO and MO sample, senior officers remained motivated to engage in political activity to perform aspects of their role; however, this was even more pronounced at this level of seniority, where more of the responsibilities and functions necessitated political behaviour. SO’s responsibility meant political activity was necessary not just for *staff management (1.2 SO)* but also to *Team representation (1.2.1 SO)* and securing resources for their team or department (*1.2.2 Team Resources SO*). Percy, the Head of Finance, stated:

“We had to push strongly for what we individually believed and that there isn’t an acquiescence of a department, that a department head had to fight for resources, fight for his area and ensure his area isn’t reduced more than any other areas because that’s his sphere of influence and that’s what he wants.” (Percy, M, P1, SO)

Moreover, as with MOs, and given the pastoral responsibility of a team or department, the focus on supporting staff wellbeing remained an essential driver of political activity such as mentoring and influencing others for crucial resources for individuals within their team (*1.2.3 Staff wellbeing SO*).

Like the JO and MO templates, *Networking (2 SO)* was a higher-order code; however, the difference between the SOs and the other officer templates was the internal and external nature. First, senior officers were motivated to establish internal relationships (*2.1 Instrumental internal relationships SO*) within the council, which encompassed being inspired by *Operational delivery (2.1.1 SO)* and information gathering to ensure they had the required knowledge to support the functioning of their department (*2.1.2 To gather intelligence SO*). For example, Frank, the Head of Planning, outlined the importance of gathering information through establishing key relationships:

“I mean it is important that you are able to establish a rapport with the elected members anyway and there is a network if you’d like where you certainly have to work very closely with... the director of planning would have to work very closely with the chairman of the planning committee you’ve got to, actually, for [gaining knowledge of] policy and applications but the principle is you had to work together to get the work done” (Frank, M, P4, SO)

Frank details how networking at this level of the organisation is critical to assist with working processes and helps to ensure the smooth running of the council. However, external networks were also necessary for the SO template (*2.2 Share knowledge externally SO*) whereby external local councils formed networking groups filled with individuals within the same profession. From HR, IT, planning, and legal, they all had an external body that they were motivated to join, be part of, and actively participate for information that they could bring back to their organisations. This is detailed by Charlton, the Head of Legal, who explains:

“So, apart from this, I mentioned earlier, [external group] and obviously effectively like Assistant Chief execs or people who are in charge of committee services and the solicitors to the council. They were always very supportive.... Also helps when you're

doing something which has not been done before, so compulsory purchase orders, maybe. You just use that conversation, has anyone done that and then you get, oh yes, we do x y z or whatever and have a chat. So that was always very important as, if you like a safety blanket, it acted as a pressure valve. So that's always good.” (Charlton, M, P13, SO)

Unlike the JO and MO interviewees, SOs were motivated to empower and mentor others (2.3 *Empowerment/mentoring of others SO*), given the elevated position they hold. This was highly salient across the SOs, as positioned by Bob, the Chief Executive:

“There’s the Chief Executive of (council) which I mentored, one at another council I mentored, a couple at (council) I mentored and they all kind of, gone on to bigger and better things, not because of my influence but at least I’ve been able to help them... [my motivation was] “Giving back” (Bob, M, P20, SO)

This Chief Executive demonstrates how political activity such as mentoring can be driven by communal purposes, such as helping others progress their careers. SOs’ reported feeling a need to give back to individuals in the way others had helped them through their careers (2.3.1 *To give back SO*). However, mentoring was not always purely altruistic; many SOs reported expecting to receive career-related benefits in return (2.3.2 *Potential reciprocity SO*), which is neatly incorporated by Percy, the Head of Finance, who stated:

“So, you do look towards helping and encouraging other people, and that’s been very useful, individuals that you become friendly with, in an office environment, it is typically colleagues, but you can become friendly with and that becomes a help and assistance for oneself [...] Those that you have helped in the past are willing to reciprocate .” (Percy, M, P1, SO)

An element of senior officers political will that stands out most significantly from the JO and MO samples was the code *Knowledge certainty (3.1 SO)* related to SOs strategically voicing their opinions (*3 Strategic voice SO*). The *Knowledge certainty (3.1 SO)* code represented a tenacious desire to make their voice heard, using political activity including making forceful and continuous attempts to influence critical members of staff to fulfil their goals and objectives. This strategy was underpinned by their expertise (*3.1.1 Expertise SO*). As stated succinctly by Steven, the Head of IT:

“If everyone else disagrees with you, it’s incumbent on you to assess and reassess what’s being said to you; if you do all that, and you still think that there’s merit in your argument, I wouldn’t give in.” (Steven, M, P2, SO)

This can be further outlined by Luke, a chief executive who demonstrates a knowledge resolve that was not apparent within either the JO or MO sample who were more guarded in sharing their opinions to conform (*3 Conform to future-proof JO*) or were motivated to achieve voice but cognisant of the cultural constraints on being too forceful (*3 Achieve voice MO*). In contrast, SOs reported a ruthless and relentless drive to ensure their goals were acted upon with a headstrong, unyielding determination (*3.1.2 Obstinate opinion SO*).

“So, you can advise them [councillors], but they can make any decision they like as long as it’s legal, and that can be exactly opposite of what you want them to do. So, what I was able to do, you have a thing called a written constitution. I was able to, in the first year, with the help of my team, give us a lot more lead. So, a lot of the authority was delegated to us, and that happened because it was explained to them that there was going to be difficulties in the way that it was managed, potentially there could be lots of tribunals, and they will be sitting having to defend their actions. Whereas if they gave me more authority, they wouldn’t have to do it; instead, I would

have to do it, I would have to deal with tribunals. So, they were worried and also quite lazy. After about three or four years, the people below them have a whole group of councillors below them, some 20+ councillors were saying, “Well, who runs the council, is it us politicians or is it this lot? We’ve given them too much authority!” Because they would say to me, well I want to do that, and I would say to them, well no, no, we have this policy, and that is what we are going to do, and you agreed it.”
(Luke, M, P5, SO)

Luke describes how he leverages his knowledge of the constitution and context to influence and undermine the councillors. He feels his expertise makes him better suited to control decision-making and policy within the council. This political interference is significant given the constitutional role of officers as apolitical support staff.

However, some SOs also reported being cautious when exerting their opinion. For instance, Sheila, the Head of Human Resources, recounted her political motivation when interacting with the Chief Executive of the council:

“I think from my position, my natural authority being most senior in nature, I had a lot of influence. Also, because I had direct access, I reported into the Chief Executive...I suppose a lot of trying to keep on the right side of the Chief Executive was politically motivated because sometimes I didn’t really agree with his behaviour or what he was doing, but in order to achieve the best that I could with him, I had to kind of not go in quite as hard as I might had done” (Sheila, M, P19, SO)

Sheila explains how she needs to consider the strength and timing of her challenge and how she makes her voice heard to ensure she does not risk her influence with the Chief Executive (3.3 Considered challenge SO). This had echoes of the JOs who were motivated to be

cautious in their voice to protect themselves (*3 Conform to future- proof JO*) and MOs who demonstrated *Strategic deference (3.3. MO)*. However, SOs reported that they needed to be more strategic and intentional regarding political activity, knowing when to pick your battles and conserve your influence within the organisation by protecting your relationship with influential individuals.

Like MOs, SOs were also driven to exert influence. However, these SOs were motivated not just to establish influence through their official position; they were also driven to leverage their *personal* influence and reputation to achieve change (*4 Leveraging influence SO & 4.1 Personal influence SO*). This can be demonstrated by Ruth, another Head of Human Resources, who argued that:

“When you reach that level, as I am in HR, you’ve got to give your time, conviction getting what you want done. You’re in that position for a reason, so make it count, or you might as well seek a demotion.” (Ruth, F, P8, SO)

A surprising higher-order code that emerged in the SO but not the JO and MO templates was the motivation to engage in governmental political activity, such as changing and influencing the local council’s policy. This is important because it runs against officers’ constitutional role as impartial public servants. They were motivated to engage in political activity to influence policy (*5 Policy influence SO*), often citing their personal beliefs or perceptions of the broader political context (*5.1 Personal beliefs SO; 5.2 National political agenda SO*). For example, Luke, a Chief Executive, adopts political activity in order to sway the council to align to his own and the broader political agenda:

“I can see that the national politicians were seeking to limit the amount of money you could raise from council tax. So, in my first year, I persuaded them all to put the council tax up enormously and said that this is the right thing to do, you can blame me, I’m the new Chief Executive, this is what I am advising you, and there is going to be no all-out elections in three years, so the public are going to be really angry, but they will forget within 12 months, and they will forget because they will be getting much better services.” (Luke, M, P5, SO)

Other SOs also reported engaging in the governmental side of political activity because their perception of the local environment motivated them to engage in governmental political behaviours (5.3 Local government model SO). For example, Steven, the Head of IT, suggested:

“I was probably most in favour of the changes they were proposing than some other members of the management were. Not necessarily because I had an idea of what change was necessary, because it was clear to me that councils couldn’t stay in the financial model that they had been working to, for the last 50 years in the current environment, the current financial environment and the current working environment” (Steven, M, P2, SO)

Importantly, this code represents how the line between the SOs’ constitutional role as public servants and their personal beliefs became blurred. During the interviews, SOs did not report feeling that they were stepping outside of their official capacity; they perceived their influence to be valid and built upon their desire to exert their expertise and experience in an unbiased fashion. However, guiding the council’s strategic direction to such an extent could be perceived as pushing the boundaries of their apolitical remit, as discussed by Bob, a Chief Executive:

“We don’t go to Councillor X and say, ‘you got to do this,’ we say, ‘These are the options, you are the politician, you select. We’ve given you the best possible professional advice, if you want me to say which the best one is, it’s this one, but I respect it if you want to choose this one. But we never cross the line, but we go right up to it.” (Bob, M, P20, SO)

4A.6 Summary of Senior Officers

The senior officers' political motivation was more complex and nuanced compared to their junior colleagues', as evidenced by the detail of the template. Like JOs and MOs who were motivated by the functional elements of political activity, SOs were also motivated to engage in political activity in order to enact their tasks but did so at a strategic level. In particular, they were motivated to represent others, including their department and/or team (*1.2.1 Team Representation SO*). This mirrors the leader political support literature, which suggests that leaders use their power to aid their followers by attempting to alter the distribution of resources to their favour (Ellen, 2014). Looking at all three templates it is possible to see that increasing bureaucratic power and responsibility is associated with an increased motivation to represent followers, so this is one aspect of political motivation that closely aligns with power and positionality.

This drive to represent individuals suggests senior officers were concerned for others and demonstrated benevolence in their political will (Treadway, 2012; Kapoutsis, 2017). This can be seen within the first higher orders of *Relationship management (1 SO)* but also *Empowerment/mentoring of others (2.3 SO)*, whereby these individuals are seeking, to some regard, the betterment of others through their political activity. However, as seen within code

Potential reciprocity (2.3.2 SO) the SOs also attributed a sense of exchange when doing so. In line with social exchange theory SOs appear to be generating obligations for the future (Emerson, 1976). Closely attached to exchange then is reciprocity which is also observable within the code *Share knowledge externally* (2.2 SO). Therefore, it appears that motivation is far more complex than a divide between self-serving motivation and benevolent motivation. Within the existing political will theoretical frameworks (Kapoutsis et al., 2017; Treadway, 2012), there is confusion whether one can be simultaneously self-serving and benevolent. The findings from the current study would suggest that individuals can be driven by self-serving and benevolent motives for the same political activity; they can seek the betterment of their followers or others whilst at the same time understanding that their activity is likely to lead to instrumental gain for themselves. This suggests that existing binaries of self-serving vs benevolent may be more nuanced.

Like JOs and MOs, SOs were also aware of risk, however, in line with OB literature (Doldor, 2017), the seniors could evaluate what was appropriate through years of experience. Thus, their risk evaluation often did not influence their motivation to the same degree as the junior and mid-level officers. Indeed, this proficiency and understanding increased the SO samples' level of confidence or internal political efficacy, that is, the individuals' sense of their ability to understand the political environment and their perception of their ability to participate effectively (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982). This contentment with risk was linked to perhaps one of the most surprising motivations in the officers' templates, which was the motivation to influence policy (*Policy influence*, 5 SO) which could undoubtedly be outlined as both unsanctioned and in contradiction with the necessity of neutrality.

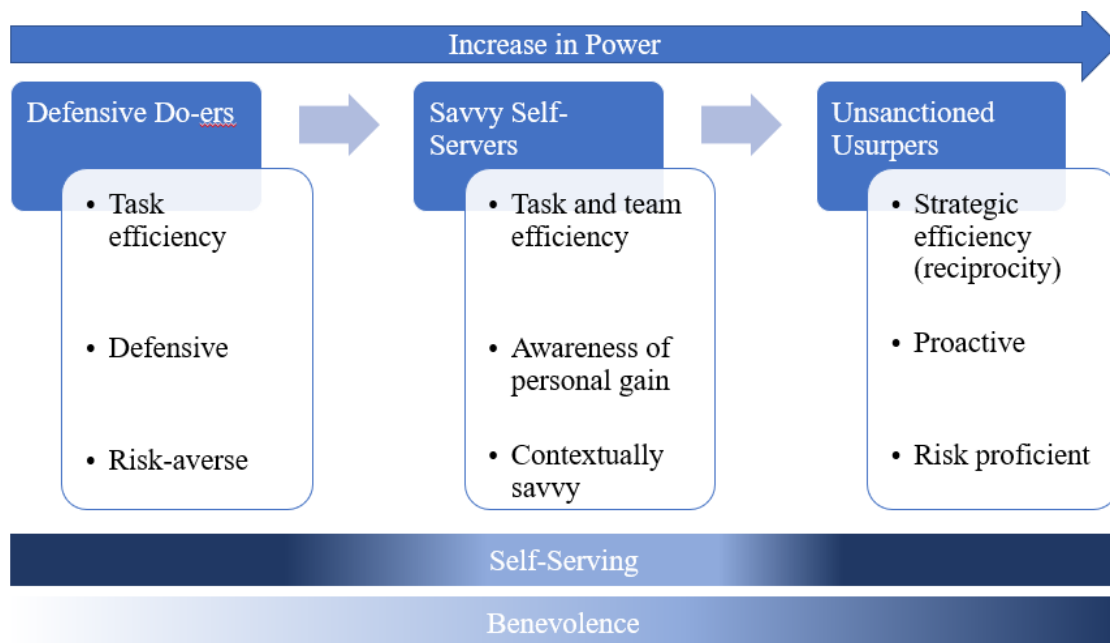
This drive for policy influence suggests that SOs are motivated to push the boundaries of neutrality and professionalism to achieve a political mission. This suggests that the political motivation of SOs had elements of the political will seen in political science literature, that is, of support for a particular policy. Thompson et al. (2020) suggest that public sector workers may use personal resources to achieve a greater good and make important ethical evaluations, just like the SOs in this sample who felt their political interference was just. While some OB literature talks about the importance of ethics in political motivation (Doldor, 2017), OB research does not discuss how some may perceive their *lack of* involvement in political activity as an *unethical* path to take.

Given the functional but representative political will, the proficient and confident approach to their evaluation of risk alongside the surprising and overt motivation to engage in political activity to influence policy to their own believes, the senior officers can be labelled as the ***unsanctioned usurpers***.

4A.7 Summary of Officers' Political Will: The Role of Power

Having analysed and discussed the templates individually it was important to consider all three templates together to identify overarching themes in the development of officers' political will. In doing so it became clear that officers' power (i.e., their seniority and position of responsibility within the council) was a key influence on the maturation of political will. Figure 4A.1 provides a summary of the overarching dimensions of political will and how they change across these levels of power. The figure reveals three broad overarching dimensions of political will for officers: (1) task/strategy, (2) defensive/proactive and (3) risk averse/proficient.

Figure 4A.1: Overarching Dimensions of Officers' Political Will



Note. Lighter shading represents a decrease whilst darker shading represents an increase in these motives.

4A.7.1 Task to Strategy

The first overarching dimension of political will referred to being motivated by a functional aim. Junior and middle officers were concerned with engaging in politics to achieve a specific task, and mid-level officers were also motivated by the functional enhancements that political involvement can bring for the team they are managing. Given that the mid-level officers have more team management responsibilities, this maturation in political will implies that more formalised responsibility leads to enhanced benevolent political motivation, that is to benefit others. This political motivation developed further for more powerful senior officers, who were motivated to not just play politics on behalf of their team, but also to achieve strategic aims across the wider council.

This development from task to strategic efficiency conflicts with existing research on political maturation, which suggests that individuals typically consider politics as dysfunctional unethical at the beginning of ones' career, and only later at more senior levels, start to consider the functional aspects of political activity (Doldor, 2017). However, Doldor's data was gathered from two global UK-based private organisations from the hi-tech sector and the fast consumer goods sector, where politics is treated as something outside of the normal range of activities; in these contexts, politics is regarded as unsanctioned, negative and self-serving. However, the empirical focus of this study, within the political work space, has shown that individuals within local councils have a different development of their motivation, whereby they consistently see politics as functional even at junior levels. This is likely due to the pervasiveness of governmental political activity in such an environment, which necessitates networking, influence, negotiation, debate, secrecy and other forms of politicking in order to succeed (Silvester et al., 2014). This finding demonstrates the importance of looking beyond trait-like and dispositional forms of political will to consider the social cognitive elements of the environmental context and how it is interpreted.

Moving from task to strategic political motivation also reflects the increased management responsibility of officers, and its links to benevolent political will, that is, acting on behalf of the entire team and/or as seen within the senior officers, a department. In the extant literature, benevolent motivation is seen as a stable or trait-like dimension (Kapoutsis et al., 2017). However, this study suggests that benevolent motivations are influenced by the power, position and responsibilities one holds within an organisation. This is more in line with research on leader political support which finds that leaders are well positioned to act politically on behalf of, and to benefit followers (Ellen, 2014), although this literature largely discusses relational and dyadic political behaviour rather than contextual and systemic

influences on political activity. However, the position of political actors within wider structures is recognised in the political science literature. For example, Persson and Sjöstedt (2012) adopt state theory to explain how *systemic factors* shape political activity by commanding loyalty and providing underlying social contracts at the national level. These factors are also relevant for organisations which are fundamentally political entities (Pfeffer, 1992). Through an empirical interdisciplinary focus in the political work space the current study suggests that systemic organisational factors impact the dimensions of individualised political will, particularly benevolence, which is shaped by power and position within the organisation.

4A.7.2 Defensive to Proactive

The second overarching dimension of political will is related to the stance individuals took towards workplace politics, moving from defensive, to proactive. The findings suggested that the less powerful junior officers were driven to protect themselves, the mid-level officers became less motivated by protective aims and more aware of the potential self-serving gains that political activity could bring, and the senior officers were far more driven by proactivity, wanting to step out in the political arena and were comfortable with being more self-serving to push through personal thought campaigns. The defensiveness of junior officers reflects the ‘conservation’ values identified in the political science literature, where individuals are driven to protect the status quo and are obedient and cautious (Schwartz, 1992). Interestingly, the proactive political motivation seen in the senior officers, which involved striving for change, reflects the opposite of conservation values in Schwartz’s typology (Ariel, Sagiv & Roccas, 2020), suggesting that unlike values, which are thought to be reasonably stable, the

dimensions of political will identified in this study seem to adapt over time based on individuals' understanding of the wider context, their positionality and power.

These findings also highlight the narrow conceptualisation of 'self-serving' in the contemporary OB literature (cf. Ashforth & Lee, 1990), which typically positions self-focused political will and behaviour as inherently harmful to others (Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989). While the findings from this study do suggest that senior officers were driven to make gains for themselves, such as power and resources, they were also motivated to do so for their team, suggesting that self-serving political will can simultaneously be benevolent. Junior officers were also self-serving but they wanted to engage in political acts that protected their career and reputation, defending them against the political arena rather than proactively making self-gains. Importantly, identifying these nuances of self-serving political motivation would not have been possible without the qualitative methodology used to uncover political reasoning.

4A.7.3 Risk Averse to Risk Proficient

The final overarching dimension within the officers' political will model in Figure 4A.1 was related to risk. Junior officers regarded political activity as being inherently risky and were driven to avoid being seen as difficult or challenging. With more experience and power in their councils, mid-level officers became contextually savvy and thus were driven to be more confident in their political actions. The senior and most powerful officers were most accepting of risk and were reasonably proficient in relation to understanding the context and were motivated to manipulate and shape the context accordingly. The extant OB literature has recognised the importance of risk. Treadway (2012) for example, includes the assessment

of risk as an important aspect of the padlock model of political will, and Kapoutsis (2016) also theorises that individuals need to consider the context when deciding whether it is prudent to engage in politics. However, the current study is the first to demonstrate that individuals assess risk in their political reasoning, and importantly, that the perceptions of risk vary across levels of seniority. This contradicts Kapoutsis et al. (2017) who found empirical evidence that an individuals' level of risk is thought to be stable throughout ones' career. Therefore, like other aspects of attitudinal political will identified by Doldor (2017: functional, ethical, emotional), this study found that risk is an important dimension of political will that can mature and vary by power, knowledge and experience.

4A.8 Conclusion

Answering research question 1 (What are the dimensions of political will in political work?) this chapter presented the findings from the 30 officers interviewed in this study. Breaking down the sample into junior, mid-level and senior officers it was also possible to examine how the dimensions of their political motivation changed with their increased experience and seniority. In doing so three over-arching dimensions of political will were identified. The chapter, therefore, contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating how a social cognitive perspective on political will can reveal how motivational dimensions change in relation to individuals' experience, seniority and position. A key finding is the role of power, in this case, seniority, in shaping the dimensions of political will. Furthermore, without the inductive and phenomenological perspective taken in this study it would not have been possible to identify the range of dimensions presented in the template analyses. These dimensions go beyond those identified in the existing empirical work on political will and demonstrate the utility of the political work context for identifying workplace political

motivation. Of course, there are limitations to this template analysis study, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4B section 4B.8. The next chapter expands on this further by presenting the findings from the councillor sample.

Chapter 4B : The Dimensions of Political Will (Councillors)

This chapter discusses the findings from the councillor interviews and presents the templates for the political motivations of the junior, mid-level and senior councillors. These individuals are the empirical focus of the political science literature, which suggests political will is concerned with a group of decision-makers (Post et al., 2010). However, this thesis is concerned by the individual, micro-level nature of their political motives. The chapter starts with all three templates presented in Table 4B.1. Then each template is discussed in detail, starting with the junior councillors, and moving on to the mid-level and senior councillors. During the discussion of the templates, comparisons will be made with the other sub-samples in the analyses.

As with the officer-templates, the councillor templates are then examined together to identify overarching dimensions of political will. These are presented in Figure 4B.1 towards the end of the chapter. The findings indicate that political will for councillors is complex, including different, and often conflicting motivates. A key finding is that the formal power, or seniority of councillors impacts their overarching dimensions of political will. This finding leads the way for power to be examined in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4B.1: Junior, Mid-level and Senior Councillors' Templates

Junior Councillors	Mid-level Councillors	Senior Councillors
1. Public service ethic 1.1 Previous Occupations 1.2 Improve their community 1.3 Family ethos 1.4 Self-development/profile	1. Public service ethic 1.1 Previous Occupations 1.2 Improve their community 1.3 Family ethos 1.4 Self-Development/profile	1. Public service ethic 1.1 Previous Occupations 1.2 Improve their community 1.3 Family ethos
2. Representation 2.1 Casework 2.1.1 Individual constituents 2.1.2 Give people a voice 2.2 Tenacity 2.3 <i>Conform to party</i>	2. Representation 2.1 Casework 2.2 Policy priorities 2.2.1 Personal interests 2.2.2 Values 2.2.3 Residents' concerns 2.3 Knowledge resolve 2.4 <i>Conformity</i> 2.4.1 <i>To party</i> 2.4.2 <i>To electorate</i>	2. Strategic representation 2.1 Casework 2.2 Portfolio Management 2.3 Community champion 2.3.1 Community contribution 2.3.2 Prestige 2.4 Knowledge resolve 2.5 <i>Compliance of cabinet position</i>
3. Networking 3.1 To fulfil their role 3.2 Growing community network	3. Networking 3.1 To fulfil their role 3.2 To gain influence 3.3 To gather intelligence	3. Networking 3.1 To fulfil their role 3.2 To gain influence 3.3 <i>Cabinet responsibility</i> 3.4 To gather intelligence 3.5 Build image 3.5.1 Collegiate image 3.5.2 Decision maker
4. Learn political culture 4.1 Understand the environment 4.1.1 Formal 4.1.2 Informal	4. Developing, understanding, leveraging influence 4.1 Awareness of strategic influence 4.2 Share knowledge externally	4. Developing, understanding, leveraging influence 4.1 Awareness of strategic influence 4.2 Share knowledge externally 4.3 Connect to powerful political actors

Note. Italics denote elements of risk

4B.1 Junior Councillors Template

The junior councillors consisted of individuals within their first elected term, meaning they all had less than four years of experience within their role. Through the template analysis, this sample produced four higher-order codes: *Public service ethic* (1 JC), *Representation* (2 JC), *Networking* (3 JC) and *Learn political culture* (4 JC) seen in Table 4B.2 below. The codes represent a mix of governmental-based political will concerning motivations for policy change and workplace political will, meaning there were apparent differences compared to the junior *officers*' motivation, who were not concerned with council policy or governmental politics.

Table 4B.2: Template for Junior Councillors

-
1. Public service ethic
 - 1.1. Previous occupations
 - 1.2. Improve their community
 - 1.3. Family ethos
 - 1.4. Self-development/profile
 2. Representation
 - 2.1. Casework
 - 2.1.1 Individual constituents
 - 2.1.2 Give people a voice
 - 2.2. Tenacity
 - 2.3. *Conform to party*
 3. Networking
 - 3.1. To fulfil their role
 - 3.2. Growing community network
 4. Learn political culture
 - 4.1. Understand the environment
 - 4.1.1 Formal
 - 4.1.2 Informal
-

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

The first higher-order code was *Public service ethic (1 JC)* which represented that the junior councillors were motivated by a deep-rooted motivation to serve the public. They reported that an essential part of their identity was to be an active member of their community. They were motivated to represent and be a dynamic leader within their community. Todd, a retired policeman, highlights how his public service ethic has been apparent throughout his career; it stemmed from his previous occupations (*1.1 Previous occupations JC*), which was a salient theme where participants came from backgrounds in the civil service, police and were retired teachers:

“Well, I think motivation is really interesting. If you look at my career, I mean, I've been a police officer since 74. So, I've been involved in delivering services to the public and supporting the public, keeping the public safe, whatever you want. Then when I retired from the police service, I retired as a [high ranking officer]. When I slowed down, I thought, well, what do I want to do? I was persuaded to become a Councillor, and it was a persuasion. It took a long time for me to agree, but I'm glad I did. My wife's not. So, you know, why am I doing it? Well, I love (area). I love (area) to serve again, and I want it to be the best it possibly can be. I want to stop other people who have completely different views to me from destroying the area if I can.

(Todd, M, P12, JC)

Not only does Todd highlight how his previous occupation in public service drove him, but he also wants to improve the community (*1.2 Improve their community JC*), which was a common theme across the JC sample. This was often rather abstract for junior councillors, it was not explicitly targeted at *how* they would improve the community, what specific elements of the community they wanted to improve, but they believed that being part of the political game, being able to influence topical matters within their community was essential.

Additionally, another component of this public service ethic stemmed directly from their background and family ethos. Often, JCs reported that their parents or siblings were involved in local politics and were following their example (1.3 *Family ethos JC*). An example of this stems from Susan, whose mother and father were heavily involved within their local wards:

“my father and my mother both used to be local councillors, one in my ward and one next door. So because I live in the ward next door to my council seat, which is where my mother represented. And then my father, I now have his seat. So with the benefit of hindsight, it was obviously going to be!” (Susan, M, P59, JC)

JCs’ benevolent motivations to assist, serve and help others were often counterbalanced with a motivation for self-development and to raise their profile (1.4 *Self-development/profile JC*). For example, Wayne recounts his motivations starting as a councillor two years previous:

“One of our councillors was stepping down because they were quite old and they were looking for a replacement, and in this area, I think it’s important that the councillor should live in the local area they represent so they have a better understanding of the issues. So anyway, this vacancy came up, I put my name forward, and fortunately, I got it, and I wanted to get, get my name out into the public; I’ve always worked behind the scenes in the civil service, so this is what I’ve wanted to change” (Wayne, M, P15, JC)

Furthermore, these councillors’ remit (2 *Representation JC*) focused on the individuals they can help within their community at this early stage of their political career. They reported wanting to assist the vulnerable and the individual ward constituents in need (2.1 *Casework JC*). In this sense, they were motivated by what they describe as their casework, their

electorate in need of assistance, as represented by Jordan's frustration with his opposition party (2.1.1 Individual constituents JC):

"A key thing is, this is a broad generalisation, but it is common within the (party) that (the opposition party) don't do casework, right, ok, like I will consider say 80% of my job to be casework, nine times out of ten, to me, that is my job! it's messy you know, I go, and I see someone in their house, and I promise them something which I might not be able to deliver, essentially I could, you know, and I sometimes have problems because I'm dealing with somebody on the ground about a particular issue and say it's a (council) issue, I have to then push that up to my (opposition party) Councillor, and I know they won't respond, and I know they will just kind of give a fluff answer that they have referred it to somebody, they won't do it, you know, but essentially they still keep getting elected, people still keep thinking they are doing something, which is as frustrating as hell" (Jordan, M, P21, JC)

This focus on the electorate continues in the following code in that JCs reported being driven to be an intermediary between the vulnerable and the council, wanting to advocate for their constituents and give them a voice (2.1.2 Give people a voice JC). Florence reports this:

"I think she [a constituent] came in from (council) and is in dire need, got two young children, very little money, and I think she's been abused and all the rest of it and got nowhere to go. So, she went to the local council, and they weren't very helpful, or they just did not get back to her, so I've just been holding her hand throughout the whole thing. I think that most of what you do is to just be there for them and make sure they know that you will advocate for them even if you can't really make more of a difference than that." (Florence, F, P25, JC)

When focusing on individual casework, JCs reported being highly driven to represent their constituents successfully. They demonstrated tenacity (2.2 Tenacity JC) to influence others and stubbornly persisted to ensure their aims were met. Ruby demonstrates this:

“So I play my part. I expect officers to have to prioritise things that I asked and act accordingly, or I’ll ask again, and again.” (Ruby, F, P18, JC)

JC’s political will was also influenced by the values and norms of their political parties. Interviewees reported surprise at the compliance they had to express to the mechanics of the party (2.3 Conform to party JC). This can be highlighted in the interview with Karen:

“It’s about making sure my residents, whether or not they voted for me (I don’t really care), get what, get their money’s worth from the Council, and, yeah, it’s all different than I thought it would be. You have clear responsibilities to the political party whom you represent; it hadn’t really occurred to me before. So, I have to look at a lot of stuff I do through a lens of that”. (Karen, F, P54, JC)

Because they needed to influence party members to achieve change for their constituents, the JCs, like the junior officers, were also motivated to network within the council (3 Networking JC); however, while JOs were motivated to gain personal support networks and friendship, JCs were motivated to network to achieve political gain, illustrating they were concerned with engaging in workplace politics to achieve governmental political aims (3.1 To fulfil their role JC). Todd and Susan can explain this:

“Networking is absolutely crucial. It helps you get things done. I’m afraid that’s a fact of life. If I want, if I want a favour, if I want something done, If I know somebody [an

officer] who's there for me, I'm likely to get it done. You go in cold; then you won't get it done. Absolutely critical.” (Todd, M, P12, JC)

“You as a Councillor, you have to maintain good working relationships with these people [officers], because no matter how frustrating they can be, and they can, they might not go your way or be able to help you terribly on case A, but then when you've got case B, they can. And it depends very much as well on the personality of the officer. Like Planning, for example, they are given their cases, there is a case officer for each individual planning application. And I suppose, like anything, you know, you look at it and depending on who the officer is, you think, 'oh no' or 'oh, yeah, brilliant'” (Susan, F, P59, JC)

As well as networking with officers, JCs also networked across their party and cross-party to drive through initiatives for their community. JCs were motivated to build their network within their constituency, to develop their image and their profile within the community, and to be involved within their community more (3.2 *Growing community network JC*) as demonstrated by Lucinda:

“I decided to run for the Council, I was kind of new to the area, and I was thinking I need to make some friends in the area, so I was 5 minutes away from joining the WI, and then I thought, well actually I want to join a party so I joined the party, still thinking I might join the WI, but I've met so many people I just didn't have time for that. But in your role, you end up dealing with all the businesses around here; you get to know everybody; you meet a lot of community leaders, lots of activists in many

ways, so your network just grows and grows, people will just say hello to me, I don't remember you. But that involvement is what I wanted." (Lucinda, F, P16, JC)

The fourth higher-order code within this sample was the JCs' motivation to learn about the environment (4 Learn political culture JC & 4.1 Understand the environment JC), including the Formal (4.1.1 JC) and Informal (4.1.2 JC) power and the structure of the council, and the remit and control of officers. Lucinda and Wayne, two councillors at different councils at other sides of the country, can explain this. Lucinda highlights how the organisational structure is challenging to navigate at the start of one's term:

"So, yes, when I first became a Councillor, I had a sort of induction, and they gave me the organigram with everybody and who they are and what they do and stuff but even then because it's not, like, you have people heading up different teams, and you got these Committees, and you have to figure out which one is relevant to which, like the language is not very clear, like figuring out the difference between Community Services and then Special Resources or Planning and Planning Policy, like it, it takes time." (Lucinda, F, P16, JC)

Additionally, Wayne states that it is essential to learn about the informal and political elements of the council, including the tacit knowledge about appropriate political behaviours such as influence skills that you have to learn if you are to succeed within your councillor role.

"Yes, when I was even newer, I was told there were Officers who were good and not so good. So you know there are certain departments which are good and ones not so good. So if you want to approach a good department, there is no problem, but in a department which is perhaps not so good, you have to be careful how you phrase

things, who you approach, you don't go in all guns blazing you have to try to be a bit more conciliatory that sort of thing.” (Wayne, M, P15, JC)

4B.2 Summary of Junior Councillors:

The junior councillors’ political will, like the political will of the junior officer counterparts, was rather functional. They were motivated to engage in political activity to fulfil their job role and learn the political culture and environment. This contrasts with Doldor’s (2017) research that found it was only *senior* managers who saw politics as functional, suggesting that the context likely shapes political motivation. In this case of political work, it would almost be strange to foresee a dysfunctional political will, given the salience of political activity in local councils. The findings also show that politicians consider it necessary to participate in *organisational* politics to fulfil their role, as politics is their job (Silvester, 2008). It is often assumed that politicians engage in a separate, distinct form of political activity and thus have unique motivations detached from broader organisational workers, but the findings from this study suggest that this is not the case.

However, as one would expect, there are also divergences to the officers within local councils. There were examples of political science or governmental political will whereby councillors, as expected, were motivated to represent, and champion political causes. This can be seen within codes such as *Individual constituents* (2.1.1 JC) and *Give people a voice* (2.1.2 JC). Such motivations to engage in governmental political activity display a link to the political science literature that taps into the ‘character’ of political representatives. According to Callander (2006), individuals are either office motivated, (i.e., seeking the rewards of office) or policy motivated, (i.e., placing a higher drive and value towards establishing policy

outcomes). The template codes that show a drive to represent and provide a voice in the council for constituents indicate that these individuals were more policy- rather than office-motivated according to Callander's typology. The policy- versus office-motivated debate has similarities to the OB's literature on other-focused and benevolent political will (Kapoutsis et al., 2017; Treadway, 2012): junior officers have an outward-facing, other-orientation, driven to provide others with a voice within the local council and thus are nobly motivated to better their followers' situation. There were also similarities with literature that generally concentrates on public administrators rather than elected officials, namely the work on 'public service motivation', which is defined as an individuals' predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily in public institutions, with a strong commitment to the public interest (Perry & Wise, 1990). This literature was mirrored in the higher-order code *Public Service Ethic (1 JC)* for councillors, but interestingly was not salient in the junior officer sample, where it would be more expected.

Because junior councillors were motivated to represent others to change policy, their motives bring together political science and OB perspectives on political will. However, political science's conceptualisation of political will is centred around a *group* of individuals joining together to change a particular policy. Within the JC sample, neither the bonding of a group for collective action nor the fixation on broader scale (local) governmental policy was clear. Instead, they see themselves as noble intermediaries, seeking to give voice to *individual* constituents and to persistently champion *individual* causes, reflected in the code *Tenacity (2.2 JC)*. This indicates that for these local politicians, stand-alone causes are more important than being a member of a broader collective, suggesting it is vital that political science does not reject the idea of micro-organisational political notions as this literature can have key insights for the motivations of political actors.

Nevertheless, this does not suggest that junior councillors are not mindful of the necessity of collective buy-in. For example, as seen in code *Growing community network* (3.2 JC), they were aware of the need to build a broader base of support from the electorate who bestow their democratic mandate upon them. Further, they were motivated to create a collective with officers, perceiving the need to act appropriately to form these relationships with officers as fundamental to achieving their goals (*To fulfil their role*: 3.1 JC). Therefore, in line with political science theorists (e.g., Post et al., 2010), JCs' were at least conscious of the importance of building a collective to champion political issues. Yet, junior councillors were also naïve to the power of the collective, particularly the party's expectations. For example, the template code *Conform to party* (2.3 JC) highlights how junior councillors anticipated much higher levels of autonomy than they have. Still, motivations were restricted by their evaluation of risk and their consideration of their party affiliation. In contrast, junior officers were acutely aware of the collective culture and were thus motivated to avoid being seen as a rebel or difficult. So whilst junior councillors were aware of building political will to get things done in the community and actions passed through council processes and thus reflective of a political science perspective on political will, they were less aware of the need to align themselves with the broader party collective, and therefore traditional OB notions of political will, as a micro-level construct were also relevant for their political motivation.

In summary, given the individualised motivations with a benevolent outlook and the perception that they are principled and honourable intermediaries, providing a voice for their vulnerable constituents, caveated with a naivety around the expectations of the collective, the junior councillors can be labelled as ***Naively Noble***.

4B.3 Mid-level Councillor Template:

Mid-level councillors (MC: $n=10$) were councillors who had experience as an elected local councillor, were vice-chairs of committees or leaders of the opposition. This template for this sample contained four higher-order codes, with the first three higher-order codes the same as the JC sample including *Public service ethic (1 MC)*, *Representation (2 MC)* and *Networking (3 MC)* with a development in the fourth higher code in the mid-level sample being *Developing, understanding, leveraging influence (4 MC)*.

Table 4B.3: Template for Mid-level Councillors

1. Public service ethic
1.1 Previous Occupations
1.2 Improve their community
1.3 Family ethos
1.4 Self-development/profile
2. Representation
2.1 Casework
2.2 Policy priorities
2.2.1 Personal interests
2.2.2 Values
2.2.3 Residents' concerns
2.3 Knowledge resolve
2.4 <i>Conformity</i>
2.4.1 <i>To party</i>
2.4.2 <i>To electorate</i>
3. Networking
3.1 To fulfil their role
3.2 To gain influence
3.3 To gather intelligence
4. Developing, understanding, leveraging influence
4.1 Awareness of strategic influence
4.2 Share knowledge externally

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

The first higher code at this mid-level councillor level represented a similar motivation to the junior councillors in the first thematic analyses, the *Public service ethic (1 MC)* seeking to

represent others. There were examples of *Previous occupations* (1.1 MC) being a motivation to continue to serve their communities (1.2 *Improve their community MC*) and *Family ethos* (1.3 MC) where previous family members were heavily involved in the community. This meant there was no differentiation between the Junior councillors (1 *Public service ethic JC*), suggesting a stable pro-social motive to engage in politics. However, in this sample, interviewees reported a greater desire to develop their profile (1.4 *Self-development/profile MC*), which was more self-serving than pro-social because it was related to assisting their electoral hopes and reputation.

Like JCs, mid-level councillors held a similar motivation to represent their constituents (2.1 *Casework MC*), an integral aspect of the exact higher-order code *Representation* (2 MC). However, compared to the junior sample, they reported broadening their political concerns, moving from *individual* issues and *individual* constituents' concerns seen in the JC sample to the strategic aspects of more expansive policy areas and serving larger community groups (2.2 *Policy priorities MC*). These priorities were important to them through their own personal values, beliefs and agendas. For example, when Richard, a councillor of 20 years' experience, was asked to outline his role, he stated (2.2.1 *Personal interests MC*):

"I'm an opposition councillor, and my particular interest is in Planning and Transport, which is really the area I'm most involved with [...] Planning and Transport is something I've wanted to enrich for 15 years, my Party probably have enough of me debating it with them" (Richard, M, P58, MC)

Likewise, Harold, a councillor with over 25 years of experience, when asked the same question, discussed his values (2.2.2 *Values MC*):

“role has changed significantly; when I first got in, I represented a village. [Now] it’s a very big ward which I concentrate on graffiti, anti-social behaviour and drug use[...] We all have the local problems we are passionate about and the teenager problem, you know, you should see the graffiti around the corner, but, it’s not just me it’s as a community we have to tackle it together – we have to value our community”
(Harold, M, P17, MC)

Dawn, a councillor with a significant reputation within their community and in the latter stages of their second electoral cycle, illustrates how, in comparison to the JC sample, Mid-level councillors widened their concerns beyond individual constituents to wider collectives and community groups (2.2.3 Residents’ concerns MC):

“Say, for me, I’m a councillor because I think there are a lot of keyboard warriors out there, who are very, very good at being keyboard warriors. But the reality is, how do you make a difference? You make a difference by standing and representing your community. And so that’s why I did it. And since I’ve done it...my station has...(lots of) steps, from streets down to the station, it’s a 1900’s thing. And I campaigned, and I got..., £10 million.” (Dawn, F, P56, MC)

Like JCs, mid-level councillors also had a stubborn motivation to persist in achieving their political aims (2.2 Tenacity JC); however, at this level, they were driven to not only engage in persistent influence to support their individual constituents, but they also begin to see the broader collective issues within their remit as more under their control. Therefore, they became increasingly tenacious in promoting strategic priorities (2.3 Knowledge resolve MC).

MCs emphasis on representing their ward and community was now a part of their reasoning when considering their political actions. With this came an awareness of their precarity as a councillor. So, while there was still evidence of MCs conforming to the expectations of the Party (2.4 *Conformity MC*; 2.4.1 *To party MC*), there was now a deeper, more self-serving consideration of the influence of their constituents and the power of constituents to impact their electoral destiny (2.4.2 *To electorate MC*). This is discussed by Harold, the councillor with over 25 years of experience, which documents the importance of being attentive to constituents' priorities for one's career:

“Longevity for a Councillor is a matter of getting re-elected, and that is usually down to hard work in the ward; you keep your electorate happy and don't take on unpopular agendas. I saw one Councillor end up being unpopular, the leader of the council two years ago, in a very, village area, ended up being humiliated because he was the [urban development] guy, that was his pet baby, it's that sort of arrogant, ex-hedge fund manager, he got his comeuppance”. (Harold, M, P17, MC)

Compared to the JCs, MCs recognised that the view of constituents potentially constrained their actions. This does not mean that all strategic priorities were directly motivated by their perception of the electorate's wants. However, they were attuned to treading carefully and not supporting unpopular agendas if they wanted to remain in office. This is comparable to the mid-level officers' sample who were motivated to pick their battles (3.2 *Picking your battles MO*) and motivated by *Strategic deference* (3.3 *MO*), which highlighted a similar cognisance of risk attached to the political arena.

Like the JCs, networking was considered essential to fulfilling their political agenda (3.1 *To fulfil their role MC*). However, unlike the JC sample, who networked to achieve change for

their constituents, the MCs sought to gain influence (3.2 *To gain influence MC*) through their networking to achieve self-serving career-related outcomes and raise their profile. They were motivated to engage with external organisations and influences outside the council to raise their profile and influence within the council chamber. This can be demonstrated through Janet, a councillor in her third term:

“I’ve networked. I did the next-generation programme, and from that, I think we’re seen probably as one of the most successful cohorts because we have roles within the LGA board. There’s a group of us, and we meet separately, everyone knows we exist, and that’s probably where a lot of the changes will come within the (council)...So I’m in a really interesting situation, we don’t have a leader of the council, and the view is, if there were anyone right now who could lead this council and who could take it forward, it would be me.” (Janet, F, P57, MC)

There was an additional second-order code within the higher-order codes *To gather intelligence* (3.3 MC). Within local councils, information is a valuable commodity. For example, officers will have information concerning the direction of policy that the majority group are seeking to move towards and are often expected not to divulge such information. This is most likely why within this passage by Paddy, it is noticeable how motivated he was to gather intelligence via the officers.

“So, council officers aren’t born or instructed to brief opposition councillors, you have to learn to ask the right questions, and you have to learn to ferret, and you have to learn to dig deep to get to what you think might be the truth. Officers are not going to brief you in detail unless you ask the right questions, they will never lie to you, but they won’t brief you in detail because you are the opposition, so you have to learn to

ask the right questions of the officers you trust, to ensure you get the right answers.”

(Paddy, M, P23, MC)

Paddy's example demonstrates the complexities of political activity for MCs who are motivated to engage in workplace political activity, such as exploiting relationships with, circumventing, or manipulating officers to satisfy their governmental/policy related political will.

The fourth higher-order code is the most significant departure from the JC sample. It displays how the MCs' were aware of their influence and how wide-ranging it was (*4 Developing, understanding, leveraging influence MC*). This perception meant they were more willing to influence policy agendas, whether successful or not (*4.1 Awareness of strategic influence MC*). This was whether they were the leader of the opposition, a councillor that had been re-elected numerous times and had 25 years' experience or someone three of four terms into their role. For example, Johnathon stated:

“I'm quite vocal on issues I believe in, and I often sway the vote for a particular viewpoint... There's an element of experience, if you will, I suppose I do have a relatively high profile; I frequently feed information to the local press. So, yes, [I] can often sway a decision” (Johnathon, M, P14, MC)

MCs also reported that their membership of external organisations bolstered their sense of influence. Therefore, their motivation was to *Share knowledge externally (4.2 MC)* with their political activity differing throughout the MC sample, including influence attempts to specific political behaviours such as lobbying. In Johnathon's interview, he discussed how he was motivated to share knowledge externally to create alliances to assist his agendas:

“I’m a member of four residents’ associations; I frequently attend Parish Council meetings for... I’m associated with three local amenity societies with a climate change group, lots of groups associated with all sorts of concerns; air pollution, climate change, planting of trees... There is a conflict of interest, I believe, between what the council wants to do, and that’s a decision I think largely led by the officers but endorsed by the majority group. I’m very much involved within a wider group, or groups, in trying to get decisions changed [in the council]. If I can give those groups my ideas...well.” (Johnathon, M, P14, MC)

4B.4 Summary of Mid-level Councillors:

Like the junior councillors, the mid-level councillors are motivated by individual causes through their motivation of *Casework* (2.1 MC). Many examples suggested that councillors held benevolent political will to *Improve their community* (1.2 MC) and address *Residents’ concerns* (2.2.3 MC). This finding echoes the literature on political values, for example, Weingberg (2020) found that individuals who score high on benevolence (Basic Human values, Schwartz, 1992) were more likely to become an MP. Importantly, Weinberg (2020) also found that this benevolent outlook was counter-balanced, with higher power values predicting candidate emergence, suggesting that individuals desired to seek and control resources. This was reflected in the current MC sample, who reported that, as well as being benevolent, they were also self-serving in their endeavours. They were keen to change the agenda of the council to suit their values, drivers and personal interests (*Policy priorities* (2.2 MC); *Personal interests* (2.2.1 MC); *Values* (2.2.2 MC)) and confident that their proposed action was the right course (2.3 *Knowledge resolve MC*). Crucially, these motives were not devious or career-minded, in contrast to how politics is traditionally regarded in the OB

literature. In fact, the MCs sought to achieve outcomes that are best for the community as a whole and felt that self-serving endeavours were thus ethical and necessary. This finding departs slightly from existing studies, such as Doldor's (2017) research, which found that middle managers held ambiguous ethical considerations towards their political involvement. The findings from the current study therefore suggest that there are subtleties in the ethics of self-serving motives, and the balance between self-serving and benevolent political will, which have not been captured in the current OB literature (Treadway, 2012; Kapoutsis, 2017).

The balance between self-serving and benevolent motives can be further seen in the codes that highlight the MC's awareness of 'optics' and risk, such as *Conformity (2.4 MC)*, *To party (2.4.1MC)* and *To electorate (2.4.2 MC)*. These codes reflect how, compared to junior councillors, mid-level councillors reported increased awareness of how things play out to the voters. They reported adapting and moulding their political activity to align with the electorate's expectations, given they are accountable to them, with the voters responsible for their future career as local councillors. Similarly, in comparison to the junior councillors, who were more naïve, the MC participants were also aware of their increased position in the council, as seen in codes *Developing, understanding, and leveraging influence (4 MC)*, *To gain influence (3.2 MC)* and *To gather intelligence (3.3 MC)*. Like mid-level officers, who were concerned with *Picking your battles (3.2 MO)* and *Strategic deference (3.3 MO)*, this sample was acutely aware of the council environment suggesting that perceptions of power and position that one holds in an organisation shapes political motivation. These evaluations of their environment highlight the social cognitive process of individuals within the political workspace.

In summary, the mid-level councillors were more self-serving than the junior councillors; they sought to influence the council agenda for their own personal interests, were concerned with their own career ambitions and were cognisant of risk, which now included the power of the electorate and their ability to provide them with another term in office. However, this was balanced with multiple examples of benevolent motivation, which often related to pursuing policy for the benefit of their constituents and their ambitions to involve themselves within the political institution of the local council. Therefore, given this balance, the mid-level councillors can be labelled as the ***balanced bureaucrats***.

4B.5 Template analysis of Senior Councillors

The final template consisted of the senior councillors ($n=10$) who had roles within the cabinet, such as leaders of the council and heads of committees. Like the senior officers to the JO and MO sample, the senior councillor template was more complex. However, the senior councillors' template continued to have four higher-order codes: *Public service ethic (1 SC)*, *Strategic representation (2 SC)*, *Networking (3 SC)* and *Developing, understanding, leveraging influence (4 SC)*.

Table 4B.4: Template for Senior Councillors

-
1. Public service ethic
 - 1.1 Previous Occupations
 - 1.2 Improve their community
 - 1.3 Family ethos
 2. Strategic representation
 - 2.1 Casework
 - 2.2 Portfolio management
 - 2.3 Community champion
 - 2.3.1 Community contribution
 - 2.3.2 Prestige
 - 2.4 Knowledge resolve
 - 2.5 *Compliance of cabinet position*
 3. Networking
 - 3.1 To fulfil their role
 - 3.2 To gain influence
 - 3.3 Cabinet responsibility
 - 3.4 To gather intelligence
 - 3.5 Build image
 - 3.5.1 Collegiate image
 - 3.5.2 Decision maker
 4. Developing, understanding, leveraging influence
 - 4.1 Awareness of strategic influence
 - 4.2 Share knowledge externally
 - 4.3 Connect to powerful political actors
-

Note. Italics represent codes that link to the notion of risk

Within this template, the SCs pointed to their *Public service ethic (1SC)* as a strong motivator to fulfil their role. This meant that there was a theme around their *Previous occupations (1.1 SC)* within public service bodies and their desire to continue that and a family ethos of public sector work (*1.3 Family ethos SC*). However, for SCs, there was a difference in improving their community (*1.2 Improve their community SC*) because while the motivation was the same, their attributions suggested they felt more in control and had a greater sense of political efficacy. Therefore, they were more willing to attempt political change on a grander scale. Katrina, a cabinet member, can represent this:

“It was a very deprived area where you couldn't even buy fresh food, (how bad is that!) We delivered retail units, flats above, a community hub with a library, a not for profit, community cafe, full restaurant units, rooms for hire and youth service. They had been talking about it for about ten years. And we achieved it in about two and a half years. So those are the things I played a particularly master part in because I knew I could get it. That's made such a massive difference to people's lives in my area, that I love, and they actually now go and buy fresh bread, fresh food.” (Katrina, F, P48, SC)

Similarly, while SCs were still motivated to assist constituents with their Casework (2.1 SC) to represent vulnerable individuals, this was far less salient compared to JCs because SCs were motivated by strategic, grander scale council-led priorities (2 *Strategic representation* SC). This represented in the code *Portfolio management* (2.2 SC), which indicates how SCs were motivated to do what was necessary to ensure that the portfolio they have worked hard to obtain fulfils its responsibilities and obligations. This is demonstrated by Adam, a member of the cabinet:

“I mean, take my cabinet role of leisure. I enjoy leisure, looking after leisure, so my cabinet role is very much concerned with what I enjoy. And one of the things I saw through this year has been the enlargement of a new football stadium that I helped get built. It's actually in my area, which is a football stadium, which held originally 1000, brand new buildings, new international standard in artificial pitch, changing rooms, this took a lot of my time, but I was so proud of it” (Adam, M, P50, MC)

This example echoes the sense of control SCs felt over governmental political activity and shows how SCs were not just motivated to serve the collective; they also reported an emotional attachment to their political portfolios. This was similar to MCs who showed that

personal interests (2.2.1 MC) and values (2.2.2 MC) spurred their political action. However, SCs took in a broader remit, as leaders in their community (2.3 Community champion SC & 2.3.1 Community contribution SC) where they would champion specific political agendas for their communities and were also driven by the prestige of doing so across the wider community (2.3.2 Prestige SC). Francesa, a cabinet member, positions this:

“We had a road, which was going into our industrial estate, which nobody owned; it was not adopted. The builder who had built the whole of the estate, he disappeared off the scene, and he had no responsibility for it...To cut a long story short, we got the road adopted, and the Council resurfaced it... I think a lot of it was personality and the fact that I wouldn't take no for an answer from any of the officers. I just said I'm sorry, it's got to be done. So I thought it was a really good achievement and it was, it was MY contribution...I've had councillors tell me outside the chamber what an achievement and I've talked about this at the doorstops, so that is a, what can I say, a nice part of the role.”

This passage by Francesca also represents tenacity (2.4 Knowledge resolve SC), which is similar to the MC sample, although SCs made this far more visible to others, making it clear that their goals for the council should be a priority. This was not as visible in the JC and MC samples, who were more focused on individual casework or smaller policies, which demonstrates the increase in control and power for SCs in the wider council.

That is not to say that the SCs were not mindful of the council environment and the position taken by the Cabinet. This assessment of risk was different to the JC and MC samples, who felt they needed to conform to the party and needs of the electorate. With an increased amount of formalised power and reputation within the party, SCs were no longer restricted by

the party. Instead, it was explicitly the *cabinet*, i.e., the top executive of a local council consisting primarily of the majority party (2.5 *Compliance of cabinet position SC*).

Alexander, a cabinet member, references this:

“Let’s talk about the meeting we have later; the leader will say, let’s take a vote.

Cabinet members will all agree, no doubt. Yeah, and of course, we will; we’ve had a pre-meeting before this, you’d have to be a very brave cabinet member to go against your own cabinet, I wouldn’t dream of it, and I’ve never seen it.” (Alexander, M, P9, SC)

Like the other samples, SCs also referred to the perceived importance of *Networking* (3 SC).

The SCs template comprised a similar code to the JC and MC sample in that they were motivated to engage in political activity *To fulfil their role* (3.1 SC). However, SCs wanted to network with other cabinet members to ensure they fulfil their objectives as a collective body (3.3 *Cabinet responsibility SC*). This is reported by Rupert, a leader of a local council:

“As a cabinet member, which I am, you’ve got to work with others, you’ve got to work with the other members of the cabinet. I don’t agree with all of them, all the time.

They disagree with me all the time, but we have to work together. And it’s important that we show, so far as is possible, a united front because you’ve always got an opposition” (Rupert, M, P45, SC)

SCs were also more often aimed at achieving influence over the senior officers within the local council (3.2 *To gain influence SC*) and gathering information to protect their power and prestige (3.4 *To gather intelligence SC*). This can be seen within the analysis provided by Thomas, a cabinet member:

“Well, I think my, the only repeated complaint of officers, seniors, directors, if you like, is that they don’t keep me informed sometimes. So, they do most of the time.

When it becomes strained when I go into meetings with the leader of the council and he says, “so, what are you doing about this because you should have seen the paper?” And I say, “no, I haven’t been shown that at all.” So, then I go back to the officer and say, “look, I was embarrassed in front of the leader, he obviously knows about this, why don’t I know about this? Why didn’t you tell me?” So, we have this scenario, and I have to resolve it.” (Thomas, M, P47, SC)

Despite wielding voting rights and power within the council, SCs were also keen to develop an image of collaboration over aggression with officers (3.5 Build image SC & 3.5.1 Collegiate image SC). Overt demonstrations of power and aggression were thought to be strategically damaging if SCs want to develop coalitions with officers to support their political goals. This is highlighted by the Mayor of a council, Elma:

“I think it’s because I put my arms around people, and friendly and accessible and never ever rocked the boat or shouted at anyone or been off. I just feel that they always think I am always there and easy to talk to...I think if you go in with aggression, they will clamour up.” (Elma, F, P7, SC)

However, SCs were still motivated to maintain their power persona to be seen as the decision-makers in the council (3.5.2 Decision maker SC). This can be seen in the account of a cabinet member, Eve:

“So from my point of view the collaborative method even in a political environment, very political environment, definitely works better because there’s been absolutely no chuntering away, it doesn’t mean I don’t become strict, that I think that even with Coronavirus going on I haven’t stopped [getting strict]... I absolutely have no

difficulty in asking difficult questions, challenging where necessary.” (Eve, F, P26, SC)

When it comes to influencing, the SCs had a very similar outlook to the MCs; they understood that they had considerable influence within the council (*4 Awareness of strategic influence SC*) and knew that this was a crucial component of their role as a councillor to *Share knowledge externally (4.2 SC)*. The only key difference was their motivation to gain kudos through association to influential individuals (*4.3 Connect to powerful political actors SC*), and with this came a certain air of pomposity. Take, for example, Bert (a cabinet member) who discussed how his role connected him to powerful actors which brought with it a sense of kudos and grandiosity:

“I’ve been successful in other roles in my life but a benefit of this job is the involvement in, the people you get to work with, they aren’t just in your field, they are sometimes people you would never get to interact with [...] I do feel I have a wide sphere of influence. You know, now more than ever. I have {national cabinet politician} phone me up now as well, and particularly in COVID times, when everything’s closed down, I’m the first port of call [within the local council], I was his first port of call. You know, look, there’s a problem going on, can you, or can you sort it out on your end? So yes, I do feel I have a wide sphere of influence. I would like to think it’s because I can do things, and people come to me because they think I can actually affect change, even you know, {national cabinet politician}.” (Bert, M, P49, SC)

4B.6 Summary of Senior Councillors

The senior councillors' motivation to engage in political activity was focused far more at a grander, more impactful scale than the junior or the mid-level councillors. There was also a development in their evaluation of risk, whereby they were both more bullish whilst at the same time being aware of the potential restraints from powerful mechanisms such as collective cabinet responsibility.

Senior councillors were concerned with harnessing the collective will of key decision-makers to implement various grand scale impactful policies that will affect individuals and the entire electorate of the local council. This is in stark contrast to the junior councillors who were motivated by single constituents or household issues. Instead of focusing on individual casework, SC codes included *Portfolio management (2.2 SC)* and *Community champion (2.3 SC)*. These motives are wide-reaching, impacting the entire community, with policies such as transport, tackling council-wide graffiti, anti-social behaviour, and large-scale planning re-developments in their communities, and therefore directly align with political science definitions of political will as “the extent of committed support among key decision-makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem” (Post et al., 2010, p.659).

However, SCs were also driven by a *Prestige (2.3.2)* and to form a legacy for themselves, seeking opportunities that are not so much about the mission to serve but finding avenues to fulfil their desire for recognition and status. This can be further illustrated by codes *Awareness of strategic influence (4.1 SC)* and *Share knowledge externally (4.2 SC)*, which demonstrate the desire to develop and maintain levels of personal influence, form prestigious networks (*4.3 Connect to powerful political actors SC*) and be seen as a key *Decision-maker*

(3.5.2 SC). This suggests that while SCs are concerned with collective goals, they are also self-serving, seeking power and personal recognition, which is more in line with research that shows politicians as Machiavellian individuals who engage in politicking to succeed (Silvester et al., 2014; Winter, 2010). This is in direct contrast to the officers, who reported more benevolent motivations as they become more senior. This is likely due to the lack of management responsibility for councillors; when moving up the ladder within the role of councillor, you do not gain more staff, but instead gain more decision-making power. Thus, context, positionality, and power impact the extent to which individuals hold self-serving and benevolent motivations for political activity.

The grander scale motivations that can be seen in the codes already mentioned are likely to be linked to evaluation of risk, which has consistently been displayed throughout the samples, and as an important dimension of political will outlined theoretically by Treadway (2012). In contrast to the mid-level councillors who were mindful of the power of the electorate on their continued role as local councillors, the senior councillors felt safe from the voters; they exhibited fairly significant levels of hubris and were less concerned about the electorate because they believed their choice of action was correct. This most likely stems from having experience and knowledge of the political institution of local government, navigating both workplace and governmental politics. Relating to previous research such as studies by Doldor (2017) and Maher (2018), this data therefore suggests that individuals' political will is likely to mature to provide individuals with confidence in their political motives. However, SCs were still mindful of some elements of risk, in particular *Compliance of cabinet position* (2.5 SC), where they were aware that collective decisions should not be questioned. This is seen in the extant theorising on political risk (Treadway, 2012) and prudence (Kapoutsis, 2016),

suggesting that individuals make a cognitive evaluation of their political context, conforming to group norms, before engaging in the political activity.

Finally, a surprising finding was how similar the senior councillors' political motivation was to the junior officers'. The junior officers were motivated to engage in political activity by functional aims and a self-serving drive to protect themselves. Similarly, SCs were concerned with presenting themselves in a particular manner that provides them with functional benefits to get the job done (*Build image*, 3.5 SC). In addition, the code *Compliance of cabinet position* (2.5 SC) discussed previously indicates that senior officers are motivated to protect themselves against the group norms and group values and driven to ensure the group do not seem to them as difficult, notably similar to the junior officers. This suggests that despite differences in positionality and power, there are consistencies in the themes of political motivation for different groups.

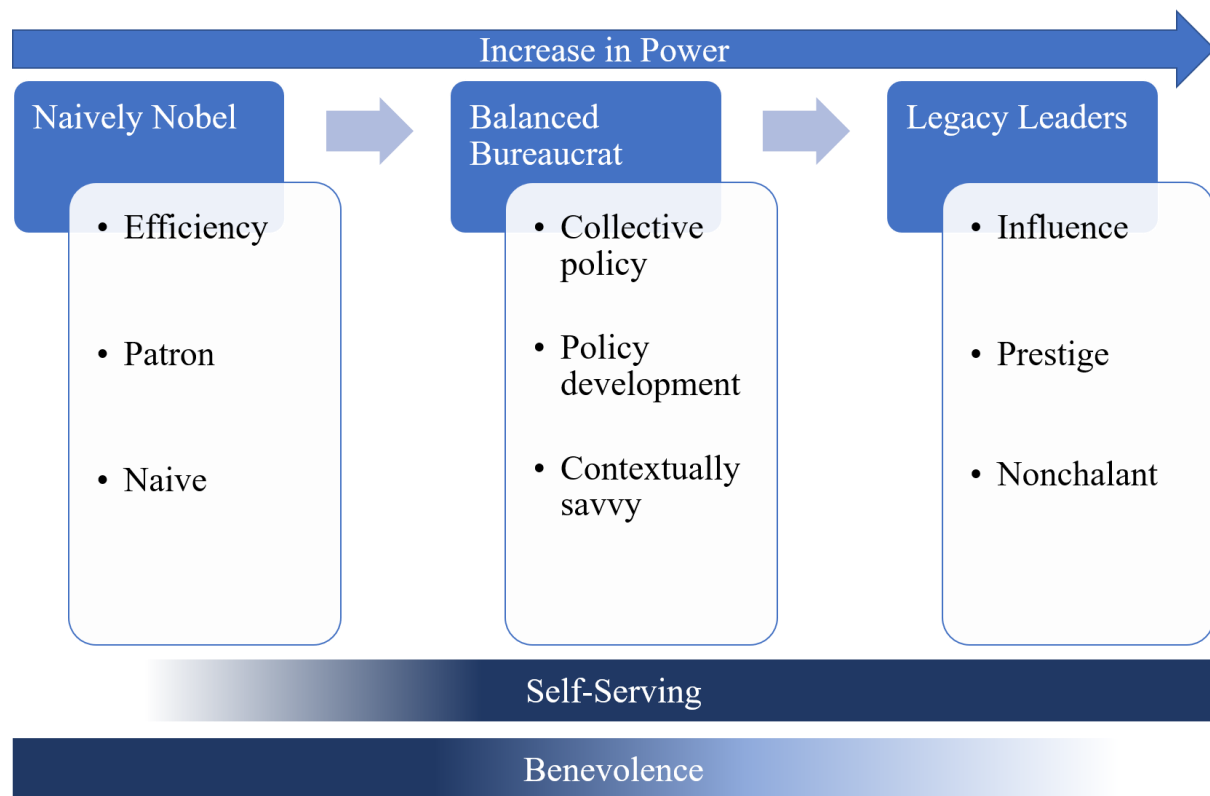
In summary, the senior councillor sample were motivated on a much grander and impactful scale than the previous councillors' samples. There were numerous similarities to the political science literature at the collective level, but they were often motivated to engage in political activity in a self-serving manner to fulfil their legacy. In this respect, the SC sample can be labelled as the *legacy leaders*.

4B.7 Summary of Councillors' Political Will: The Role of Power

Following the procedure of the officers' sample, the councillor templates were analysed together to establish overarching dimensions of political will. The findings are provided in

Figure 4B.1 which outlines the role of power (i.e., seniority) in shaping three overarching dimensions of political will in the councillor sample: (1) efficiency to influence, (2) patron to prestige, and (3) naïve to nonchalant.

Figure 4B.1: Councillors' Overarching Dimensions of Political Will



Note. Lighter shading represents a decrease whilst darker shading represents an increase in these motives.

4B.7.1 Efficiency to Influence

The first overarching dimension of political will was efficiency to influence, where junior councillors were motivated to use politics to enhance their objectives, often more akin to small-scale workplace political activity. The mid-level councillors' political motivation was centred around collective policy, which was a drive towards policy initiatives. Finally, the powerful senior councillors' political will were motivated to influence more widely, seeking,

through a mixture of workplace political activity and governmental political activity, influence within the council, influence within the community and wanting to leave a legacy of success.

This overarching dimension demonstrates the complexities of political will in political work, which comprises, according to the current study, motivations for both workplace political activity and governmental political activity. Holding the lowest power, junior councillors were driven to engage in workplace political activity to achieve small-scale influence to bring about efficient change, but as their power increased, mid-level and senior-level councillors were more ambitious with their targets of influence, seeking to make grander scale policy, political and community-wide change. These findings suggest both conceptualisations from OB and political science literature are important in this context. Political science literature typically positions political will as a social collective, and deliberately overlooks the impact of individual motivations (Post et al., 2010). However, the individual focus of political will is highly relevant in political work, where junior councillors at the start of their careers focus on championing individual and localised causes. The organisational politics literature, which focuses far more on the motivation of individual political actors, therefore offers an important perspective on the motivation of politicians (Ferris et al., 2019).

It is not just the junior councillors who engaged in workplace politicking activity, however. Senior councillors also discussed how, to win votes either in the council chamber or electorate, they needed to engage in workplace political activity to influence public servants (i.e., officers) and members of their party. These strategies are in fact recognised in the political science literature, for example, Raile et al. (2018) highlight the need to identify

stakeholders, assess their views, align problems and solutions and build commitment and mutual accountability in order to achieve collective political aims. Although the authors' perspective is positioned at the collective level, binding together key decision-makers, it does suggest that workplace and governmental political motives are equally important for politicians. The findings from the current study therefore contribute towards an interdisciplinary perspective of political motivation.

4B.7.2 Patron to Prestige

The second overarching dimension of political motivation for the councillors related to the self-serving and benevolent aspects of political will. Compared to the officer sample, who went from being driven by self-serving protective motives at junior level, to benevolently helping those in their team at senior level, councillors' followed an almost opposite pattern. In the councillor sample, the least powerful (i.e., junior councillors) sought to help individual constituents, represent them and provide with a voice in the local council, and thus desired to be benevolent patrons or champions for others. With more power across the council, mid-level councillors began to be more motivated to make wider change, but also became far more driven by their own agendas, interests and values, and thus became more self-serving. Finally, the senior councillors were motivated by prestige, seeking to engage themselves in governmental political activity that they believed would fulfil their legacy and impact within the community. Therefore, whereas the officers started with self-serving motivation developing into benevolent motivations, councillors became increasingly more self-serving, despite having more power to impact the community.

This is intriguing for the political will literature because of the broader debate around the motivations of politicians. For example, quantitative work in political science has found that those individuals who scored highest on benevolence values were more likely to become an MP than those who attributed less importance to benevolence. At the same time, power values were strong predictors of being a candidate or elected MP, for example, individuals seeking to control resources (Weinberg, 2020). The current study adds to this understanding, suggesting that naïve candidates are likely to have benevolent motivations when first entering politics in their first term, driven to champion individual causes but over time (and power), they become more self-serving and seek prestige. This suggests some differences between the role of a politician and the traditional employees within organisations, including public servants. Therefore, the empirical focus of this doctoral study contributes to the political will literature, which suggests that self-serving and benevolent political will is more stable (Kapoutsis et al., 2017; Maher, 2018), that the type of political work role and the power people hold combine to mature and shape the political motivation of individual actors.

4B.7.3 Naïve to Nonchalant

The final overarching dimension of political will related to councillors' evaluation of risk in engaging with workplace political activity. Junior councillors were considerably naïve to the influence of institutions such as the political party. Mid-level councillors became savvier, being motivated to make decisions which took into account the power of the party and the electorate. With greater power, senior councillors took a considerably more laissez-faire approach. Although they recognised the importance of keeping in line with the Cabinet, they were more nonchalant in their evaluation of risk, suggesting that they were not as concerned as the previous samples about the power of the Party or Electorate.

As previously mentioned within the officers' evaluation of risk, within the extant literature, there has been limited insights into the perceptions of individuals of the risk attached to their political activity and the influence this plays on their political will. Whilst Treadway (2012) theoretically assessed the importance and potential relevance of risk, and Kapoutsis et al., (2017) identified that individuals may be relatively stable in their approach to risk, the current study demonstrates that the content of individuals' risk assessment is likely to change with their seniority (i.e., power) and positionality. This finding would not have been possible without the qualitative methodology and social cognitive phenomenological perspective adopted in this thesis.

4B.8 Discussion

Chapters 4A and 4B presented the findings from the officers' and councillors' template analysis respectively. Across these samples, six overarching dimensions of political will were identified, answering research question 1 (What are the dimensions of political will in political work?) These findings contribute to extant literature that typically treats political will as either a stable trait-like individual disposition in the OB discipline (Kapoutsis et al., 2017; Shaughnessy et al., 2017) or at the collective level in the field of political science (Kpundeh, 1998; Brinkerhoff, 2000; Post et al., 2010). Instead, the current study found that political motivation varies across power and role type in political will, demonstrating the importance of the social cognitive perspective adopted in this thesis which highlights how individuals' motivation is dependent on how they interpret their environments (Bandura, 2002). The study also identified the nuances and complexities of political will in political work. By adopting a qualitative methodology, it was possible to identify a number of

dimensions of political will, moving beyond the self-serving/benevolent dichotomy found in previous quantitative research in the OB field (Kapoutsis et al., 2017). The study also demonstrated the importance of the individual perspective on the motivation of political actors, including politicians, who may act on behalf of the collective, as suggested in existing political science research on political will (Persson & Sjostedt, 2012; Post et al., 2010), but may also adopt more complex self-serving motives to engage in politicking within political workspaces. The juxtaposition of councillors and officers brought together two disciplines' notions of political will and highlighted vital aspects of both literature and the insights that both can provide for the other, enhancing the theorising of both the content and construct of political will.

Limitations

Although these two chapters have contributed to the extant literature, similar to all empirical examinations there are some limitations to acknowledge. The first of which is the sampling within both the officer and councillor samples. For instance, when considering the officer category, every effort was made to have equal samples of men and women within each sub-sample. Unfortunately, however within senior positions there is a clear disparity between male and female interviewees with 8 male and 2 female senior officers. Still, during the time of data analysis of this research (2019-2021) there is a significantly disproportionate number of men in senior roles within local councils throughout the U.K. which made equal participation of genders improbable (LGA, 2021). Furthermore, it was also difficult, particularly in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the sample was representative across different parties (Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats). While the councillor samples comprised greater numbers of Conservatives, the analyses did build in points for reflexivity to ensure that Party political perspectives were considered. However, it would be advantageous for future research to ensure equal numbers of distributions in terms of key

aspects such as gender and party affiliation with larger sample sizes across the sub-samples which would provide a more holistic picture of political will within these levels of analysis.

Another potential limitation that is worth acknowledgement was the sometimes challenging task of teasing out the cause and outcome within individuals' attributions for political activity. This could be best seen within the motivation to network, whereby individuals were often motivated to network (political will), and thus networked (political activity). However, via adopting a qualitative perspective, investigating the *content* of individuals attributions it was possible to provide insight into specific aspects of individuals motivational reasoning. For example, interviewees were motivated to network *because of potential reciprocity*. Without a qualitative perspective, such nuances of individuals' motivation would have been very difficult to isolate and illustrate.

Conclusion

Using attribution theory as a theoretical framework, Chapters 4A and 4B have established the dimensions of political will in political work across six samples. Importantly, a key finding across these chapters has been that the dimensions of political will are impacted by power. By examining three different levels of seniority, it was expected that political motivation may mature with knowledge and experience, as has been identified in previous studies (Doldor, 2017). Indeed, the increasing power of each sample along seniority certainly did shape the nature and content of the participants' political motives. However, the political work context and the two different samples also pointed to other more nuanced forms of power impacting the development and content of political will, beyond simple seniority. Participants also spoke about other forms of power, including their expertise, ability to withhold information, their democratic mandate, and the complex relationships between political (i.e., councillors)

and apolitical (i.e. officers) political workers. These aspects of power deserve greater attention. Therefore Chapter 5 introduces the second research question of this thesis: **How does power impact political will?** To explore this question, Chapter 5 adopts a social cognitive perspective on power to examine the power mental models of each of the samples, and demonstrates how perceptions of power (beyond simply seniority) can forebear political will, how it shapes and constrains individuals' political motivations and highlight the complexities of power within the political work space.

Chapter 5 : Power Political Pathways

This chapter answers a second research question central to this thesis: *How does power impact political will?* This question is driven by findings from Chapters 4A and 4B that demonstrated that power in the form of seniority, was important for shaping the dimensions of political will, however, there was a missing piece to the puzzle. Seniority was just one notion of power that was apparent in the data. To explore these other forms of power, this chapter expands on the findings from Chapter 4A and 4B by presenting an analysis of the role of perceived power in shaping different dimensions of political will. Taking a social cognitive perspective on power, the analysis draws on attribution theory, or causal reasoning to map their ‘power mental models’ (PMMs) which are “organised mental representations of ones’ own and others’ power” (Fiol et al. 2001, p 225) and how these are shared across the sub-samples in the data, represented in this chapter by ‘Sankey’ diagrams. This chapter contributes to existing knowledge about political will because few studies have considered the impact of power in the organisational behaviour literature. Although power has been theorised to be important for deciding whether (or not) to enact political behaviour (Kapoutsis, 2016) and that seniority may impact political maturation (Dolder, 2017 and Chapters 4A and 4B of this thesis), this chapter shows how power can forebear political will, acting to influence individuals’ motivations. In doing so this chapter explicates a social cognitive process that shapes political will and draws on notions of power, such as politicians’ democratic mandate, that go beyond the conceptualisations typical in the organisational behaviour (OB) literature.

Before introducing the analysis, the chapter builds upon the examination of organisational politics and power literature review within Chapter 2, section 2.1.1 by first outlining the

social cognitive perspective of power underlining this research. The chapter then moves on to discuss the unique shared mental mapping methodology stemming from individual data analysed through the lens of attribution theory. Finally, the last section presents the findings of the analysis, starting with the officers, the chapter displays the shared mental map of the junior officers and reveals the key power political pathways, following a similar format for the mid-level officers and the senior officers. The same format is provided for the councillors, with the Sankey diagrams containing the shared mental maps for each sub-sample displayed before specifying the key power political pathways highlighting the similarities and differences from their officer counterparts.

5.1 Social Cognitive Perspective on Power

The social cognitive perspective on power examines how people interpret their own and others' power (Guinote, 2013). Social cognitive insights into power have mainly used experimental, quasi-experimental and correlational methodologies. Often these studies assign participants to different conditions of power, for example, when examining episodic recall, Galinsky, Gruenfeld & Magee (2003) assigned participants to powerful, powerless or control conditions. Fiske and Depret (1996) formed two groups and asked them to make decisions concerning internship applications, one powerful group were informed that their decisions have a 30% impact on the final decision and the other group was told they would have no impact. Guinote (2007) asked participants to engage in subordinate and manager roles where the subordinates were paid according to the managers' evaluation of their outputs whilst the managers were paid a fixed rate.

With these methodologies, social cognitive research has produced some insightful findings relating to power. For instance, that powerlessness decreases individuals' cognitive abilities and well-being whilst the perception of power increases individuals' sense of control opening up opportunities and the freedom to attain desired outcomes (Guinote, 2007; Marmot, Stansfeld, Patel, Head, White & Smith, 1991). Power has also been found to activate approach-oriented behaviour meaning that power triggers effortless cognition (Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003). Importantly, power also affects motivation and goals, with individuals in power focusing on their goal priorities, with power energising individuals to pursue salient activities, projects and aims.

However, the experimental nature of extant social cognitive power research has been criticised for lacking ecological validity (Sturm & Antonakis, 2015). Using student samples, and priming to elicit feelings of power does not allow for the vast array of powers at play in complex social environments. For example, before choosing to make a 'power play', an employee may consider their self-interest as a worker in a specific context, their risk as an individual, including their reputation, career, future profession, mortgage, and bills, which are all factors that may be challenging to capture in a laboratory setting. Sturm and Antonakis (2015) have therefore called for future organizational scholars to explore power across a more extensive range of research methodologies.

This thesis answers this call by adopting a social cognitive perspective on power and using a qualitative methodology to explore how individuals interpret their power in their (political) work context. While it is not claimed that this perspective relates to the actual power individuals hold (although participants are sampled by seniority), it does afford the

opportunity to link structural (e.g., seniority, perceived network centrality), behavioural (political tactics and action) and personal power (e.g., perceived expert, informational power) to political will. In order to achieve this, the research utilises the concept of power mental models, which have been advocated as important for understanding the complexities of political activity in political work (Silvester & Wyatt, 2018).

Power Mental Models (PMM) were first conceptualised by Fiol et al., (2001, p. 224) who define power as “as the ability or potential to influence”. This means that instead of previous conceptualisations referring to the use of behavioural tactics, or the structural element of power (Pfeffer, 1981), the PMM approach assumes power is a social construction, perceptual in its nature. Fiol defines PMMs as “organised mental representations of ones’ own and others’ power that tends to lead to relatively predictable behaviours within a particular context” (2001, p225). PMMs can shed light on how individuals process their environment, including their own and others’ power to make sense of and decide whether to engage in organisational politics (i.e., political will). From this perspective, power can have multiple interpretations from numerous different actors within an organisation, including different perceptions of structural, behavioural and personal sources of power. Fiol et al. (2001), make a distinction between ‘Identity PMM’s’, which refer to how a group or individual perceives their power and ‘Reputation PMM’s’, which refers to how others perceive a group or individual. This thesis focuses on the former. Although these PMMs are clearly within people’s mentality, they do not develop in isolation, and these power bases instead develop through social interaction. Individuals can gain information about how others perceive their power and thus conceptualise how they view their own power.

Fiol et al., (2001) argue that PMMs are developed through structural position, network centrality and unit characteristics (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989), which cue or trigger the attention of the individual or group to the power of the unit (or individual). Cognitive processes then filter and distort information about the power of themselves and others, creating a layer of subjectivity, such as the ability to maintain focus and process information (Chen, 2015). Like most mental models, PMM's are argued to reduce uncertainty and lead to scripts that guide behaviours, which generally lead to relatively predictable behaviours. Both individuals and groups form power mental models that are relatively predictable and resistant to change once they have been in an organisation for a while.

Importantly, as with most subjective processes, there are gaps between the interpretation of different actors. Gaps between how individuals perceive their own power and how others perceive their power are likely to widen as individuals seek information that confirms their assumptions more than information that rejects them (Nickerson, 1998). Additionally, when significant changes are made within an organisation, Fiol et al. (2001) propose that power can transfer. For example, if a high performing senior manager joined a new team this move will likely increase the identity PMM of the entire group. Therefore, instead of simple objective notions of power, such as, hierarchy increasing one's power, PMM theory recognises how power can also change, increase, or decrease (if a group loses a powerful member) based on interpretation.

Overall, PMMs offer an important framework for examining power in organisations and political will. In the current research, they enable a perspective on power that looks beyond the objective markers (e.g. seniority) or individual variables (e.g. political skill) typically

studied, to instead consider how individuals interpret their power within the wider environment. In this thesis attribution theory is used as a basis of PMMs, linking individuals' causal reasoning for political activity to the power(lessness) that people perceive they hold and therefore expanding knowledge of the social cognitive processes involved in the development of political motivation. Therefore, this analysis produces an important contribution for this thesis identifying not just the content, or dimensions of political will but also a social cognitive process that shapes political motivation.

5.2 Mapping Mental Models: Methodology

The previous section outlined the extant literature on power and political will, an area which is underdeveloped. It argued that to progress the examination into the influence of power on political will, we must look beyond the traditional power structures of seniority and hierarchy and seek to further the knowledge of how individuals' social cognitive representations of power affect their political will. The next section, therefore, provides an overview of the dynamics of power within the sample of this thesis before exploring the power mental modelling approach to isolate individuals' power mental models and their influence on political will

5.2.1 Power in Local Councils

The local council is an essential context for the study of political work because there is often tension between the power of decision-makers (councillors) and the implementers of decisions (officers). The following section discusses how the types of power held by officers and councillors such as those outlined by French and Raven (1959) manifest.

5.2.1.1 Officers' Power. Officers must be neutral when providing advice and guidance to councillors, who are there to make the final and abiding decisions. However, officers have a higher level of **expert power** than their political counterparts. For example, a senior officer in finance is likely to have significant and extensive knowledge gained over many years of study and experience within his/her professional area. They are responsible for laying out the unbiased, expert advice of the positives and negatives of a certain policy and often provide a recommendation to which, in their professional opinion, is the best course of action. The officers' expert power base is simply an individual one; it holds no objective decision-making power: Councillors can take on board a recommendation, but they can accept or reject the officers' judgement. In terms of seniority, one could argue that expert opinions on matters will develop when moving up the hierarchal ladder. Officers become more knowledgeable with greater experience and more opportunities to study within their professional areas.

Informational power refers to the individual's ability to control information that would be valuable to others to accomplish a given task or objective. When officers move up the hierarchal ranks, their informational power becomes intensified. Officers who sit on the senior management team, and particularly the Chief Executive who has consistent dealings with all political parties, can hold significant levels of informational power. However, this power comes with challenges because their information can be particularly valuable to opposing parties.

5.2.1.2 Councillors' Power. Councillors have an almost entirely different power base to the officers within local councils. The first and predominant power base they hold over all others is their **democratic mandate** which is the authority provided by the electorate to an individual

acting as their representative. This power, granted by constituents through their democratic votes, allows the councillor to “wield power, govern, and take decisions on behalf of others.” (Silvester, 2012, p26). This power is perceived in high regard; officers are employed, unbiased public servants, whereas councillors are democratically elected to use their judgement for their constituents.

This judgement is an intriguing and important element of a democratic institution. On the one hand, one could argue that political actors are not required to hold expert power, in that they are not expected to pass any exams or possess specific knowledge, skills or abilities (Silvester & Wyatt, 2015). Therefore, not enforcing any specific knowledge or training onto our politicians ensures that the individual has the absolute right to represent the constituents in the way in which they believe to be legitimate. Applying training, may infer that some skills or knowledge are placed within a higher order than others. Instead, it is solely down to the judgement of the elected political actor to navigate the ambiguous and complex environment of a local council, knowing the power they hold stems from the electorate and thus this power rests upon the political activity they judge to be the best course of action. The COVID-19 pandemic was an example of this. Boris Johnson and his cabinet were consistently provided expert guidance from various specialists in the field, individuals such as Professor Chris Witty and Professor Jonathon Van Tam, alongside numerous other experts who held more qualified knowledge than the politicians. However, the decisions to ‘lock down’ the country or to re-open it were in the hands of Boris Johnson and the Conservative party; even in a time of national emergency, politicians are provided with *guidance* from experts but have to make decisions on the public’s behalf because of the mandate they are empowered with.

This democratic mandate translates relatively well into the **legitimate power** base of French and Raven (1959). This power base stems from a belief that an individual has the right to make commands and expect others to be obedient when these commands are formed. Although there are strict guidelines for councillor and officers' relationships (LGA, 2018), councillors do have the right to make demands of officers and officers are expected to comply with these demands, within reason.

Councillors also have **referent power**, which refers to the target complying with the request of their superior because they identify with or respect them, which often increases up the hierarchal chain. For example, leaders of the council, mayors, and leaders of the opposition are likely to have higher levels of referent power than backbenchers or first-time councillors who wish to comply with their superiors requests given they are seeking a similar position i.e. leader of the council in the future. With greater levels of experience comes greater levels of familiarity, power, and respect.

Thus, the types of power that officers and councillors hold are different and change with seniority. However, importantly, this thesis looks at a social cognitive perspective of power, that is, how individuals interpret their own and others' power rather than objective notions of power. So, while the power bases are important to consider, this research aims to map how individuals perceive power themselves. The following section, therefore, outlines the methodology into power mental models, starting by explaining how power mental models are epistemologically aligned with this thesis before highlighting how the research elicited shared mental models through individual data using a unique mapping methodology.

5.2.2 Phenomenology and Power Mental Models

PMMs are a form of a cognitive map, defined as “organised mental representations of ones’ own and others’ power,” which seek to explore the individuals’ perception of their reality concerning their power and their perception of others’ power (Fiol et al, 2001).

Epistemologically, it is essential for this research that any exploration of these models seeks to investigate the individuals’ perception of their lived experience, in line with phenomenology. Mental maps exist within the minds of individuals, and they are constructed through the unique experience, perceptions and understandings of the world in which they live and therefore have similarities with a phenomenological epistemology that concentrates on the lived conscious experience. Accordingly, it is accepted that these are incomplete representations; they are based on the individual circumstances that are context-specific, likely to change according to the situation one finds themselves in. Therefore, by mapping power mental models this research follows the lead of other scholars who have used hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger’s phenomenology) and cognitive maps to assess individuals’ interpretation of their environment. For example, Galehbakhtiari (2015) adopted a phenomenological approach to extract the motivations and factors that encourage individuals to participate in online communities. She used a cognitive mapping methodology to model consumer motivations for their online participation and how these causal relations affected one another. The present doctoral thesis uses attributions as a basis for power mental models, which provides an advantageous methodological tool to examine individuals’ phenomenological sense-making process regarding their perception of power in a real-life setting of a local council.

5.2.2.1 Analytical Method of Power Mental Model Research. No two mental mapping methodologies are likely to be the same, given the discipline, the phenomena studied by the researcher, the contextuality of the environment studied and the visualisation needed for the

data analysed (Bjornson, 1981). Although mental models can be representative of individual cognition, i.e., a mental model per interviewee, recent research has illustrated how mental mapping methodologies can be used to represent group level mental models, which demonstrate how cognitions can be shared amongst groups and used as guides for action (Wyatt, Doldor & Tresh, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of the mental maps in this thesis was to 1) elicit the mental models of individuals concerning the power antecedents of political motivation; and 2) summarise the shared mental models for each sub-sample of political workers.

5.2.2.2 Individuals' Mental Models. One of the biggest challenges for researchers seeking to gain insights into mental models is how to elicit individuals' mental models of the phenomena they are seeking to investigate. Researchers using this methodology recognise that mental models are incomplete constructs. They are a representation of reality that allows the individual to understand and interact with the world they find themselves within and thus can be challenging for the researcher to access. This is made more complicated because individuals often have little knowledge or are even unaware of the mental models they possess, and when asked to articulate the content, they may encounter difficulties in doing so (Zhang & Chignell, 2001). However, although there are challenges in eliciting mental models, they have become more prevalent in a variety of disciplines. It has become more widely recognised that the mental maps individuals produce, through their past experience, can represent deeply held mechanisms, which are often called upon to provide a sense of control and an increased understanding of the world around them. For example, elicitation has been achieved in previous research across numerous disciplines including, but not limited to medical education (Byram, Fischhoff, Embrey, de Bruin, & Thorne, 2001; Trautner et al., 2013) risk management (Bostrom et al., 2015; Hagemann & Scholderer, 2007) psychology

(Barrett et al., 2013; Markman & Gentner, 2001) and human resource development (Chermack, 2003; Chermack, Song, Nimon, Choi & Korte, 2012; Seel, 2001). Within organisational studies, eliciting mental models can assist researchers in examining the cognitive and motivational processes behind individuals' behaviour. Due to the potential strengths of mental maps, finding a reliable and robust approach is important.

An interesting example of cognitive mapping is provided by Elsworth, Guillaume, Filatova, Rook & Jakeman (2015) in the field of environmental management. The authors sought to better incorporate essential human elements (such as perceptions, decisions and actions) into decision making within complex socio-ecological systems via interviewing and further eliciting mental models from farmers integral to their socio-ecological environment. The individual maps collated by the authors can be seen in Figure 5.1 below. Within this map of a single interviewee, the concepts are elicited from the interviews, and links are identified based on how the interviewee perceives the concepts are associated.

[illegible]

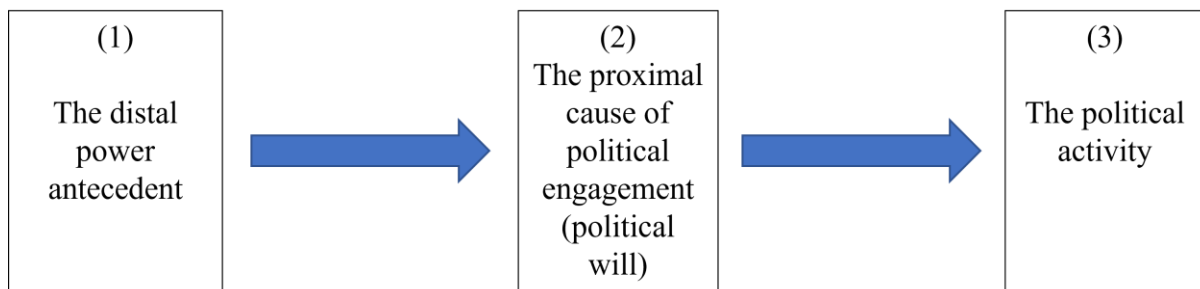
There have been two broad forms of elicitation within the wider literature to access individuals' mental models. Some research has used indirect or verbal elicitation such as case studies and open, semi-structured or structured interviews. When using this method, scholars have indicated that open-ended or semi-structured interviewing format is the best method for eliciting mental models as it allows for free expression and elaboration, which allows for individual thinking, impressions along with attitudes (Darisi, Thorne, & Iacobelli, 2005; Kvale, 1996; Grenier & Dudzinska-przesmitzki, 2015). This method of elicitation, however, has been criticised for the influence of the researcher on the applicability of access to individuals' mental models. Thus, it depends on the quality of the social scientist and the skill to make sure the interviewees trust and feel they can be honest with the researcher.

202

Kearney and Kaplan (1997) developed a Conceptual Content Cognitive Map (3CM) methodology that asked interviewees to identify various important concepts and then visually organise them to depict their understanding of that domain. Direct elicitation is said to have an immediate means of verification which indirect elicitation does not have because participants are present to check meaning (Jones, Lynam, Perez & Leitch, 2011). However, this form of elicitation was not suitable for accessing individuals' power mental models, which is central to this thesis. It was considered vital that interviewees focus on the richness of their accounts rather than on deciphering linkages between cognitive concepts. Additionally, politics is a sensitive topic, and although interviewees found themselves in an environment where they felt free to discuss their political activity, they may not have accepted mapping it out as if it were a deliberate strategy. In essence, it was important that the discussions of their political activity were spontaneous and not constrained by the mapping during the limited time frame of an interview. Therefore, instead of reducing individuals' constructions of reality to a few concepts they would prioritise visually, interviewees were allowed to make sense of their power environment within the interview through an indirect elicitation technique via attribution analysis.

5.2.2.3 Method of Elicitation for Individual Power Mental Models. PMMs were elicited in the current study through a process of connecting causal attributions for political activity to the wider power context. This was achieved by creating 'power pathways', which comprised links between three concepts: (1) the (distal) power antecedent, (2) the (proximal) cause of political engagement (i.e. political will), and (3) political activity as seen in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2: Three Concepts of Power Pathways



The *power antecedent* was coded by building on the analyses from Chapters 4A and 4B but exploring the wider context in the interview transcripts from which the attribution had been extracted. The power antecedents were initially coded using French and Raven's (1959) bases of social power. However, the researcher remained reflexive about different forms of power that may be specific or unique to the political context and also allowed power antecedents to emerge from the data. For example, the democratic mandate emerged as an important base of power for councillors in the political work context. Definitions of the power antecedents that emerged from the data are provided within Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Definitions of Social power

Formal power*	Is derived directly through the official position within the local council. It is legitimatised by their contract of employment and varies based on their position within the hierarchal structure of their organisation.
Legitimate power*	The justifiable right for compliance when a request is made from the individual.
Expert power*	Belief that they can gain compliance through superior knowledge to other members of the council
Informational power*	Wielding information to be able to explain to another individual why their compliance is necessary.
Referent power*	Power is held through another individual identifying with their current position and wanting to comply with requests to ensure they make it to a similar level in the future.

Reputational power**	The level of power they believe others attribute to them
Structural power***	derives from an actors' position within the hierarchy of an organisation, either formally, or informally through their network position.
Constitutional power***	The power that stems from the constitution of the local council
Democratic mandate***	Is the power granted by the electorate to act as its representative
Majority power***	The perceptual power that stems from membership of the party that controls the electorate

* These definitions are devised and adapted from French and Raven (1959) bases of power

** These definitions are devised and adapted from Fiol et al. (2001) power mental model research

*** These definitions emerged from the data and are specific to the political work space

The second component in the power pathways the *political will* was drawn from the template analyses in Chapters 4A and 4B. A decision was made to use the second higher-order code from the template analysis because it provided a balance between the specificity needed for the PMMs but also parsimony of the models (when piloting the method, the lower order codes were too fine grained to build a clear picture of relationships between different forms of power and political motivation).

The outcome of the power pathways was political activity which was established from the outcomes of the attributional statements. A list of political activities identified can be seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Definitions of Political Activity

Image control	A political activity that regulates the image of oneself provided to others. Examples include: Self-promotion, ingratiation
Creating alliances	A political activity that generates support for oneself. Examples include: Forming in-groups, networking.

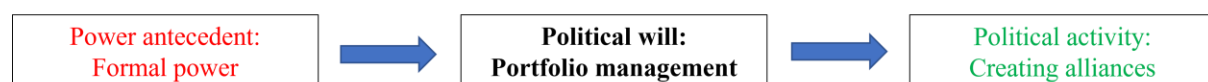
Prudent Challenge	A political activity that contests the status quo. Examples include: Challenging authority, creating obligations
Purposive evasion	A political activity that eludes and evades authority or thoughts often in a protective manner. Examples include: Avoiding groups, avoiding providing opinion
Selective information exchange	A political activity that carefully considers and subsequently deals with critical information. Examples include: Gaining information, selectively providing information
Representing others	A political activity that acts on behalf of a group or someone else. Examples include: Seeking to influence authority, speaking on behalf of others
Lobbying	A political activity that attempts to influence the decisions of local council. Examples include: negotiation, influence tactics with key decision makers
Community leadership	A political activity that influences local council decisions for the community. Examples include: Leading on a community project.
Regulating and monitoring	A political activity that scrutinises policy with acute understanding of legal responsibility and protocols. Examples include: Monitoring policy, regulating
Providing vision	A political activity that sets out a vision for the local council. Examples include: Stimulating debate, setting out agenda
Patronage	A political activity that supports and encourages others. Examples include: mentoring, providing individual assistance
Combative Challenge	A political activity that is highly contentious against another individual or group. Examples include: coercion, intimidation.
Council leadership	A political activity that influences local council decisions for the benefit of the incumbent council. Examples include: Swaying a vote, influencing opposition members.

An example of this process can be seen within Figure 5.3 below. The attribution itself is the basis of the cause and outcome, i.e. the political will is the cause and the outcome is the political activity. Within this attribution, the *political activity* in green was creating alliances. The councillor has established an alliance or group of individuals that they believe will produce the best results, perceiving the individuals that they can and can not work with based on their own perception. The proximal cause i.e. the *political will* in black was ‘portfolio management’ drawn from senior councillors' template analysis. It was clear that this

councillor was motivated by their portfolio, ensuring that it was improved. Lastly, the *power antecedent* is shown in red. Within this attribution was the appointment of conservation from the council. This highlights how the extracted attribution is analysed through the lens of the wider transcript. This councillor had already detailed how they had been appointed conservation as their portfolio and how this was central to their involvement within their council's cabinet. Thus, the researcher can comfortably conclude they were talking about formal power as this was a structurally assigned power by the council.

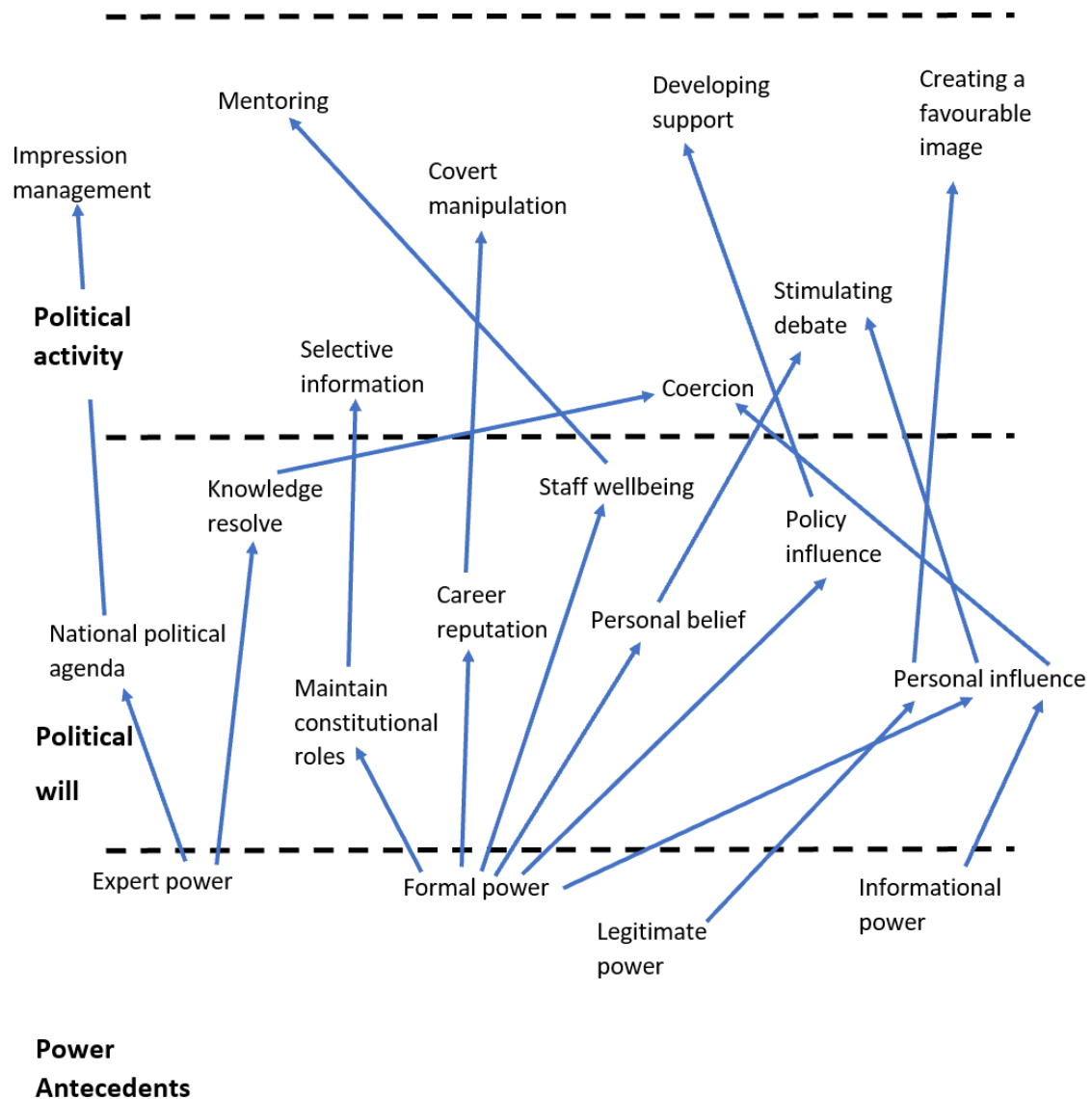
Figure 5.3: Eliciting Power Pathway from Attribution

The council have said, I'm a conservator, I'm THE conservator of [region]. And so, therefore, /I've got a tight, very tight group on conservation and because I was vice-chair and now am Chairman I have to get, I have to work with the right people, and work out who you can't work with and who you can. And then, I can talk things through to get a better decision. It's a lot of work and a lot of pressure but <I'm very passionate and motivated to improve conservation and Joel, sometimes you have to influence to get the right to tell these people what to do.



Once all power pathways were coded within a single transcript, an individual mental map was produced. An example of this from the senior officers can be seen in Figure 5.4. The 60 PMMs then formed the basis of shared power mental models, which are discussed in the following section.

Figure 5.4: Example of Senior Officers' Individual PMM Map

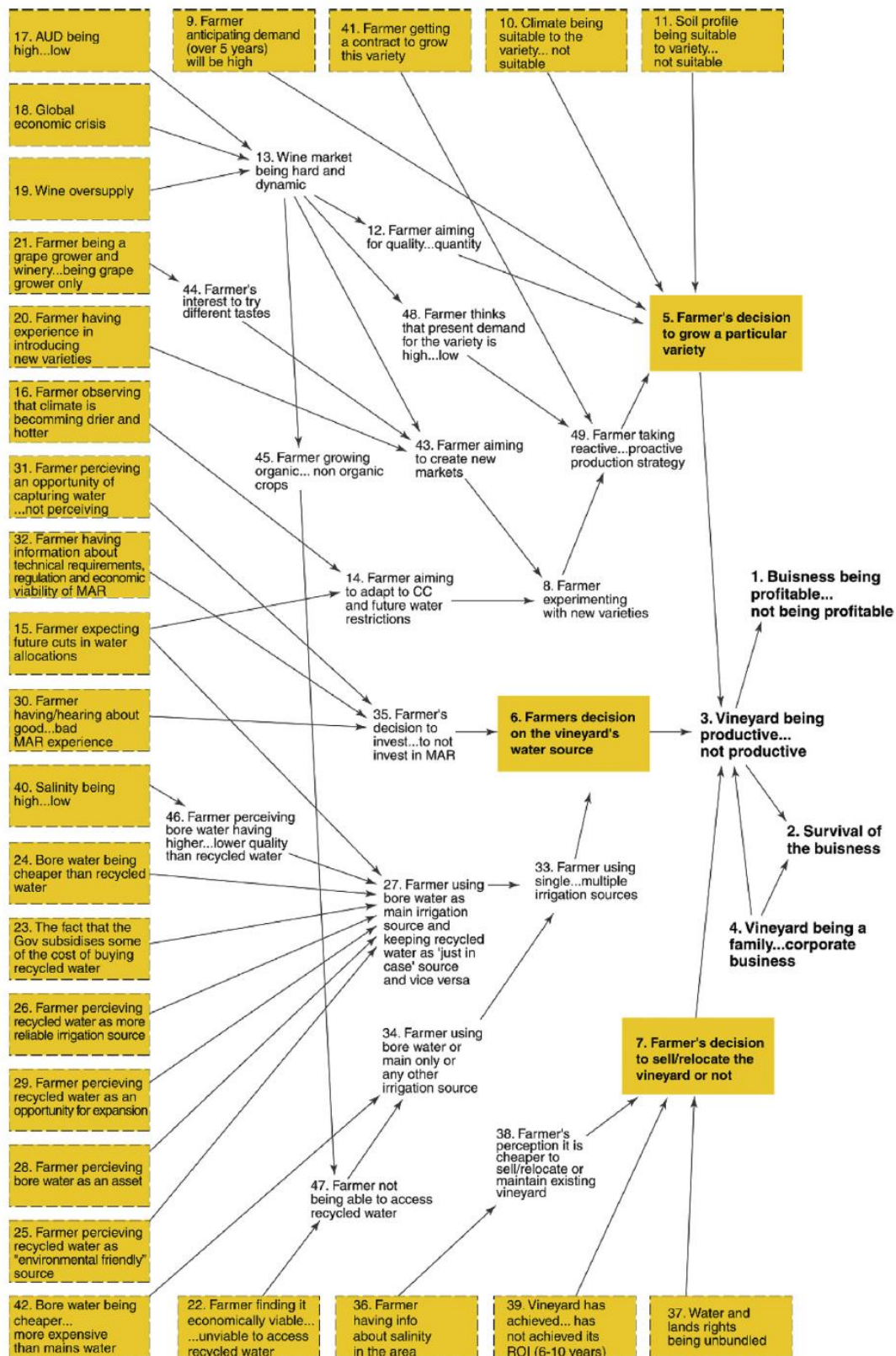


5.2.2.4 Shared Power Mental Models. Recent research has recognised the potential for applying a mapping technique to groups, acknowledging that there is a social component to cognition (Jones et al., 2011). This is particularly relevant for attribution-based PMMs because attributions can be shared as part of natural discourse, to develop knowledge about how and why unpredictable events, such as political activity, may occur (Silvester, 2004). Shared maps within this thesis are used to highlight the power pathways across each of the sub-samples. As discussed above, Elsayah et al. (2015) used maps to outline farmers'

cognitive understanding of their environment, however, they also went on to produce shared maps by merging individual maps to highlight shared pathways (see Figure 5.5). The current research uses a similar method albeit a small deviation in merging individual and shared maps: Elsayah et al. (2015) used domain analysis to calculate the number of incoming and outgoing arrows directly linked to a concept and centrality analysis to examine the complexity of links at a number of levels away from the concept. In the current research, attributional analysis has been conducted already (in Chapters 4A and 4B) to isolate the key concepts making it possible to merge the individual maps to create shared maps through combining the elicited attributions within each sub-sample.

Figure 5.5: Shared Map within Elsayah et al., (2015)

S. Elsayah et al. / Journal of Environmental Management 151 (2015) 500–516

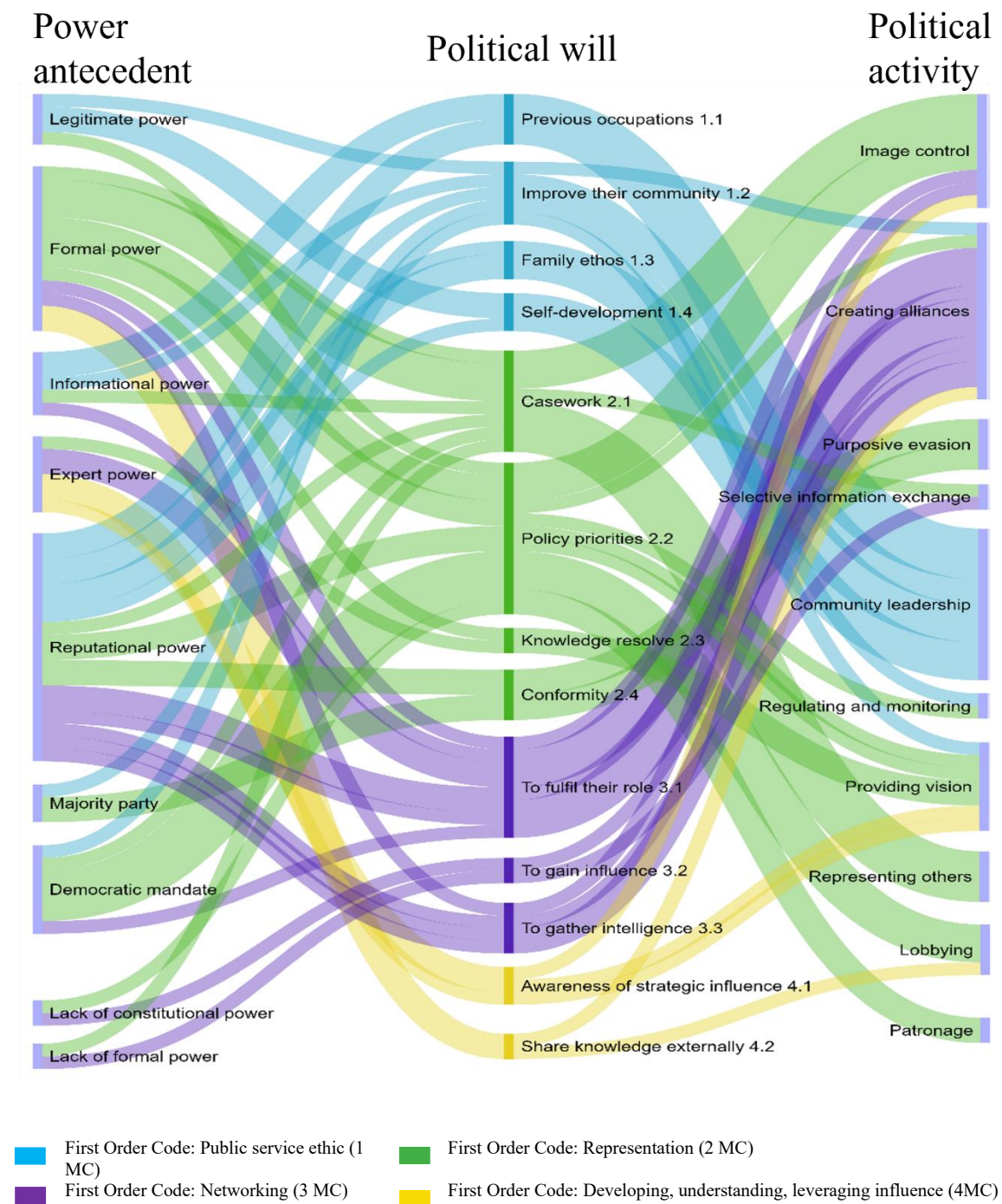


5.2.2.5 Method of Elicitation for Shared Mental Models. To produce the shared power political pathways of junior, mid-level and senior councillors and officers, all power pathways from the individual transcripts were collated into shared databases (one for each sub-sample). This was accomplished iteratively by merging the power pathway within each individual transcript. In theory, this could imply that a single transcript would exhibit far more attributions than others. However, the analysis revealed that the range of attributions and power pathways did not differ significantly. While certain interviewees delved into more detailed nuances, leading to longer interviews, the overall range of discussions on various political behaviours remained quite similar across interviewees, meaning the salience of the pathways was not overly influenced by one transcript. The collective PMMs were then visualised using Sankey diagrams, which are a form of diagram that show the flow between different concepts and where the width of the arrows is proportionate to rate or number of linkages between each concept. Although numerical counts of the codes were not necessarily representative of their salience in the data, the Sankey diagrams are a useful way to visualise collective PMMs and draw broader conclusions about key power pathways that are shared within groups.

The final step of analysis within the PMM study was therefore the formation of the Sankey diagrams through the use of SankeyMATIC, an online resource that allows researchers to insert data and design a Sankey diagram that suits the study at hand. The advantages of the Sankey diagram compared to other shared cognitive mapping approaches is that it highlights the process or pathways of different forms of power very clearly. As seen in Figure 5.6, which shows an example of a Sankey diagram for the mid-level councillors, the visualisation highlights the prominence of certain power antecedents, such as reputational power on the left hand side of the diagram, on political motivation and the activity that stems from the

motivation. Examples in other collective maps, such as Elsayah et al. (2015)'s collective maps of farmers' shared mental models, seen previously in Figure 5.5, are less suitable for showing how prominent each pathway is across the sample.

Figure 5.6: Example of Sankey Diagram



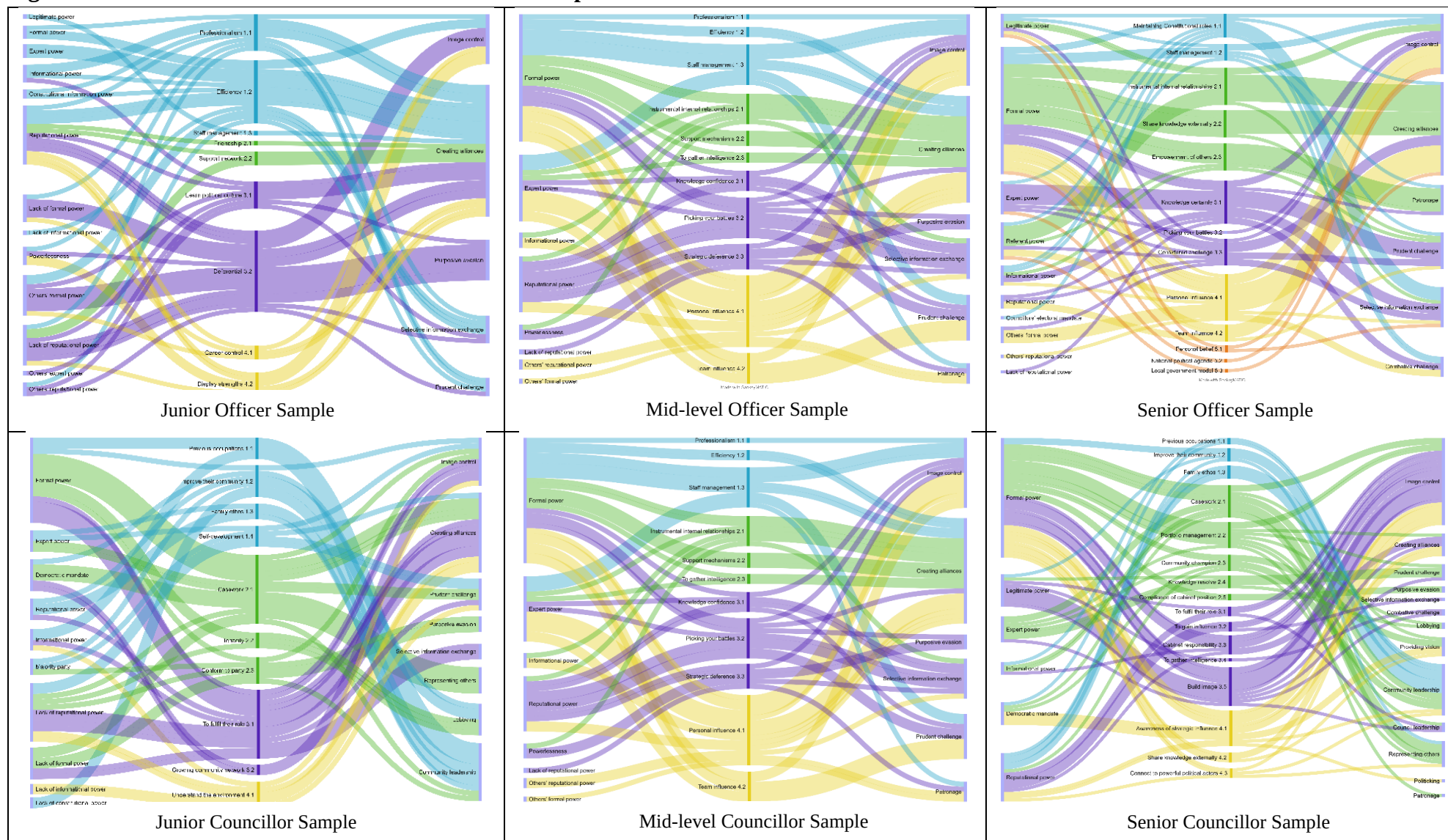
Within the Sankey diagram, the antecedent for power is located on the left-hand side, whereby one can note, in Figure 5.6, that formal power and reputational power are the most salient power antecedents. The middle section is the political will, drawn from the template analysis within Chapters 4A and 4B, applying the second-order codes as outlined in section 5.2.2.3. Lastly, the third section of the Sankey is the political activity. The colours stemming from the left-hand side connecting through the political will to the political activity is the first order code within the template analysis. For example, within this Figure 5.5, To fulfil their role (3.1 MC), To gain influence (3.2MC) and To gather intelligence (3.3MC) are the same colour purple, because within the template analysis they are hierarchically placed under the third, first order code which is Networking (3 MC).

This unique power mental model mapping methodology therefore allows for an investigation into the social cognitive representations of individuals within the political work space, an area which has yet to be explored. As the findings in the next section show, perceived power can be an important factor in shaping political will.

5.3 Power Political Pathway Findings

This section presents the findings for each of these sub-samples, starting with the junior officers, then moving to the mid-level and senior officers before following the councillor sample in the same format. Figure 5.7 shows the shared power mental models for all these groups, visually demonstrating how, with seniority and role, their power bases become more complex and lead to a wider array of political motives.

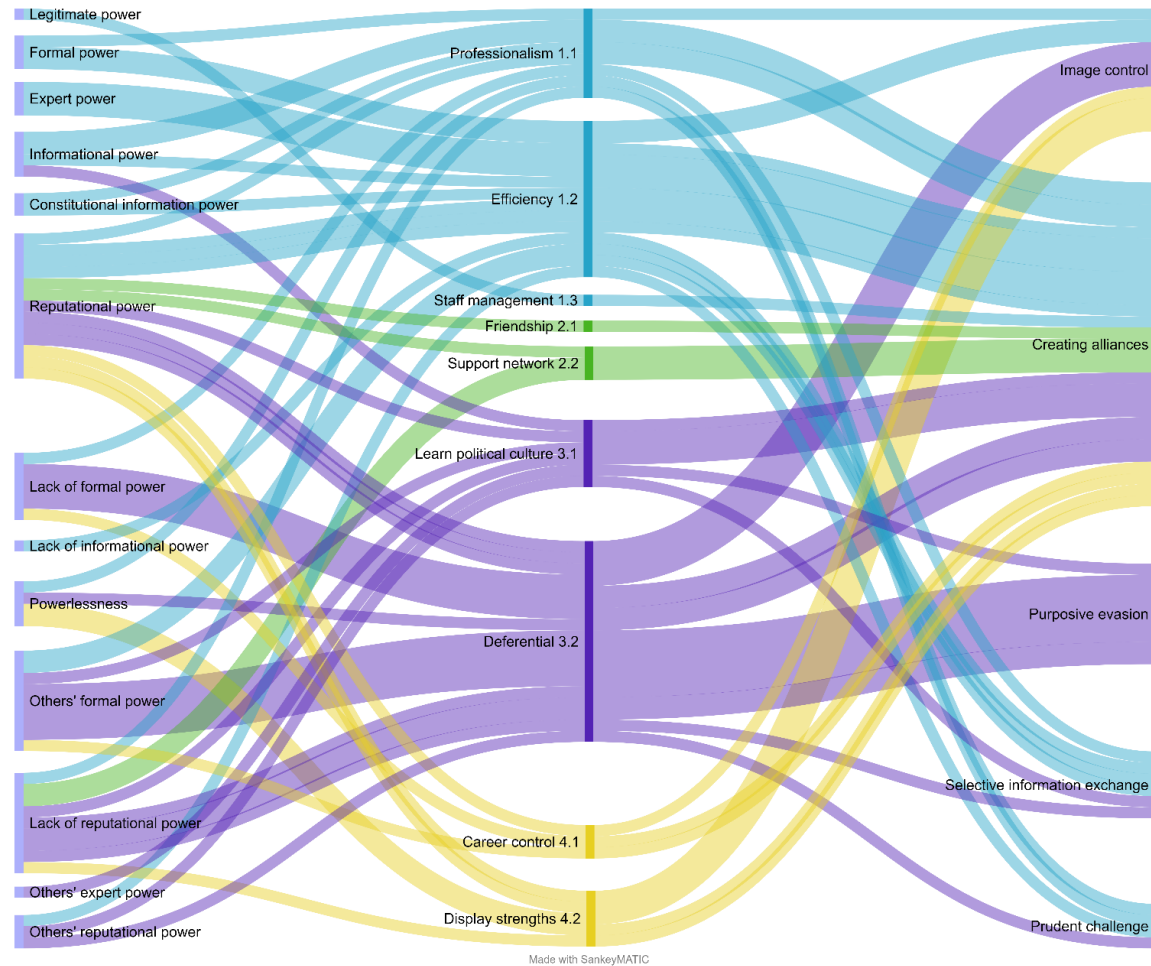
Figure 5.7: Shared Power Mental Models of all Sub-Samples



5.3.1 Power Political Pathways (Junior Officers)

This section will outline the findings of the junior officers' sample. To do this, the section will start by displaying the Sankey diagram (see Figure 5.8) formed from the individual data extracted through the attributional analysis. The section will then move on to spotlight the key insightful pathways and illustrative quotes belonging to the junior officers.

Figure 5.8: Junior Officers' Shared Power Mental Model



Junior officers perceived a core base of their power to be formal power which refers to their official position. As can be seen from Figure 5.8 formal power focused junior officers' political motivation to improve their *Efficiency (1.2 JO)* and *Professionalism (1.3 JO)* engaging in political activity such as creating alliances in order to achieve this. For example, Chris, a service team manager explains how he leveraged his formal power to improve efficiency by bringing people together:

“In other service areas, like revenues, for example, they’ve got a (regions) branch and have regular meetings. In customer services, it’s more informal, we all know each other, but formal because we are all in the same role across (region). So, we’re reopening reception, we’ve had to put a lot of things in place, put screens up etc. Now, because of my job I can ask a question to those people, get those opinion’s and they’ll benchmark on your behalf, ask others, and then I can get the screens up quicker [...]”

[Formal power > Efficiency > Creating alliances]

Wanting to improve Role performance (i.e., *Professionalism (1.1 JO)*, *Efficiency (1.2 JO)*) was also shaped by JOs' informational power, or their ability to withhold powerful information, and their perception that they held superior knowledge (expert power). This power pathway is demonstrated by Charlotte, a cabinet policy advisor, who viewed her informational power as a resource that she could leverage to enhance her professionalism (political will) in her role by controlling her image (political activity).

“Sometimes when you have a conversation with (senior councillor) I think I do find out key information like, how do they feel, I want to know what is going on in their head. So, I am just trying to have a conversation with them so I’m trying to build that

rapport, I know that they are going to give me something and that information I can use to come across really well and look really smart in my next meeting. You know, I can use that information to look competent, reliable, thorough to my actual manager.”

[Informational power > Professionalism > Image control]

Notably, JOs were also influenced by their perceived *lack of* power. Feeling powerless drove political motivations that concerned wanting to *Learn political culture* (3.1 JO), be *Deferential* (3.2 JO) to others, by creating alliances or purposively evading providing their opinion. An example of this is provided by Gemma, an independent reviewing officer, who recognised her lack of reputational power (the level of power they believe others attribute to them) led to her being motivated to learn more about the political culture (3.1 JO *Learn political culture*) to manage how she presented herself (i.e. image control).

“So you have to start figuring out now, why, these people (management) are saying these things, because finding out, was the only way you’re going to keep your job. You had to be talking about what they were saying, it was not just about doing a good job, you had to be in their good books. I didn’t feel I was [in their good books], so I knew that I had to work out exactly who I needed to say the right things to. I certainly think there is something about if you want to get promoted now, you need to have a relationship with these people, they need to know who you are and what you’re about.”

[Lack of reputational power > Learn political culture > Image control]

Along with the impact of a sense of ones' own lack of power, interviewees' understanding of others' power was also important. Pamela discusses how she gauged the power of her managers, which led her to be motivated to learn more about the council's culture (3.1 *Learn political culture*) before purposively evading her opinions when interacting with her powerful managers.

"I have to learn to gauge the circumstances and exactly how important my managers are before I actually do something. In the past, you know I've stuck with my guns to say this is what we need to do. I really, really love my job at [council] and you can't do that, I've learned that I can't do that in every situation you have to work this kind of thing out."

[Others' formal power > Learn political culture > Purposive evasion]

Likewise, Elliot describes how his assessment of others' power meant he was motivated to *Avoid being seen as difficult* (3.2 *JO*) and thus were prudent in the challenges they made to authority:

"Do you try and impress your manager and get on with him? What I have learned is if you do not get on with your manager it's better to leave or to totally dodge being yourself. Although, I do sometimes see authority as something that should be challenged, but I don't have a harsh way of challenging them, I will do it in friendly, humoristic way but I would challenge [...] I must add, I do wonder if that has meant I've not progressed or taken steps back here"

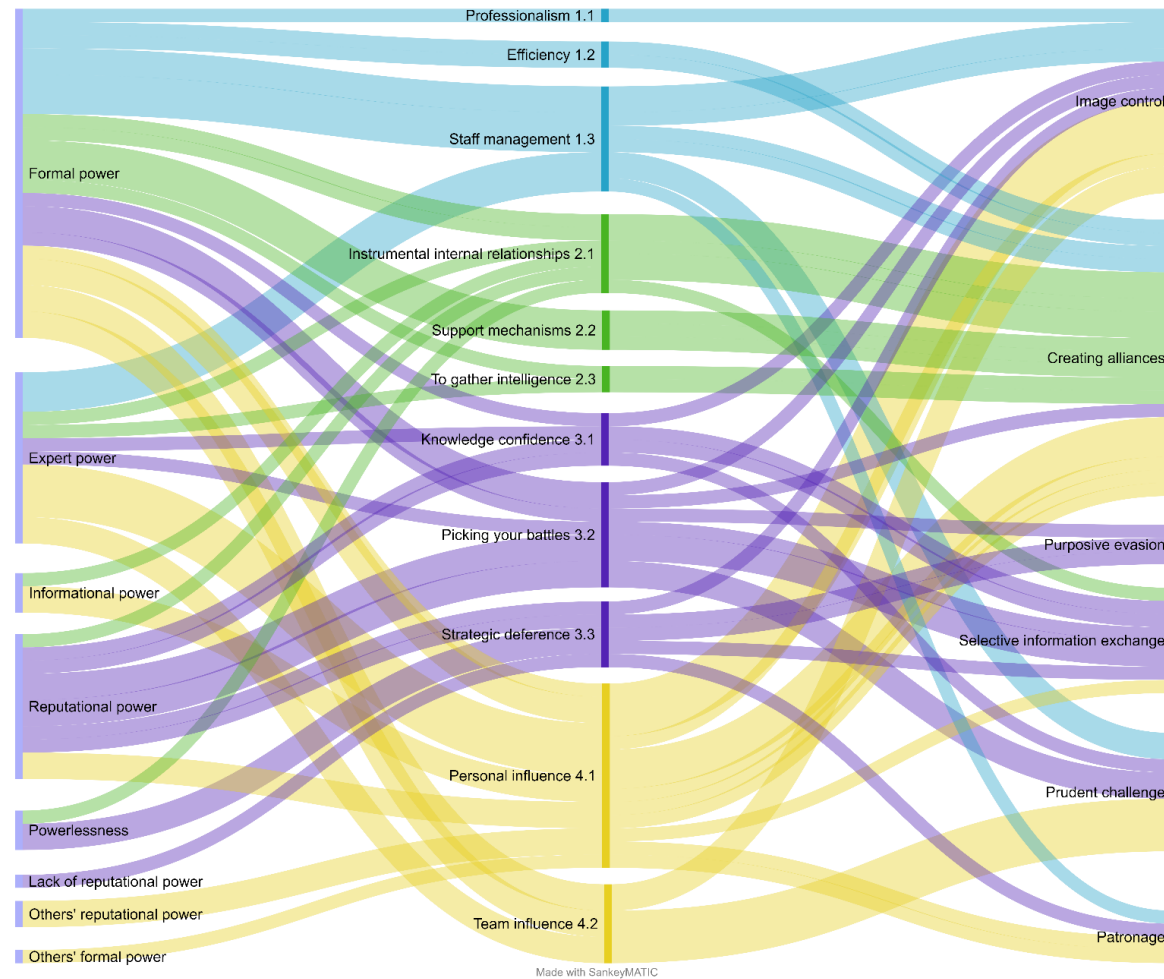
[Others' formal power > Deferential > Prudent challenge]

Overall, the JOs' political motivation was primarily shaped by their perceived powerlessness and others' power which resulted in individuals forming motives to be deferential, learn the culture and keep your head down in order to not lose further footing. This suggests that power, or lack of power, is the basis for their political strategies and a driver of motivation because it directs individuals along power pathways that open up certain avenues and close others. For those that perceive a lack of power, or make attributions related to others, these pathways are relatively closed and lead to defensive political strategies as seen in Chapter 4A.

5.3.2 Power Political Pathways (Mid-Level Officers)

Mid-level officers made fewer attributions related to powerlessness and others' power, resulting in broader avenues for political motivation and activity (see Figure 5.9). One of the most salient differences between the JO sample and the MO sample was the impact of individuals' formal power, which was rather limited, due to their position in the council hierarchy, and thus they had narrower political motivations (i.e. to be motivated by *Professionalism* (1.1 JO), or *Efficiency* (1.2 JO). In contrast, MOs enhanced formal power opened up a wider array of political motives including *To Gather Intelligence* (2.3 MO), *Picking your battles* (3.2 MO) and *Personal and team influence* (4.1 MO, 4.2 MO). For instance, Sandra documents how her role as 'the manager' which she had previously discussed was an important promotion, drove her to influence her team by engaging in image control and displaying leadership:

Figure 5.9: Mid-level Officers' Shared Power Mental Model



- First Order Code: Role performance (1 MO)
- First Order Code: Networking (2 MO)
- First Order Code: Achieve voice (3 MO)
- First Order Code: Establish influence (4 MO)

“It is easier to influence when you are the manager in the council... not easy, but it's easier. Because if you're going on a long journey for something for whatever project you're doing, you've got to take people with you”

[Formal power > Team influence > Image control]

The increase in formal power of MOs and the wider range of political motivations highlights how an increase of seniority brings around increased opportunity and necessity of political activity. But mid-level officers also discussed the impact of their perceived expert power within the local council on their political motivations. Many acknowledged that they withheld this expert base of social power, sustaining the motive of *Knowledge confidence* (3.1 MO), a pathway that was not apparent in the junior officer sample. Therefore, the quote below by Richard (a head of revenues) directly references his perception of his expertise and suggests that as individuals move up the hierarchal bracket, they develop bases of power that drive political strategies which in this case are more overt and self-serving.

“I think if, if anything happened in my area of expertise, obviously, obviously professionally qualified and have been for a number of years. Yeah. So if some if something happened in my area of expertise, then I'm a member of the Council, the leader of the Council. Yep. On the member side, or the chief exec down, would contact me if so, something cropped up in my area. Yeah, they would contact me, and I think they would trust my judgement in that area. And so I think, yeah, in that respect, I think, there is some influence and those people become allies.

[Expert power > Knowledge Confidence > Selective information exchange]

Additionally, reputational power was still a prevalent driver of political activity, however, with the increase in seniority it was evident that this base of social power was a resource that individuals were keen they did not lose or negatively affect. Therefore, the motivation was often to ensure they were voicing their opinion, they were more politically active but motivated to *Pick your battles* (3.2 MO) and exercise *Strategic deference* (3.3 MO). For example, Fiona a corporate group accountant stated:

“I’ve been here for 8 years and I have a wonderful array of colleagues and friends now which makes the work more, tolerable, but then you also have to think, should I make this point? I think that we’re rowing in the wrong direction but you just can’t always say it because you don’t want to affect your relationships [...] of course, at times you have to!”

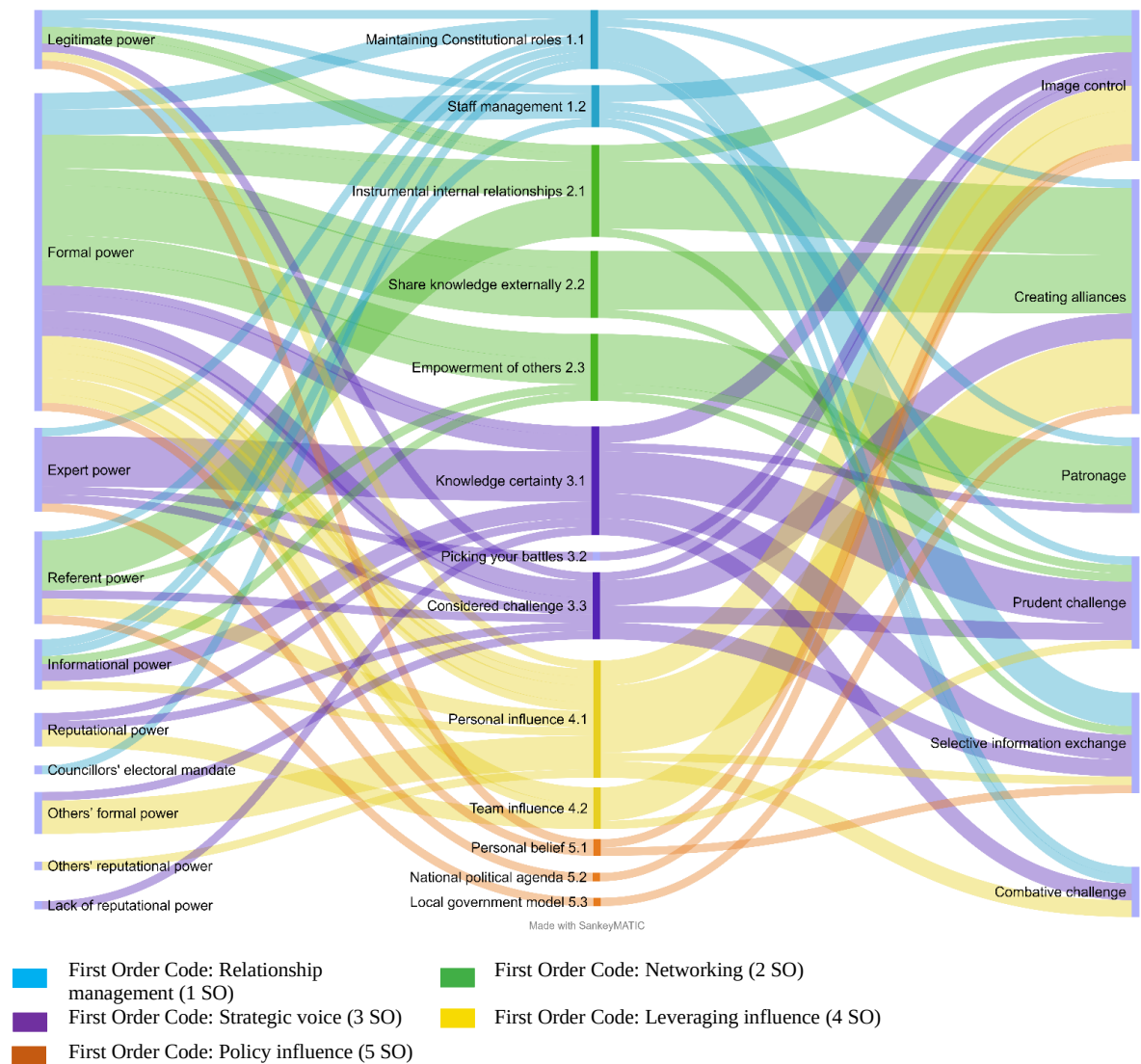
[Reputational power > Picking your battles > Purposive evasion]

In summary, mid-level officers’ power political pathways broadened as can be noted within the salience of formal power compared to the JOs.

5.3.3 Power Political Pathways (Senior Officers)

Following the trend from mid-level officers, senior officers’ shared mental models show even more impact of formal power, opening up further political motivations and activity, which were constrained at the junior and to some extent the mid-level officer samples (see Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Senior Officers' Shared Power Mental Model



Formal power was a key perceived power resource within the SO sample, driving multiple dimensions of political will. The SO's power political pathways were broader, feeling less constrained and thus they were more motivated to engage in a wider range of political activity. For example, formal power shaped SOs to be motivated by the *Empowerment of others* (2.3 SO), a particularly other-orientated motivation. The motivation to empower others can be seen by Frederick, Head of legal:

"I had an arrangement with the council whereby the Head of legal would provide mentoring and advice to students who were either from an ethnic minority background, or who were mature students, or who haven't got very good grades at A

level. I would go up to the college and we would meet these students and gave advice on interview techniques and how to apply for contacts and talk to them about different aspects of the law and that sort of thing, that meant a lot to me that probably prolonged my career at the council that I was given that.”

[Formal power > Empowerment of others > Patronage]

In contrast, JOs and MOs with lower formal power (perceived and actual) and less leverage and formal influence, were less motivated to empower others.

Interestingly, when interviewees discussed their expert power, instead of the power political pathways broadening, they focused on the motive *Knowledge certainty (3.1 SO)*, a drive to push as much as possible to ensure that their point of view was adopted within the local council. For instance, in the example below Harry, a Chief finance officer went to considerable lengths, with a mental representation of being imbued with expert power and motivation of *Knowledge certainty (3.1 SO)* to prudently challenge the decision made by councillors. This indicates that although the saliency of bases of power seems to broaden the power political pathways in some regards, in others it focuses them to achieve certain political goals, such as challenging powerful entities.

“They [senior councillors] put an idea forward that I knew, it didn’t stack up, I didn’t think, well I knew because this is what I’ve been doing my whole life, it wasn’t going to work, it was going to end up costing us money, rather than, you know, saving us money. They didn’t like the fact that they didn’t agree with me. I said to them, ‘its not going to work’ and quite frankly I didn’t regret a thing, they couldn’t get it through and if I had just been a yes man, I would have been in the situation of having to do it and trying to make the numbers fit, which they wouldn’t have!”

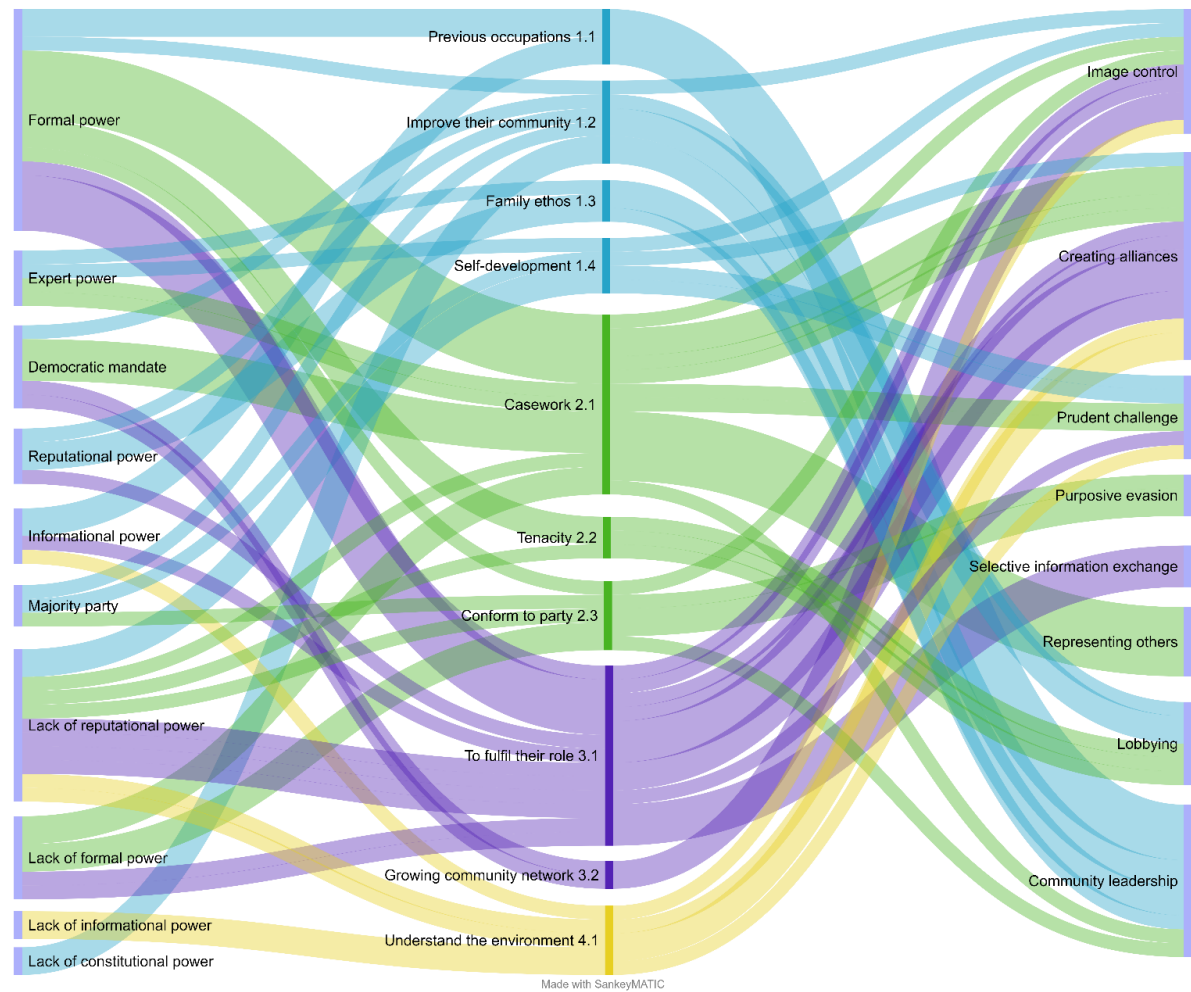
[Expert power > Knowledge certainty > Prudent challenge]

A divergence from the previous samples was the absence of reputational power as a power resource that interviewees specified they wielded. Instead, of how they felt others' perceived them, their legitimate, formal and expert forms of power were far more salient. Overall, senior officers saw their formalised power as a key power resource to draw upon and their power political pathway was very broad and drove various motivations across multiple dimensions of political will. In addition, the decline in the saliency of reputational power suggests that individuals rely on more formalised legitimate and expert bases of power at this level, suggesting the perceptions of others have far less impact on the motives of officers at senior levels.

5.3.4 Power Political Pathways (Junior Councillors)

To start the analysis of the councillors, the juniors are introduced first, with Figure 5.11 below displaying the Sankey diagram which represents the shared power mental model of the junior councillor sample and the next section highlights key takeaways and quotes from the PMM analysis.

Figure 5.11: Junior Councillors' Shared Power Mental Model



- First Order Code: Public service ethic (1 JC)

First Order Code: Representation (2 JC)
- First Order Code: Networking (3 JC)

First Order Code: Learning political culture (4 JC)

The junior councillors' mental representation of their formal power (i.e., their position) and their democratic mandate (i.e., power bestowed by winning the election), influenced their motivation of *Casework* (2.1 JC) and led to a range of political activities such as representing others, prudent challenge, lobbying or creating alliances. This can be displayed well here by Steve a first-term councillor:

“So I’m now the councillor for {ward}, I’ve taken up this challenge, this role. So, when one of my residents comes to me for help, and I’ve built relationships with different officers who are important in the things that are important, you kind of use them to your advantage, for your residents.”

[Formal power > Casework > Creating alliances]

Greg discusses his perception of having a democratic mandate, which influenced his motivation to stand up for his residents through the political activity of a prudent challenge to officers, who he believed were too involved in decisions. This represents how political motivation can often be the same whilst political behaviour differs. John outlines this in the quote below:

“The residents have given me a mandate to help them, so I want to do it for the residents, because they deserve it. They’ve spent a lot of time and effort in the community doing things that the council should otherwise have been doing and never getting the help when they need it. Sometimes, you get the feeling that these officers in the council and the councillors that have been there previously, they think they make all the decisions, well now they’re being challenged by us [newly elected councillors].”

[Democratic mandate > Casework > Prudent challenge]

Given the difference in roles it is unsurprising that there are differences between junior councillors and junior officers. Chapters 4A and 4B demonstrated that the context of the role influences an individual's political will. However, between these samples, there was a key similarity in the salient power resources or specifically the 'lack of' power or powerlessness. Within the Junior officer sample, the 'lack of' reputational power and powerlessness drove the will to be *Deferential* (3.2 JO) and to *Learn political culture* (3.1 JO). There was a similarity here, whereby junior councillors who perceived a 'lack of' formal power, were motivated to *Conform to party* (2.3 JC). For example, Wayne a first-term councillor outlined his perceived lack of reputational power as a resource and how this drove his motivation to conform and purposively evade them.

"I've had a history attached the [political] party but it's just been, canvassing, turning up at meetings and sometimes, social events. I got the nomination and the vote, lots of other councillors from the [opposition party] don't know me and I put 'councillor' in my emails to the staff. I don't think I'm too known yet by the big leaders in the party either so I try and keep my head down whilst I get settled in and wait for them to ask me, if they feel I can help."

[Lack of reputational power > Conform to party > Purposive evasion]

Additionally, when assessing the junior councillors' power political pathways, it was clear that they were motivated to engage in more organisational politics than expected given the political context of their role. For example, when they had a perception of powerlessness, they were motivated to *Understand the environment* (4.1 JC) driven by a sense of a lack of

reputational, and a lack of informational power in the council. An example of this can be shown through Susan:

“Some officers, we’re lucky if we get, you know, a two-line email back. So I think it’s perhaps how they see us as much as how we see them. Maybe, they see us as being, I don’t know, a new thorn in their side? Maybe it depends on the relationship we individually have with them? I think we’re all so new we have to try and have working relationships with them as we don’t have that, I think maybe that makes them more willing or less willing to help us and work with us [...] for all of us and myself becoming familiar with these things is something we have to do and we need officers help”

[Lack of reputational power > Understand the environment > Creating alliances]

Further, a lack of informational power was a key driver of wanting to *Understand the environment* (4.1 JC). Local councils are a matrix of political information, with the majority party having control of the decision-making, the individuals that comprise the party wield important information. At the same time, officers at differing ranks will have information that councillors within all parties would strive for to create political leverage. Information is therefore a valuable commodity in local councils. Ruby, for instance, stipulates that:

“Officers have fallen into the way of working, and they are struggling with change. They’re very very reluctant to depart with information, particularly from the finance department. It’s been awful, you know, trying to get information. Our group leader, he has to fight tooth and nail to get hold of anything. I’m new and I’m forced to learn that I have to act in a completely different way around finance to any other department, its ridiculous.”

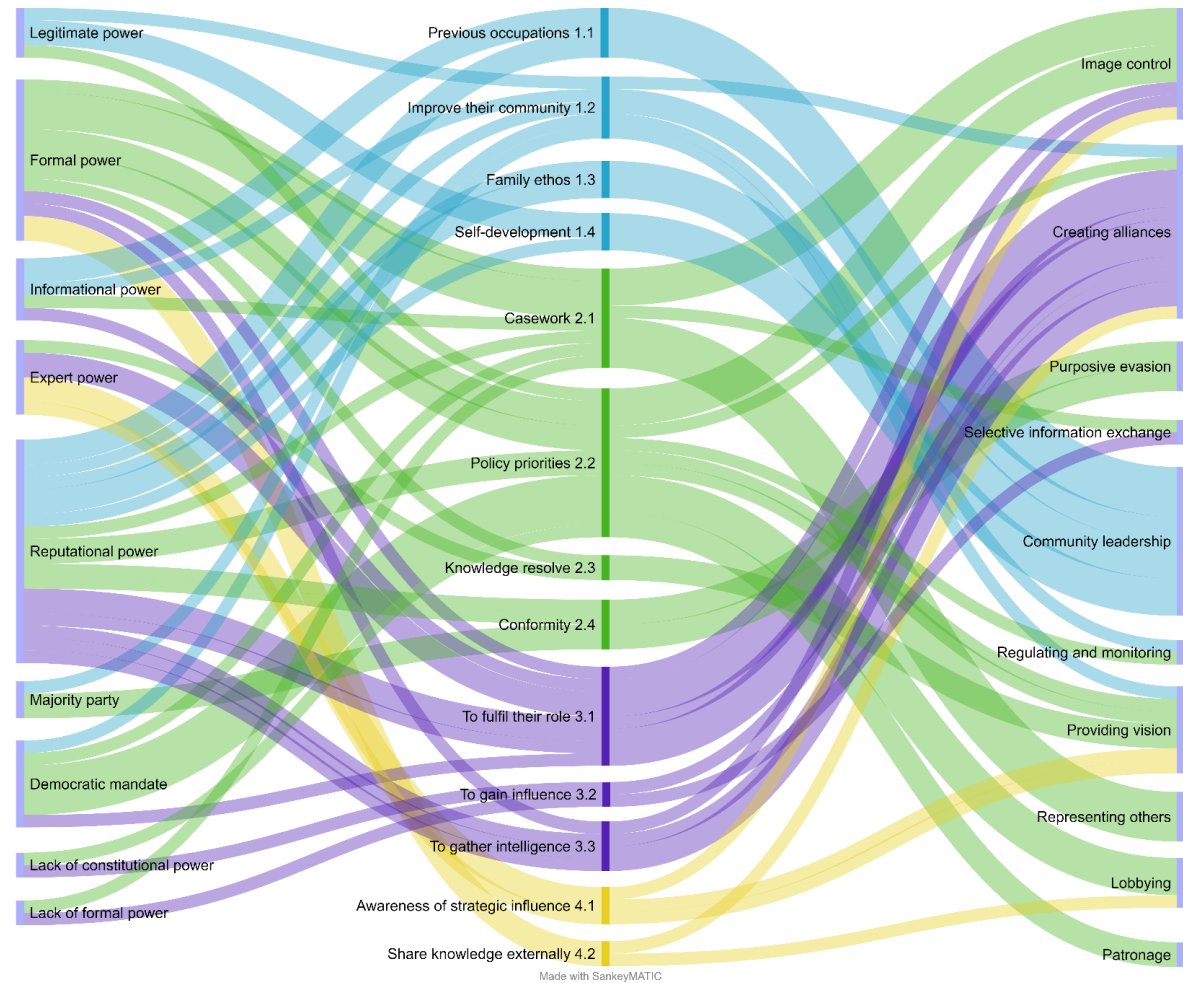
[Lack of informational power > Understand the environment > Image control]

Overall, the junior councillors had some similarities with the junior officers when evaluating the impact of power on their political will. Both samples were aware of their lack of certain power bases, which drove them to often defensive political motivations, such as *Conform to party (2.3 JC)* within the JCs. However, for councillors, their democratic mandate served as an important power base that shaped their political motivations to engage in casework.

5.3.5 Power Political Pathways (Mid-level Councillors)

Whilst the junior councillors' power political pathways were marked by a lack of certain bases of power, with some acknowledgement of their formal and democratic mandate, the mid-level councillors' pathways became more expansive. For example, there was a considerable increase in the saliency of reputational power for mid-level councillors. Similar to the preceding sections, Figure 5.12 below displays the shared power political pathway for the mid-level councillors and the section following provides the key elements and important quotes to illustrate.

Figure 5.12: Mid-level Councillors' Shared Power Mental Model



Mid-level councillors had been re-elected, and provided with various different responsibilities for either their party or the council and believed to hold more expert power than junior officers within the council. This perceived increase in expert power seemed to open up a wider range of political motivations for mid-level councillors. One of these was the motivation network in order *To fulfil their role (3.1 MC)*, which was illustrated by Alistair:

“There must be a relationship of trust with [officers] and I frequently disagree with decisions made by officers, particularly in the planning department where I, well, that is my area, you know? However, I think it’s recognised by both sides that is not in any way a matter of personal ranker or anything like that. With junior or senior officers I always want to respect their views and form relationships, however, I can [...] I need them to be on my side [to get things done].”

[Expert power > To fulfil their role > Creating alliances]

Additionally, while junior councillors’ formal power drove their motivation for *Casework (2.1 JC)*, mid-level councillors’ formal power also led to motives concerning *Policy priorities (2.2 MC)* which in turn led to activities such as lobbying, patronage and image control. This can be displayed by Jennifer who had over 8 years of experience:

“ This is my job [...] I will give everything, well my best, to improve the roads because they’re awful here, truly. 10 years I have made this my mission and I bet they’re fed up of me, the [party], my party and the officers because all I do, at times for weeks, is lobby them”

[Formal power > Policy priorities > Lobbying]

Although mid-level councillors are limited in terms of their extra-constitutional scope for influence, they do have more experience and exposure to officers, councillors and the council chamber. This is reflected in mid-level councillors' perception of increased reputational power. Reputational power was a precursor for their motivation, closely aligned with political science, for *Public Service* (1 MC) but also an important driver of organisational politics in motivations such as *To gather intelligence* (3.3 MC) within the council. An example of the latter can be seen through individuals such as Dominique who had been at her council for over 12 years:

"I have good relationship with officers, sometimes on a friendship thing, sometimes on a more working relationship sort of thing but they respect me and I respect them, Joel. Now, sometimes I do like the idea of using that to get some facts out of them that some of the others [councillors] wouldn't. You could call that networking or whatever, I would never get them in trouble or get them leaking stuff that would get them in trouble but sometimes I can get facts from them, I guess"

[Reputational power > To gather intelligence > Creating alliances]

Within the mid-level officers, reputational power was a driver for the motivation of *Picking your battles* (3.2 MO) and *Strategic deference* (3.3 MO). Similar motivations are much less visible with the MC sample. It is the case that sometimes reputational power drives *Conformity* (2.4MC), similar to that of the officers but this was less salient. When considering officers, their success within the political arena will largely rely on their ability to generate wider support, the loss of reputational power would be significantly damaging to them. However, councillors have the fundamental power of their democratic mandate, which they can leverage themselves, or fall back on if they lose reputational power. Thus, whereas mid-

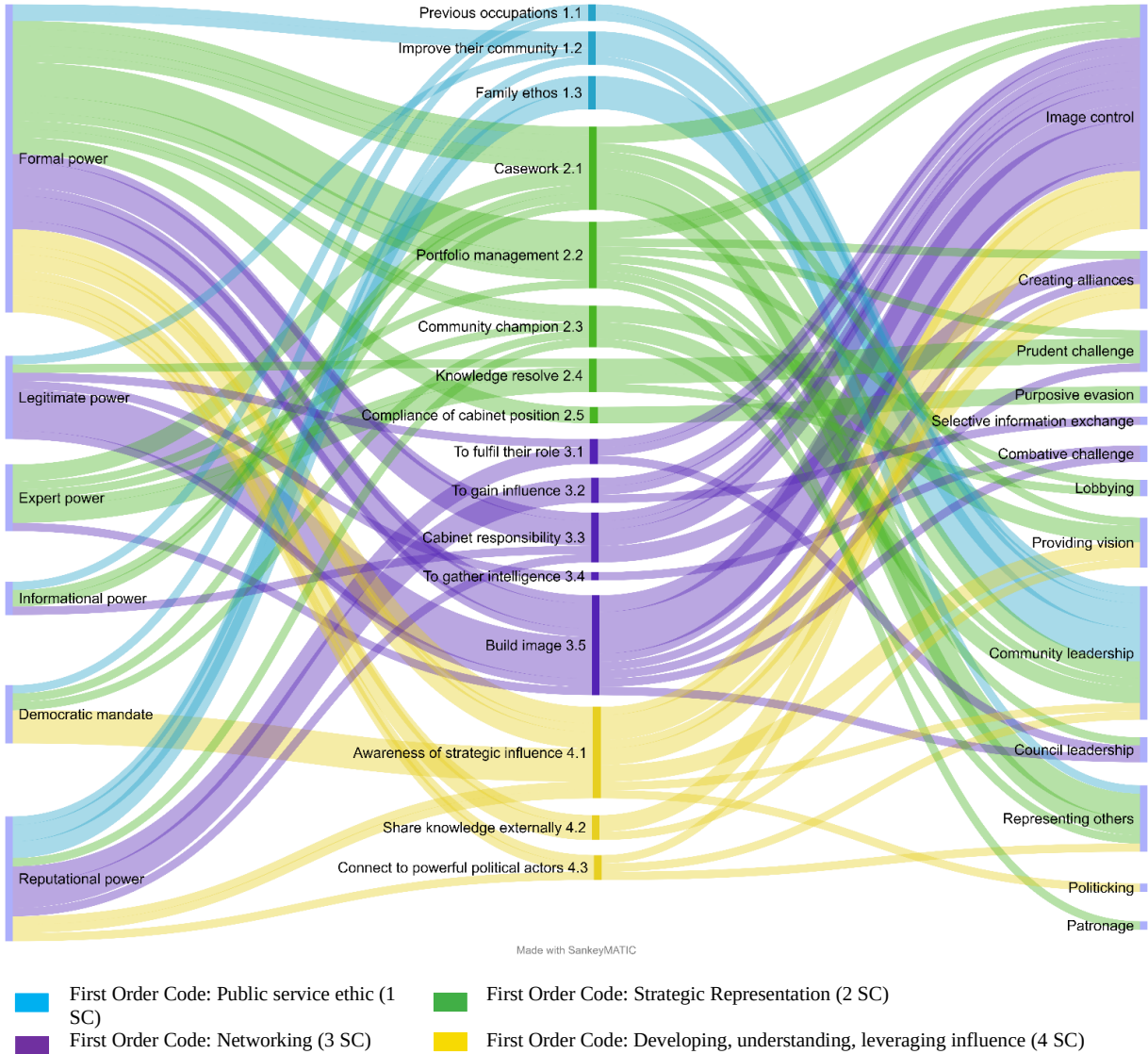
level officers are motivated to pick their battles and strategically be deferential, this was not the case for mid-level councillors.

Overall, the bases of social power that mid-level councillors' stipulated were pertinent in their power political pathways were based around more formalised, expert and reputational power resources. Following a similar theme as the officers, it was evident that these pathways were now broader and had opened up more potential pathways than their junior councillor counterparts.

5.3.6 Power Political Pathways (Senior Councillors)

The Sankey diagram that represents the shared power mental models for the senior councillors can be seen in Figure 5.13 below and the key quotes follow the diagram.

Figure 5.13: Senior Councillors' Shared Power Mental Model



First, when comparing the mid-level and senior councillor samples, senior councillors no longer factor in a lack of power or powerlessness. These individuals all have hierarchical, public-facing roles and most likely have significant experience within the local council and their communities and thus this is not surprising they do not perceive themselves as powerless. Instead, the power political pathways show how senior councillors are driven by more formalised power types such as formal, legitimate and informational power. One of the unique facets of the senior councillors was that formal power was a driver for their motivation for *Portfolio management* (2.2 SC). Within this sample, councillors were motivated by the responsibility of their portfolio which could include transport, recycling, refuse collection and so on. The formalised power that had been assigned to them via being the cabinet member for one of these elements was important in shaping their political motivation, as demonstrated by Stacey:

“The council have said, I’m a conservator, I’m THE conservator of [region]. And so, therefore, I’ve got a tight, very tight group on conservation and because I was vice-chair and now am Chairman I have to get, I have to work with the right people, and work out who you can’t work with and who you can and then I can talk things through to get a better decision. It’s a lot of work and a lot of pressure but I’m very passionate and motivated to improve conservation and Joel, sometimes you have to influence to get the right to tell these people what to do.”

[Formal power > Portfolio management > Creating alliances]

The prominent nature of formalised power might explain why reputational power was less salient for senior councillors. For example, senior councillors were motivated to build their image, driven not by reputational power (or lack of) but formal power. The fact that

reputational power was less pertinent might be surprising given their elevated status and hierarchal position within the council as members of the cabinet, or even leaders of the council. However, within increased formal power to fall back on, senior councillors may be more confident in acting politically without regard for their reputational losses.

Intriguingly, senior councillors were similar to senior officers in relation to their perceived expert power. For senior officers, their perceptions of expert power drove their motivation of *Knowledge certainty* (3.1 SO), and for senior councillors, expert power drove the very similar motivation of *Knowledge resolve* (2.4 SC) and this often linked to seeking more overt influence (e.g., prudent challenge):

“ I’ve been working for this department for longer than plenty of the councillors have been elected, I’ve been briefed by numerous different smart officers who have moved on, I’m not sure my current guy can give me briefs I have not considered. And I have to do the best job for the vulnerable children [social work] that I consider, well, believe I can do that better than anyone else in the area. That wasn’t always the case, when I started but can anyone do it better now? The officers know that and if they do disagree with me it is not personal for me to push back”

[Expert power > Knowledge resolve > Prudent challenge]

This suggests that, at least for some forms of motivation, councillors and officers follow a similar path in relation to their political maturation (Doldor, 2017).

Lastly, given their position as politicians, which many authors argue are vastly different from other leaders (cf Silvester, 2008), it was surprising to see the level of traditional organisational politics motivations and behaviours within the senior councillors that there is within the template analysis of Chapter 4B. A key example of this was the motivation to *Build image* (3.5 SC), often further motivated by a *Collegiate image* (3.5.1 SC) or *Decision maker* (3.5.2 SC) and the precursor of this motivation was often formal and legitimate power, that is, the right to tell someone what to do. An example of this can be seen through Elizabeth:

“It is a mess [decision making], which is ridiculous because we are the ones that should tell the officers what to do and they do it. But, this is something you have to do, you have to do it, make sure they know that you’re making the decisions [...] sometimes you go to someone superior to them, then they know you’re connected and aren’t one of them that gets pushed around.”

[Legitimate power > Build image > Creating alliances]

Overall, the seniors’ councillors, like senior officers, had a broader number of power pathways open to them compared to their junior and mid-level colleagues. They no longer had the driver of a lack of power, and were more concerned around the traditional organisational behaviour conceptualisations of power such as formal, expert and legitimate.

5.4 Discussion of Power Political Pathways

This chapter built on the findings of Chapters 4A and 4B and set out to answer: *How does power affect political will?* Taking a sociocognitive perspective on power, the power mental models of officers and councillors were mapped using a unique attribution-based

methodology to identify the power antecedents of political motivation. The findings show that power plays an important role in shaping political motivation. They also demonstrate it is not simply seniority that influences political maturation, but perceptions of a wide range of power bases and thus this chapter makes several contributions to extant knowledge of power and politics.

First, taking a socio-cognitive perspective the findings show that context is important for political motivation and power. While existing studies in the organisational behaviour literature suggest that power and political will are bound together as dispositions, by scholars such as Liu et al. (2010) and Shaugnessy (2017) who have used the trait-like construct ‘need for power’ as a proxy for political will, the current study demonstrates that power is less stable and its changes can mould political will differently in a range of contexts. Looking beyond a dispositional perspective enabled the study to identify that power does not just increase/decrease political will, but actively shapes the *content* of political motivation, a finding that would not be possible without the qualitative, inductive methodology used in this thesis. For example, if individuals perceive a *lack of* certain bases of social power they are often motivated by defensive, rather than proactive politics. Likewise, as participants perceived greater formal power, the range of political motivations also expanded, for example, mid-level officers became more motivated to engage in political activity that made them stand out, and wield their power more effectively (e.g. *Picking your battles* (3.2 MO), *Knowledge certainty* (3.1 SO), *Policy priorities* (2.2 MC), *Community champion* (2.3 SC)). Similarly, with perceived increase in expert power, the range of political motivations expanded with mid-level officers becoming more driven to influence widely (*Personal influence* (4.1 MO), *Awareness of strategic influence* (4.1 MC)). This corresponds with the

social cognitive insights into power that finds individuals' sense of control can open up opportunities to attain desired outcomes (Guinote, 2007) and perceptions of power can energise individuals to pursue salient activities (Keltner et al., 2003). This suggests that individuals' evaluation of their environment and their perceived bases of power act to shape the content (and even constrain) political will, which is indicative of a wider social cognitive process of political motivation.

Second, the study was also able to demonstrate the impact of different forms of power. Most existing research on power in organisations focuses on either structural, behavioural or personal power. Whilst studies have found evidence that structural sources of power have an influence on political will (Doldor, 2017 and Chapters 4A and 4B in this thesis), the current study draws attention to the *interaction* between structural (e.g., seniority), behavioural (e.g., political activity) and personal (e.g., perceived power bases) power and their impact on political will within organisations. For example, officers' perceptions of their expert and information power meant they were more motivated to engage in *Staff management (1.3 MC)* alongside *Considered challenge (3.3 SC)* and councillors' reputational and democratic mandate power meant they were driven to engage in politics in order to *fulfil their role (3.1 MC)* alongside *Policy priorities (2.2 MC)*. These findings indicate that perceived personal power interacts with structural and behavioural power, shaping and constraining motivation for a variety of political activities.

Third, by conducting the study in the context of political work it was possible to further consider the perceived personal power of individual politicians. Literature in political science typically bounds together key decision-makers, so there has been little consideration of how

individual power affects political will (Persson & Sjöstedt, 2012). However, the current study finds that structural and personal sources of power are important when considering politicians' political will. For example, the different perceptions of formal power drove junior councillors to be more motivated by benevolence at a case level but senior councillors to be far more self-serving. Furthermore, the perceived reputational power of councillors was an important driver of political motivation such as *To fulfil their role* (3.1 JC, MC) and *To gain influence* (3.2 SC). Therefore, the findings in this study suggest that the perceived personal power and structural power that individual politicians experience may be as important as collective political will, which is relevant for understanding motivation for political campaigns such as fighting corruption, climate change or poverty, which are the concerns of the political science discipline. The findings also demonstrate how the political workplace is important for understanding a wide range of power bases, including officers' expertise, and councillors' democratic mandate, within the same context.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any empirical study, it is vital to acknowledge that there are limitations that need to be taken into account. The first of which was to accurately differentiate between the causal links within the power pathways. For example, sometimes it was hard to differentiate between power as an antecedent and as an outcome. In fact, originally the study did map a 'power outcome' as well as the antecedent, however, it became apparent that it was not possible to determine whether the outcomes were achieved or just expected: interviewees may have documented the power outcome clearly, but it was unclear whether they had planned for this outcome at the motivational stage or whether it was merely a consequence of their political activity. Therefore, future research should seek to map power pathways

longitudinally, which would further the knowledge of the causal links between power, political will and political activity.

Another limitation is the application of Sankey diagrams to illustrate the pathways. The Sankey diagrams highlight the complexity of power and political motivation visually, but it is important to acknowledge that they do not show the actual flow of pathways. They show the links between power antecedents and political will, and then the links from political will to political activity. However, they are not able to show the links from power antecedents to political activity *via* political will. Therefore, it was vital to return to the original individual data in relation to the power pathways as just illustrating the Sankey diagrams would not have provided enough depth of understanding concerning these linkages.

5.5 Conclusion

With the discovery in Chapters 4A and 4B of the substantial role that structural power (i.e., seniority) plays within the political will process, this thesis sought to advance the literature by investigating in further depth what impact power plays in political motivation by answering research question 2: *How does power impact political will?* To do so, first, this chapter advocated for a social cognitive perspective on power, namely, power mental models (Fiol et al., 2001) to explore the nature of perceptions of power, structure (seniority) and the content of political motivation. The findings show that the way in which individuals evaluate their own power can shape (and constrain) political will. This is important for the organisational behaviour literature because it clearly demonstrates that political will is wider than a trait-like construct, or simply structural, via the elicitation of a social cognitive process (i.e., power

pathways). It also highlights the interaction between structural, behavioural and personal sources of power for shaping and constraining motivation for a variety of political activities including politicians' motivation for public policies. Finally, it demonstrates the utility of the political work context for exploring a range of different forms of structural and perceived power bases, adding to the understanding and interactions of various forms of power on political will.

The next chapter seeks to bring the contributions to literature together through a discussion of the theoretical and empirical findings and discuss the implications of this research.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter discusses the theoretical contributions that are made in this thesis and the implications for political will literature. The first section takes us back to the start of this thesis, outlining the two research questions that this thesis answers: **What are the dimensions of political will in political work?** and **How does power impact political will?**

After summarising the findings, this chapter moves onto discuss the four contributions this thesis makes to the organisational behaviour and political science literatures: (1) establishing political will as a socio cognitive process by utilising attribution theory (2) identifying the rich content of political will by adopting an inductive phenomenological methodology, (3) highlighting the utility of political work as a context for understanding political activity both for organisational behaviour and political science research, and (4) recognising the influence of power on political will. This chapter demonstrates the further implications of the findings for theory and practice, and discusses limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

6.1 Aims of Thesis

This thesis focuses on ‘political will’ or political motivation, defined from a micro-level, organisational perspective as “the motivation to engage in strategic, goal-directed behaviour that advances the personal agenda and objectives of the actor that inherently involves the risk of relational or reputational capital.” (Treadway, 2012, p533). Although political will has received reasonable attention in the political science literature in relation to the will to engage in public policy, there have been just 10 empirical studies on political will within the organisational behaviour (OB) literature. This lack of research within OB and conflicting conceptualisations of the political will construct across disciplines led to formulating of the aims of this research.

Before any research was conducted, the study's aims were outlined in Chapter 1 section 1.1 and were three-fold. The first was **to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to investigate individuals' motivation to engage in organisational politics**. Political will is treated differently across disciplines, within political science political will is considered a collective construct, bounding together key decision-makers and investigating their motivation concerning particular policies, such as motivation to address climate change (Vogel & Henstra, 2015). Within the organisational behaviour literature however, political will is conceptualised at the micro-individual level, and has been concerned with the trait-like motivations of individuals to engage in political acts at work (Ferris et al., 2019). These disparate paths have led to a lack of clarity concerning the political will construct. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective and examining political will in political work (i.e., a local council), this thesis offers a fruitful investigation into individuals' motivation to further the understanding of political motivation across disciplines.

The second aim of this doctoral thesis was **to explore the context of political work to disentangle the interdisciplinary complexity of political will**. Given the multiple differing views of political will and the lack of agreement of its dimensionality both within organisational behaviour and political science (Kapoutsis et al. 2017; Doldor, 2017; Post et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2020), exploring a context which has actors who both engage in 'office politics' and operate in a governmental political context was considered essential to disentangle the complexity of the construct. Therefore, the political work space of local councils which comprises individuals that political scientists would traditionally investigate (i.e., councillors) and those that organisational behaviourists would study (i.e., officers) was paramount to extend interdisciplinary theorising. Therefore, the first research question was formulated which was:

RQ1: What are the dimensions of political will in political work?

Lastly, through establishing the content of political will dimensions (Chapters 4A and 4B), power emerged as an important driver of political motivation and therefore a third aim was to analyse in greater detail, **the impact of power on political will**. It is notable how little work there has been within organisational politics to investigate the role of power on micro-political processes (Silvester & Wyatt, 2018). Given the synonymous and intertwined nature of power and politics, it was essential to ensure that this doctoral thesis contributed to this evident gap in empirical literature and in doing so aimed to formulate a reflexive and novel approach to examine the impact of individuals' social cognitive representations of power on their political motivation. Therefore, the second research question of this study was devised which was:

RQ2: How does power impact political will?

6.2 Summary of Findings

With the aim of the research specified in the previous section, this section provides a summary of the findings from the two studies by introducing the political will in political work model, represented in Figure 6.1. The figure summarises the dimensions of political will in political work, as identified in Chapters 4A and 4B and the impact that individuals' mental representations of power have on these dimensions, as established in Chapter 5.

To identify the dimensions of political will in political work, Chapters 4A and 4B presented the findings of a template analysis that was conducted on 60 interviews from six samples of political workers: junior ($n=10$), mid-level ($n=10$) and senior officers ($n=10$) and junior ($n=10$), mid-level ($n=10$) and senior councillors ($n=10$). The findings showed that political will in political work is multifaceted with multiple dimensions as summarised in Figure 6.1.

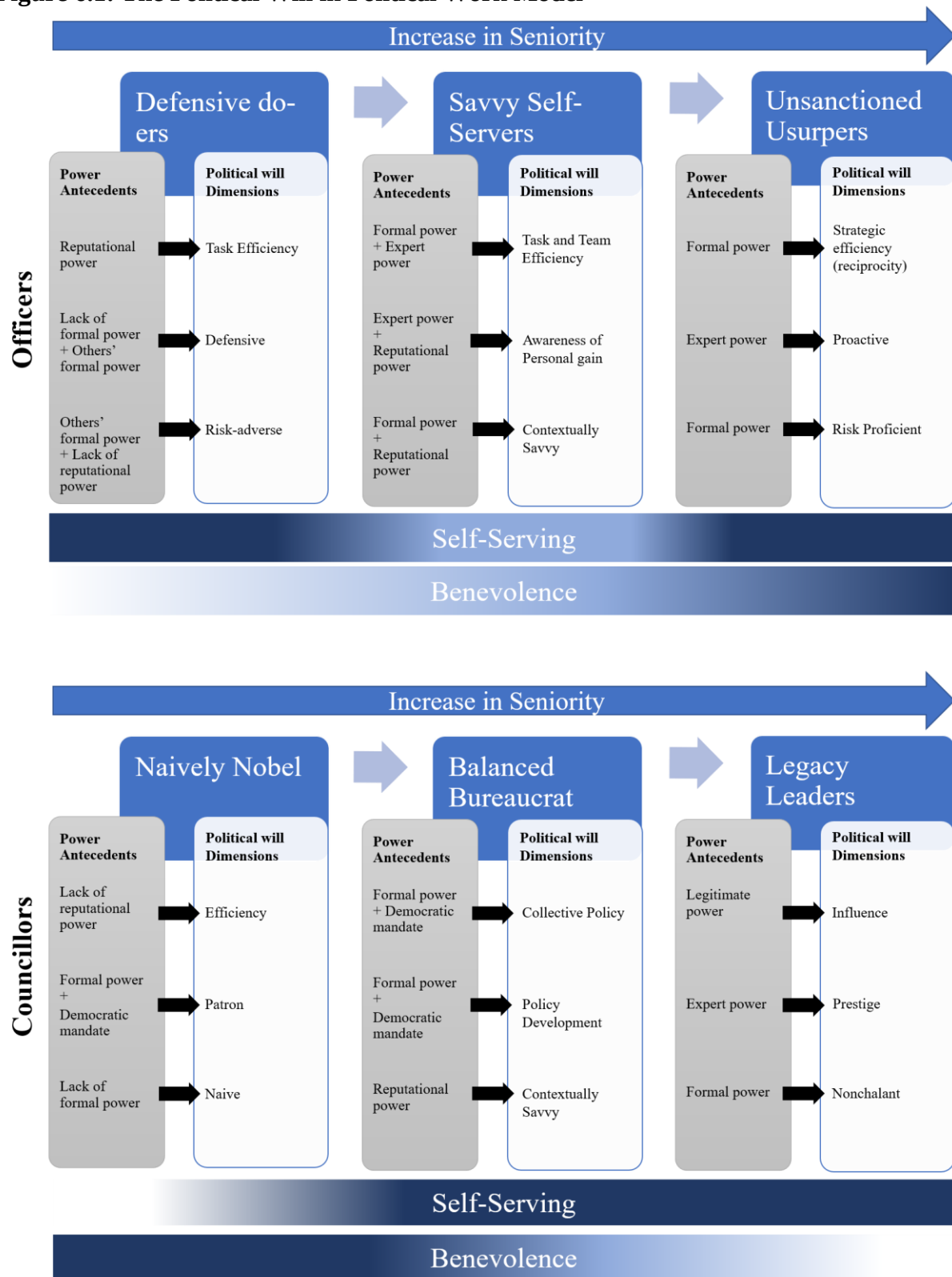
The PWPW model shows that the dimensions of political will also change in relation to the type of political work, and the seniority of individuals. For example, when comparing officers and councillors, the *Defensive Do-ers*, (i.e., the junior officers) exhibited a self-interested defensive motivation to future-proof themselves, whereas the *Naively Nobel* (i.e., junior councillors), were driven to be benevolent patrons or champions for others. Additionally, seniority was also associated with different political will dimensions. For example, as shown in the PWPW model, officers move from being motivated defensively (junior officers), to being *aware* of personal gain (mid-level officers), to being driven to engage more proactively in their political activity (senior officers), showing a maturation from defensive to proactive political motivation.

However, the influence of seniority did not capture the extent to which power shaped the content of political will and therefore Chapter 5 built on the findings of Chapters 4A and 4B to display the extent to which perceptions of various forms of power influence political motivation. This influence is demonstrated in the PWPW model through power antecedents. Via a unique power mental mapping methodology, the analysis identified that perceptions of power forebear political will, shaping and constraining individuals' political motives. For example, Figure 6.1 indicates that *Defensive Do-ers* (junior officers) and *Naively Nobel* (junior councillors) dimensions such as 'defence' and 'patron' were constrained compared to other samples because of the mental representations of power that these individuals wielded. When individuals feel a sense of powerlessness and make reference to a *lack of* a certain base of power or others' power, political will is constrained, but when individuals feel imbued with bases of power, seen in the PWPW model within the *Unsanctioned Usurpers* and

Legacy Leaders in particular, motivations become far more nuanced and widened the types of political motivation.

These findings are now explored in greater detail in relation to the four contributions made by this thesis.

Figure 6.1: The Political Will in Political Work Model



Note. Lighter shading represents a decrease whilst darker shading represents an increase in these motives.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

This section summarises the four contributions this thesis makes to the extant literature within organisational behaviour and political science: (1) the social cognitive perspective of political will (2) the inductive, phenomenological investigation into the context of political will (3) the vital political work context and (4) the examination of the impact of power on political will.

6.3.1 Contribution 1: The Social Cognitive Perspective on Political Will

The first contribution made to the political will literature by this thesis is that it has identified that political motivation is part of a social cognitive process, where individuals' motives are influenced by their interpretation of their political work environments (Bandura, 1989). This perspective contrasts with the few empirical studies on political will in the OB literature, which have largely operationalised political will as dispositional, using trait-like proxies to measure the construct (Ferris et al., 2019). These included need for power, need for achievement (McClelland, 1961, 1975, 1982), intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Machiavellianism (Christie & Geis, 1970). Furthermore, although political science as a discipline has typically examined political will as a collective construct, rather than examining individual-level motivation, there have also been multiple examples of dispositional predictors of political activity within the political science literature such as self-transcendence values and orientation towards power (Best, 2011; Caprara et al., 2010; Weinberg, 2020).

Importantly, more contemporary theorizing on political will within OB has shown signs that political will may be more than just a dispositional construct, such as the work of Treadway

(2012), who indicated that the assessment of environmental risk was an important dimension, and Doldor (2017) who highlighted the maturing nature of political will in a managerial sample. However, thus far, political will had not fully considered a social cognitive enquiry into the nature of political will to examine how individuals' perceptions and evaluations of the context, their role, their power, their previous behaviour and environment might influence their political motivation.

To address this gap, the studies in this thesis adopted attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) as a social cognitive theoretical framework, which suggests that the causal attributions individuals make for their own and others' actions affect their motivation for future behaviour.

Therefore, drawing on attribution theory and behavioural reasoning theory (Westaby, 2005), which positions causal explanations as a link between beliefs and values, motives, intentions and behaviour, the studies in this thesis examined individuals' causal reasoning to identify the motives which drive people to engage in political activity. The findings presented in Chapters 4A and 4B and summarised in the PWPW model suggest that, unlike most existing empirical work on political will in the OB literature, participants' political will is likely less stable because the dimensions of political will were found to be different across the political roles (i.e., officers and councillors) and levels of seniority, suggesting that political will is impacted by individuals' evaluation of their context, environment, and positionality.

Participants' interpretation of the political work environment (i.e., the local council) was particularly influential for their political motives. Individuals within this study were based in a work space where politics happens around them every day and which blurs the boundaries between organisational politics and party politics. Therefore, the studies in this thesis found

that individuals were unproblematically driven to engage in politics as it was an expected and endemic aspect of the workplace with few negative connotations. For example, in the PWPW a dimension of political motivation in the *Savvy Self-Servers* (mid-level officers) was an awareness of personal gain. These findings however, contrast with the extant literature such as Doldor (2017) whose study within the hi-tech and fast consumer goods private sector found that junior individuals believed politics to be unethical, immoral, emotionally traumatic, and dysfunctional. From the middle and senior managers in Doldor's (2017) study, political will matured and became more nuanced but still was pervaded by ambiguity and moral concerns around the role of politics within organisations. Within the political work space, to cast party politics as ethical and organisational politics as unethical would be a significant contradiction that did not emerge from the data. This is theoretically important for the OB literature because it affirms that the workplace environment plays a significant role in the dimensions of political will where individuals diverge in the content and dimensions of their political motivation.

The thesis also found that individuals' political motives were influenced by conformity to the political culture and structure of the council. For example, junior officers were more risk-adverse in their motives due to their interpretation of others' formal power and their beliefs that they operated in a culture whereby one is forced not to challenge decisions made by seniors. Therefore, junior officers were motivated to avoid being seen as a rebel or difficult. Interviewees also suggested that information was an important currency in their workplace environment and was hard to obtain for all audiences. This drove mid- and senior-level councillors to hold motivations towards gathering intelligence. Taken together, these findings

point to the importance of interpretations and contextual environments for the content of political motivation.

An important element of individuals' social cognitive evaluations was their perceptions of risk in relation to political engagement. This thesis therefore extends theorising into the impact of risk for political will because unlike extant literature, it captures individuals' phenomenological lived experience to reveal more detailed nuances of political risk in response to their environment. This is in contrast to political will theorists who have argued that some individuals would be more comfortable and therefore inclined to engage in political activity because they have a higher *dispositional* propensity to engage in riskier behaviours (Treadway, 2012). Through the application of attributional analysis in this thesis, it was possible to explore individuals' evaluations without narrowing them down to established constructs of risk. Take for example, the differing roles within the political work space as shown in the PWPW; while the *Naively Nobel* (junior councillors) were sometimes concerned with conforming to their political party but generally quite politically bold, the *Defensive Do-ers* (junior officers) were far more Risk-Adverse, with risk-based themes in chapter 4A that showed their motives were largely defensive and protective. Further, when considering risk the PWPW model in Figure 6.1 highlights how risk changed from a naivety at the junior level to a proficiency at the senior level for both officers and councillors. With increased knowledge of the political arena, the organisation, and the environment's culture, it was evident that individuals exhibited more nuance and accomplishment in their evaluation of risk. The findings therefore provide greater insight into the relevance and nature of risk in political motivation, and show that context matters.

These findings have important implications for the theorising of political will. Both OB and political science suggest that there are stable dispositional drives for political actors. For example, like OB researchers (e.g., Grams & Rogers, 1990) political scientists such as Best (2011) and Capara et al. (2010) have argued personality trait differences in the emergence and motivation of politicians. But both disciplines also suggest that political motivation is influenced by more malleable ‘trait-like’ constructs that sit closer to behaviour than more distal personality variables. In OB, the notion of political will put forward by Kapoutsis et al. (2017) is that it is a *relatively* stable but potentially *changeable* construct that describes political motivation as self-serving and/or benevolent. Similarly, political scientists such as Weinberg (2021) investigate basic human values (Schwartz, 1992) as drivers for candidate emergence, which are described as more proximal to behavior than personality traits, but more distal than perceptions. Weinberg’s work indicates that individuals who have high benevolence values and thus are most motivated for caring for and supporting the welfare of others are more likely to become an MP. Yet in this thesis, while junior councillors did exhibit benevolent motivations at the start of their careers, mid- and senior-level councillors were far more self-serving. Findings like these suggest that although individuals may have guiding principles such as benevolence, their political motivation may also be more malleable and dependent on context.

Behavioural reasoning theory (Westaby, 2005), suggests that motivation is driven by distal beliefs and values, like those found by Schwartz (1992) and that people also form ‘global motives’ like the self-serving and benevolent political will construct posited by Kapoutsis et al. (2017) and the attitudes towards political activity found by Doldor (2017). Importantly, behavioural reasoning theory positions more context-specific behavioural reasoning (i.e.,

attributions) between distal values and global motives, suggesting that over time, attributions shape more stable driving principles of political behaviour (Wyatt et al., 2022). Attribution theory, which is the guiding framework for this thesis, also suggests that causal reasoning in response to specific contexts helps individuals make sense of their environment and shape strategies (i.e., motives) for future behaviour (Weiner, 1985). The findings in this thesis therefore point to political motivation comprising more context-specific functional motives than previously theorised. While the thesis cannot claim to test linkages between motivational constructs, combining these findings with existing theorising suggests that political motivation may comprise (1) distal dispositional traits, (2) context specific reasons and purposes for political activity, which shape (3) more stable, trait-like motives to drive intentions, goals and political behaviour (Clary et al., 1998), which are linkages worthy of future research.

6.3.2 Contribution 2: Inductive Phenomenology: Unveiling the Benevolent Reciprocity of Political Will

As outlined throughout this thesis, the majority of research on political will has adopted a positivist perspective. Seeking to test and confirm existing notions of political will (e.g., Harris, Maher & Ferris, 2016; Liu et al., 2010) has meant there have been few empirical investigations into the content and dimensionality of political motivation (cf. Doldor, 2017). To address this gap, this thesis explored the content of political will inductively. This is important, because it allowed for the identification of the multi-faceted nature of political will and afforded in depth insight into the broad conceptualisations of political will as ‘self-serving’ or ‘benevolent’ (Treadway, 2012).

There is considerable debate within wider society around the motivations of politicians. Significant numbers of the public believe that politicians are self-serving individuals that are only in their role for personal gain: only five per cent of the UK population believe that political leaders act in a manner that is best for the country rather than with having their own personal interests in mind (Humphrys, 2021). However, although such questions are fundamentally concerned with individuals' motivation to engage in political activity, it is rare that the OB political will literature has investigated such vital questions despite being well positioned to do so. To contribute to this debate and the literature into the content of political will, this thesis identified the dimensions of political will in political work (Figure 6.1) where different drives of self-serving and benevolence are visible within the councillors' and officers' motives across the hierarchical levels.

Supporting existing work on drives and values of political candidates (Weinberg, 2020), councillors' political will was benevolent at the start of their political careers, where they sought to champion individual causes rather than work to their own agendas and interests. However, the findings in this thesis show that politicians with more power, experience, and seniority, in roles such as Mayor, leader or member of the cabinet exhibit more self-serving motives to gain prestige and shape their own legacy. In contrast, the officers were more self-serving than councillors at junior level but were driven to protect themselves in the wider political workspace, rather than proactively engage in political activity. Across officers' seniority, there were more examples of more traditional self-serving motivations such as gaining resources at the expense of others or using the political arena for personal gain. However, because of their increased managerial responsibilities, senior officers also reported benevolent motivations for political activity which were less apparent in their junior and mid-

level officer counterparts. These findings suggest that political workers adopt both self-serving and benevolent motives, but that the nuances concerned with these motivations are shaped by role and positionality.

By investigating the dimensionality of political will in finer detail, this thesis helps to explore the challenges made against existing notions of benevolence and political will. For example, Blickle (2018) critiques the political will scale proposed by Kapoutsis et al. (2017) claiming that the authors' convey a confusing message about whether benevolence is an "altruistic motive" (2017, p2254), "self-sacrificing" (2017, p2274), "other- and organisation focused motivation" (2017, p2273) or perhaps reciprocal: "exchanging benefits and building reciprocity" (2017, p2274). The research in this thesis contributes to the arguments raised by adopting an inductive phenomenological stance, allowing individuals' lived experience of their political motivation to be central to the findings to provide greater clarity for the benevolent dimension.

Certainly, the findings in this thesis show that political motivations were benevolent, and in line with political science literature, were concerned with benefitting the collective, rather than (just) the self. The findings were close to those concerning leader political support, that is defined as, "leaders tactical or strategic use of power or influence to provide for, advocate for, or otherwise aid followers by attempting to alter the distribution of advantage within the organisation in followers' favour" (Ellen, 2014, p893). Officers, in particular, were found to report more benevolent motives as they became more senior, suggesting that managerial responsibilities can necessitate the growth of benevolent motivation for the collective benefit of others.

However, the motives reported by all sub-samples in this thesis were rarely self-sacrificing or focused solely on the betterment of others. Instead, motivations would benefit others but would very often be balanced out by a reciprocal gain, either immediately or in the future. For example, within the traditional organisational political setting of officers, the benevolent motivations such as *Empowerment/mentoring of others (2.3 SO)* had benevolent roots, where interviewees reported wanting *to give back (2.3.1 SO)* but they were also concerned with *Potential reciprocity (2.3.2 SO)*, because they looked for signs that individuals may be able to help them in the future. Within the councillor sample, councillors were motivated by benevolent motivations such as *to Improve their community* throughout the whole sample, but in the junior and mid-level councillors, this was balanced out by a motivation to raise their profile (*Self-development/profile JC/MC*) or legacy (senior-councillors). These findings suggest that although political workers might be motivated by the betterment of others, they are also highly cognisant of reciprocity, providing support for the notion that political will is not merely altruistic as previously theorised (Kapoutsis et al., 2017). In addition, this extends previous survey data (Buchanan, 2008), indicating that managers view it appropriate to reciprocate ruthlessly, following a "you stab my back, I'll stab yours" approach. However, this research suggests that reciprocity encompasses not only self-serving revenge but also a collaborative motivation, fostering a joint political engagement for mutual gain.

The thesis also contributes to the political will literature by providing clarity concerning whether one is self-serving or benevolent or can be both. The participants' concerns of reciprocity suggest that political motives are often more nuanced and complicated than merely self-serving or benevolent; that they were motivated by different forms of political will concurrently and that the dominance of self-serving and benevolent motives is likely in

flux depending on the specific situation. The findings therefore help to unpack the content of political will, not only by identifying detailed nuances in political motivation, but also by providing evidence to further the debate on altruism in political will, which would not have been possible without the phenomenological inductive perspective taken in this thesis.

6.3.3 Contribution 3: Apolitical Figures in the Political Work Space: The Mutual Learning of OB and Political Science

The empirical focus of this thesis, the political work space of local councils, has shed light on political will because of the complexities of this context. OB literature has typically studied political will and political behaviour in traditional business settings in the private sector. The political work space has largely been ignored, despite its importance for shedding light on political activity in workplace settings (Silvester & Wyatt, 2018), and the size of the sector, with UK local councils alone employing more than 2 million individuals (LGIU, 2021). In contrast, while political science literature has focused on politicians it has neglected other forms of political worker, such as public and civil servants, and parliamentary aides. This thesis contributes to political will literature by studying different forms of political workers: politicians whose job it *is to be political* (Silvester, 2008), and officers who engage in more traditional office work, but within a political environment. This focus has enabled significant insights into the motivation of political actors for both OB and political science literatures.

Importantly, OB researchers can learn from the political work context about the nature of rationality in organisations. Local councils are constitutionally organised so that councillors are provided with apolitical advice by officers, without any undue influence. This mirrors the rational and apolitical nature that Human Resource Management (HRM) labours under (Ferris & King, 1991), whereby there is an applied assumption that decisions are based on

objective, meritocratic criteria rather than (workplace) political influence. However, as we know from studies on assessment processes, formal organisational processes are subject to political games. For example, Bozioneles (2005) found that in academic appointment interviews, panels would lobby for candidates whose interests were most like their own. Evidence of such ‘messiness of human interaction’ (Ferris & King, 1991, p. 63) also emerged in the findings from this thesis, where officers revealed that they were not entirely apolitical, and would at times be motivated to influence the governmental political debate as well as wield organisational political tactics. Therefore, the context of political work provides a reminder that politics transcends constitutional and rational bases of organisational processes and practices (Silvester & Wyatt, 2018).

Similarly, political scientists can learn about the nature of political neutrality from the study of political workers in this thesis. Political neutrality has its roots in Weber’s bureaucratic rationality whereby officers should be appointed by their technical competence and professional expertise and provide loyal subjection to political orders and their regulations regardless of their own persuasions and personal relations (Triantafillou, 2015). Therefore, given their technical competence and professional expertise, civil servants can engage in a *sachlichkeit* (matter-of-factness) whereby public administration is depoliticised because the implementation of political goals is based upon facts. Some scholars have noted this is a belief that applied science can be used to isolate a “correct way of proceeding in human affairs” (Fay, 1975, p 28). However, the findings from this thesis show that political neutrality is not necessarily a reality: while junior officers who perceived themselves as lacking power (see Figure 6.1), and were thus less motivated to step outside of the boundaries of political neutrality, senior officers’ who experienced more formal power were driven to

engage in Machiavellian behaviours and even political coups in order to influence policy, abandoning their politically neutral identity to achieve outcomes aligned with their personal beliefs rather than formally advise councillors with their technical competence. These findings therefore shed light on the nature of political neutrality in legislatures and highlight that politicians are often (problematically) influenced in ways that emulate the inducements of Sir Humphrey in BBC's Yes Minister.

Political workers have therefore proved to be a fruitful sample for the study of political motivation. The findings from this thesis demonstrate that officers, or public servants are an important sample of political workers which have often been overlooked in political science literature. Officers would certainly not be considered within the definition of political will provided by Post et al. (2010), which identifies only those constitutionally able to approve, implement and enforce policy as 'decision makers'. In contrast, this thesis has found that officers did indeed engage in governmental political activity, such as influencing the council's policy to suit their own personal agendas, despite their remit to remain apolitical. Therefore, political scientists need to widen their definition of political workers to be more in line with the one adopted in this thesis: "Work undertaken by elected or appointed individuals whose roles exist to deliver, support or influence democratic government" (Silvester et al., 2021).

Finally, by examining the political motivation of politicians this thesis was also able to generate greater knowledge about the construct of political will. Most political will research in political science has adopted the definition provided by Post et al. (2010), which rejects an individual-level focus because they suggest that the political is a social collective and that

personal insights are a fruitless endeavour, unless one individual has total power over their jurisdiction. However, this thesis has highlighted that taking such a position would neglect the impact of first-term junior councillors whose motivation is more concerned with casework and smaller-scale priorities. To neglect the motivation of individuals who have the same voting rights as any other councillor and focus on purely collective notions of political will is a limitation of the current political science literature in this field. On the other hand, the collective aspect of political will, identified in this thesis via studying political workers, can help to inform OB literature which has largely overlooked this aspect of political motivation. The interviews in this thesis found that councillors were concerned not just with their organisational followers, as would typically be studied in OB literature (Ellen, 2014), but were also mindful of wider groups, such as Parties, constituents, and voters. While these groups do not necessarily appear in traditional business organisations, it is important that OB considers how the political motivations of individuals such as lawyers, entrepreneurs and salespeople might be shaped by wider collective stakeholders (Silvester et al., 2021).

6.3.4 Contribution 4: The Impact of Power on Political Will

An examination into the nature of power in relation to political will is an area of enquiry which has surprisingly little attention in either OB or political science literature. This is surprising because power and politics are intertwined, as stated in Chapter 5, some even define politics as ‘power in action’ (Pfeffer, 1981). Although few studies have considered power in the organisational behaviour literature, positional power has been theorised as important for deciding whether to enact political behaviour (Kapoutsis, 2016). Additionally, through qualitative investigations such as Doldor (2017) it became evident that structural power, that is seniority, influences the maturation of political will and skill. Similarly, within

this thesis, Chapters 4A and 4B highlighted how structural power played a significant role in the dimensions of political will, but the data suggested that further inquiry was needed to form a more holistic analysis of the impact of power. This thesis contributes to the organisational politics literature by examining not only the impact of structural power on political will, but also the mental representations of power that individuals hold and thus explicates a social cognitive process that shapes political will, furthering evidence that political will is more than a trait-like construct.

As can be seen in Figure 6.1, this thesis found that individuals' mental representations of their own and others' power acted to shape and constrain individuals' political motives. A particular influence on individuals was their perception of power and powerlessness. When individuals reported feeling a lack of a certain base of power, be it formal, expert or reputational power their political strategies were more narrow and constrained. Conversely, if they reported feeling powerful and having various bases of social power available to them, the possibilities for political strategies were far wider, demonstrated in Chapter 5 where the Sankey diagrams summarised the broadening power political pathways. This is in line with other work into social cognitive insights into power which suggest that individuals' sense of control can open up opportunities to pursue salient activities (Guinote, 2007). This finding contributes to theorising in political will because it shows that while structural or positional power is thought to *moderate* motivation and political activity (Kapoutsis, 2016), perceptions of power are likely *antecedents* to political will, shaping potential political strategies. This furthers the micro-level conceptualisation of political will by evidencing that power and political will form important aspects of a social cognitive political process.

This fourth contribution to literature can also bring interdisciplinary insights not just for the organisational behaviour research but also for the political science field that looks at power at the collective level rather than the individual one. As political science is interested in understanding how to galvanize motivation to tackle large scale issues within society such as hunger, war, corruption, climate change starvation to name a few (Ankamah & Khoda, 2017 Raile, Raile & Post, 2018), it is imperative that political science accepts the importance of the individual level conceptualisation of political will and therefore consider the social cognitive representations of power that politicians hold. As Chapter 5 highlighted that councillors who perceived more secure power bases had a wider range of political motivations and activity than those who perceive a *lack of* power. This is something that is likely to occur at the national political level as well. Politicians that believe they wield secure bases of social power will be more likely to consider a wider variety of political strategies at their disposal, which is an important finding and contribution stemming from this research.

Lastly, the local council has numerous power bases and dynamics similar to ordinary organisations with some key differences. For example, councillors have legitimate power and a democratic mandate, whilst officers are often assumed to have expert power (French & Raven, 1959) given their experience and knowledge of the subject area they are controlling. Investigating the perceptions of individuals power (Fiol et al., 2001) within this context with multiple power dynamics has displayed the ubiquity and vital importance of individuals' perceptions of power on their motivation to be political and their subsequent political activity beyond that of traditional organisation conceptualisations of power. This is important because it elicits a context specific social cognitive process based on the role that individuals are placed within and their evaluation of the power that they are imbued with. Therefore, in

contexts such as political work, politicians' evaluation of their social power such as their democratic mandate may influence their political motivations. Future research could consider the strength of individual's sense of their democratic mandate, which could be influenced by the proportion of vote they obtained, and the influence of this on their political motivations.

6.4 Practical Implications

With the theoretical contributions outlined in the previous sections, it is important to establish the practical implications of the research findings. The following section outlines two, the first of which is the challenge of the political within political work and the need for better checks and balances. The second is the possibility for organisations to tap into the skill and experiences of politicians to enhance the leadership potential of ordinary employees.

6.4.1 Councillors vs Officers – The need for better checks and balances

This thesis has found that politics is endemic within all forms of political work, it is not just embedded within certain spheres (i.e., the decision making of councillors in a local council). Even in areas where politics is supposedly regulated (i.e., officers in a local council) it is apparent. When focusing on the political work space, this messiness of human interaction (Ferris & King, 1991) between the councillors and the officers was one of considerable surprises because within politics, it is often assumed that the vast majority of political activity and persuasion is across and within party lines, seeking to find compromises between differing ideologies.

However, although this was certainly notable, the relationship between councillors and officers was a central feature across all six samples, with some suggesting that the relationship between officers and councillors (across multiple local councils) is the most

fragmented they have seen in their careers. The functional relationship between the two with clear boundaries particularly at the senior level is vital to the success of the council and therefore the current checks and balances on this relationship such as having an appointed monitoring office may not be sufficient. In fact, when interviewing monitoring officers (appointed officers within the local council, often from the law department), this additional role which is designed to be 'efficient' and 'rational' ended up being intensely political in itself. Their success often relied on their political skill to manage tense relationships between councillors and officers before formal sanctions needed to be implemented against one or the other. With new and growing ways in which these relationships can be strained, such as through social media, live streams of local council meetings and the funding squeeze on local councils forming a more stressful and resourceless environment, new mechanisms may need to be established. Strong trust between councillors and officers in a local council is essential for the sustenance of democracy. Without the input of expertise in decision-making processes or decisions being made beyond the democratic mandate of councillors, the erosion of trust can severely undermine local democracy.

Although there are various local government association inspired workbooks such as Councillor Workbook: councillor/officer relations released in 2018 which sets out the importance of mutual respect and good communication to the functioning of a council. However, the LGA themselves have no power to influence councillors or officers, they are just a politically led cross-party organisation seeking to work on behalf of councils so they can provide a credible voice to the national government. Therefore, this research suggests that valuable resources such as the councillor/officer relations workbook are not reaching the individuals comprising local councils and another approach is needed. This could take the

form of induction training, bringing the best practises from OB into the political work sphere. For example, induction training should include the legal components (proof of legal right to work/on-site health and safety/facilities etc) however, both councillors and officers should have inductions which set out the culture and values of their local government such as their mission statement and employer brand (Cooper-Thomas, 2015). However, this is likely a short term fix, over the long term there needs to be further actions to maintain healthy relationships across local councils. For example, Shuffler, DiazGrandados & Salas (2011) outline how important team building interventions i.e., strategies designed to improve interpersonal relations are when there is a lack of cohesion or trust within a team. Given the dynamics between councillors and officers within the political work space whereby both individuals have differing roles and responsibilities, with distinct performance indicators this is often a relationship that interviewees outlined a lack of trust. Local councils should consider bringing OB insights and form more team building interventions across councillors and officers.

6.4.2 The Potential Employee Learning from Politicians

At the outset of this research journey, it was presumed that politicians would engage in different political motivations and activities than ordinary employees within organisations. It seemed likely there would be divergences between governmental political activity and organisational political activity. However, throughout the collection and analysis of data there were limited differences with more pertinent similarities. Given the parallels between the political strategies (motivation and activity) of both these individuals and specifically because politics is the job of politicians (Silvester, 2008) there is scope for politicians at all levels to provide a more acute account of their skills to ordinary employees of organisations. It would

seem a waste of a significant resource to separate politicians in the public sector and individuals in the private sector when the experiences of local councillors or members of parliament could provide insightful accounts of their skill and experience through training workshops on the proviso that it is vital for leaders to navigate the political arena of organisations successfully. In fact, the literature suggests that when organisations incorporate multiple methods of delivery to their leadership development programmes, they improve their transfer (i.e., utilize skills taught during the training within the job role) significantly (Lacerenza, Reyes, Marlow, Joseph & Salas, 2017). Therefore, if organisations exploit the learnt knowledge, skills, ability and experiences of local councillors (and/or members of parliament), particularly focusing on their political skills that are vital for leadership, it could improve both individuals and organisational performance.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research

6.5.1 Political Representation

Whilst this study had a sample size of N=60 interviewees which encompassed the hierarchy of the local council structure, at numerous different regions within England, a limitation of this research could be the sample size of the individual sub-samples of (n=10). Although this sample size was large enough to produce the findings within the previous chapters, future research could seek a more representative sample of officers and councillors with a wider range of political parties and council types.

Alongside more evidence being useful within local councils, the next logical step would be to extend this line of research to members of parliament (MP) who have additional responsibilities, to the nation, have additional constraints such as strong party lines they are

compiled to follow by ‘whips’ together with their constitutional responsibilities to a large pool of constituents. This can also address a national debate that consistently lingers but sporadically becomes a focal point within the media and wider public. For example, politicians are often labelled as ‘self-serving,’ indeed a contemporary debate has flared up with the Owen Paterson scandal who was suspended for earning over £500,000 for additional work outside of his role of MP, only for the government to make an attempt to overhaul this decision. This ‘sleaze’ scandal progressed further with numerous members of parliament suggesting their £82,000 salary was not enough to live on and second jobs were essential for them, leading to a wider debate whether politicians were motivated by ‘self-serving’ intent or were working for the people. An empirical examination into the political will of a large pool of MPs’ on an individual basis would provide some much-needed evidence into this recurring national debate around the motivations of our political leaders. This would be a difficult task, as chapter 3 section 3.2.1 demonstrated, the ability to recruit a large amount of MPs’ for an academic enquiry is profoundly difficult given their time constraints and concerns around such an in-depth examination into their motivations.

6.5.2 The Impact of Intersectionality

As the focus of this study was on the dimensions of political will in political work, alongside the influence of power on political will, the findings did not concentrate on the gendered component of political motivation. Previous research from scholars such as Doldor et al. (2013) have found that political will is gendered and that men and women experience politics differently because women have less access to political information and the relationships that help develop their political savvy. Although this thesis’ research was reflexive concerning the impact of gender on political motivations, it did not note any substantial differences. However, future research needs to consider gender in political work more closely and

therefore could bring about key insights into the nuances of political motivation and how the influence of individual characteristics such as gender shape and influences individuals' political will, particularly in the male-dominated arena of local councils within the UK.

Further, a limitation of this research will be the dominant middle aged (average age across samples: 53) and white profile of the interviewees. Based on prior research it is the case that these individuals are more accepting of politics in general and more included within political networks compared to black and minority ethnic individuals (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015) who are underrepresented within local councils. Although every effort was made to ensure a representative sample and the researcher was reflexive concerning the impact of age and ethnicity, like gender, no substantial differences were prevalent.

6.5.3 Longitudinal Data

Future research could also seek to use a longitudinal methodological approach to investigate the motivations of individuals throughout their career. This research has provided more evidence that signals differences between political will across seniority. However, this study has not tracked singular individuals across their career, instead it strategically sampled officers and councillors at different seniority levels of the local council. Although a longitudinal approach would be a significant and difficult task, with the research potentially spanning over an entire working career and the potential difficulties of interviewees dropping out, such a methodology could bring further validation to the maturation of political will across careers.

Additionally, future research should build upon the social cognitive perspectives of political will highlighted within this thesis and examine the potential linkages between stable, trait-like, malleable global motivations and more context specific political reasonings. This would provide a holistic investigation into political motivation and start to consider the stages of political motivation and therefore treating it a process.

6.6 Reflections

At the start of this thesis, I outlined how my inspirations to further the knowledge in political will stemmed from my undergraduate in politics and my masters in human resource management, where I started to realise the influence of politics within organisations.

Although this inspiration was a motivation throughout this journey, I was always aware of the importance of finding a balance within interdisciplinary research. It was a challenge for example within interviews to not be drawn into long, party political debates, where although as a phenomenologist I was a part of the research, I wanted to remain as objective and professional as possible.

This further taps into the perceived difficulties I believed I would encounter within data collection, particularly within the councillor sample of discussing their involvement in organisational politics and whether they would understand what my questions were seeking to explore. I considered having two distinct interview schedules, however, this concern was ill-founded and councillors seemingly enjoyed discussing their political activity in the day-to-day councillor role with some stating how informative to be able to reflect on their political motivations and activity.

The last difficulty that I considered at the start of this thesis was the recruitment of officers, particularly with the political lens of this study. I believed given the mandated neutrality, it would be difficult in an email to provide enough context to explain that I am not exploring party politics and the interview will not infringe on their neutrality. This also ended up being ill-founded, I was often blown away at how helpful interviewees were, reaching out asking me if they could help find other interviewees for me, sending out voluntary emails of individuals they believed would enjoy the interview.

Through this entire PhD process, I have learnt more about myself through my research including conducting interviews, my extensive teaching experience and speaking at conferences both online and in-person. Being an introvert and rather neurotic, choosing a career of consistent public speaking and being forced to accept my work can and should be better from one angle or another, very well might make me a walking contradiction, but one imbued with more knowledge, skills, and confidence than at any other point in my life.

6.7 Conclusion

In summary, this thesis has examined political will across two studies based in the political work space, incorporating two types of political workers: officers and councillors. Whilst this chapter has outlined the four interdisciplinary contributions these studies have made to literature, a final note is the following quote from President Emmanuel Macron, who to some extent neatly summarises the differences in motivation of both politicians and their public service counterparts found in this thesis.

“When politics is no longer a mission but a profession, politicians become more self-serving than public servants.”

References

- Allegretti, A. (2021). *MPs criticise academics for sending them fictitious emails for research*. [online] The Guardian. Available at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/feb/24/mps-criticise-academics-for-sending-them-fictitious-emails-for-research>.
- Allen, R. W., Madison, D. L., Porter, L. W., Renwick, P. A., & Mayes, B. T. (1979). Organizational politics: Tactics and characteristics of its actors. *California management review*, 22(1), 77-83.
- Amah, O. E. (2021). The role of political prudence and political skill in the political will and political behavior relationship. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-15.
- Ammeter, A. P., Douglas, C., Gardner, W. L., Hochwarter, W. A., & Ferris, G. R. (2002). Toward a political theory of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13(6), 751-796.
- Anderson, M., Branchflower, A., Moreno-Torres, M., & Besançon, M. (2005). *Measuring capacity and willingness for poverty reduction in fragile states* (No. 668-2016-45527).
- Andrews, M. (2004). Authority, acceptance, ability and performance-based budgeting reforms. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. 17 (4) 332-344
- Andrews, R., & Ashworth, R. (2013). Determinants of representation: an empirical assessment of the UK civil service. *Policy & Politics*, 41(3), 429-448.

- Andrews, R., & Ashworth, R. (2015). Representation and inclusion in public organizations: Evidence from the UK civil service. *Public Administration Review*, 75(2), 279-288.
- Ankamah, S. S., & Manzoor e Khoda, S. M. (2018). Political will and government anti-corruption efforts: What does the evidence say?. *Public Administration and Development*, 38(1), 3-14.
- Ankamah, S. S., & Manzoor, E., Khoda, S. M. (2018). Political will and government anti-corruption efforts: What does the evidence say?. *Public Administration and Development*, 38(1), 3-14.
- Antaki, C.R. (1994) *Explaining and Arguing*, London: Sage.
- Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., & Norrie, A. (2013). *Critical realism: Essential readings*. Routledge.
- Arieli, S., Sagiv, L., & Roccas, S. (2020). Values at work: The impact of personal values in organisations. *Applied Psychology*, 69(2), 230-275.
- Aristotle (trans. 1985) *Complete works of Aristotle*, Volume 1: The Revised Oxford Translation. Princeton University Press.
- Bacharach, S.B., & Lawler, E.J.(1980), “*Power and politics in Organizations. The Social Psychology of Conflict, Coalitions and Bargaining*”. Jossey – Bass Publishers, San Francisco, California
- Baddeley, S., & James, K. (1987). From political neutrality to political wisdom. *Politics*, 7(2), 35-40.
- Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action. *Englewood Cliffs, NJ*, 23-28

- Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American psychologist*, 44(9), 1175.
- Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Applied psychology*, 51(2), 269-290.
- Barber, J. D. (1972). *The Presidential Character*. Englewood Cliffs. *New Jerseys Prentice-Hall*.
- Barbuto Jr, J. E., Fritz, S. M., & Matkin, G. S. (2001). Leaders' bases of social power and anticipation of targets' resistance as predictors of transactional and transformational leadership. *Psychological reports*, 89(3), 663-666.
- Barrett, J. D., Peterson, D. R., Hester, K. S., Robledo, I. C., Day, E. A., Hougen, D. P., & Mumford, M. D. (2013). Thinking about applications: Effects on mental models and creative problem-solving. *Creativity Research Journal*, 25(2), 199-212.
- Bates, R. H. (2015). *When things fell apart*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Berzonsky, M. D., Cieciuch, J., Duriez, B., & Soenens, B. (2011). The how and what of identity formation: Associations between identity styles and value orientations. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 50(2), 295-299.
- Best, H. (2011). Does personality matter in politics? Personality factors as determinants of parliamentary recruitment and policy preferences. *Comparative Sociology*, 10(6), 928-948.
- Bjornson, R. (1981). Cognitive mapping and the understanding of literature. *SubStance*, 10(1), 51-62.

- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Blickle, Gerhard & Schütte, Nora & Wihler, Andreas. (2018). Political will, work values, and objective career success: A novel approach – The Trait-Reputation-Identity Model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 107.
- Bostrom, A., Walker, A. H., Scott, T., Pavia, R., Leschine, T. M., & Starbird, K. (2015). Oil spill response risk judgments, decisions, and mental models: findings from surveying US stakeholders and coastal residents. *Human and Ecological Risk Assessment: An International Journal*, 21(3), 581-604.
- Boyne, R., & Rattansi, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Postmodernism and society*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Bozeman, B., & Su, X. (2015). Public service motivation concepts and theory: A critique. *Public Administration Review*, 75(5), 700-710.
- Bozionelos, N. (2005). When the inferior candidate is offered the job: The selection interview as a political and power game. *Human Relations*, 58(12), 1605-1631.
- Brass, D. J. (1984). Being in the right place: A structural analysis of individual influence in an organization. *Administrative science quarterly*, 518-539.
- Brass, D. J. (2017). Intraorganizational power and dependence. *The Blackwell companion to organizations*, 138-157.
- Braun, D., & Guston, D. H. (2003). Principal-agent theory and research policy: an introduction. *Science and public policy*, 30(5), 302-308.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

- Brewer, G. A., & Selden, S. C. (1998). Whistle blowers in the federal civil service: New evidence of the public service ethic. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 8(3), 413-440.
- Brewin, C. R., MacCarthy, B., Duda, K., & Vaughn, C. E. (1991). Attribution and expressed emotion in the relatives of patients with schizophrenia. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 100(4), 546.
- Brief, A. P., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1986). Prosocial organizational behaviors. *Academy of management Review*, 11(4), 710-725.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. (2000). Assessing political will for anti-corruption efforts: an analytic framework. *Public Administration and Development: The International Journal of Management Research and Practice*, 20(3), 239-252.
- Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E., & King, N. (2015). The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 12(2), 202-222.
- Buchanan, D. A. (1999). The logic of political action: an experiment with the epistemology of the particular. *British Journal of management*, 10, 73-88.
- Buchanan, D. A. (2008). 'You stab my back, I'll stab yours: management experience and perceptions of organization political behaviour'. *British Journal of Management*, 19, 49-64.
- Butterfield, L. D., Borgen, W. A., Amundson, N. E., & Maglio, A. S. T. (2005). Fifty years of the critical incident technique: 1954-2004 and beyond. *Qualitative research*, 5(4), 475-497.

- Byram, S., Fischhoff, B., Embrey, M., Bruine de Bruin, W., & Thorne, S. (2001). Mental models of women with breast implants: Local complications. *Behavioral Medicine*, 27(1), 4-14.
- Byrne, Z. S., Kacmar, C., Stoner, J., & Hochwarter, W. A. (2005). The relationship between perceptions of politics and depressed mood at work: unique moderators across three levels. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 10(4), 330.
- Cabinet Office. (2019). *Civil Service Statistics*. Cabinet Office. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836373/Statistical-bulletin-Civil-Service-Statistics-2019-V2.pdf
- Callander, S. (2008). Political motivations. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 75(3), 671-697.
- Caprara, G., Francescato, D., Mebane, M., Sorace, R., & Vecchione, M. (2010). Personality foundations of ideological divide: A comparison of women members of parliament and women voters in Italy. *Political Psychology*, 31(5), 739-762.
- Carpenter, J., Doverspike, D., & Miguel, R. F. (2012). Public service motivation as a predictor of attraction to the public sector. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(2), 509-523.
- Chang, C. H., Rosen, C. C., & Levy, P. E. (2009). The relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and employee attitudes, strain, and behavior: A meta-analytic examination. *Academy of Management journal*, 52(4), 779-801.
- Chen, Y. S. (2015). Chinese learners' cognitive processes in writing email requests to faculty. *System*, 52, 51-62.

- Chermack, T. J. (2003). Mental models in decision making and implications for human resource development. *Advances in developing human resources*, 5(4), 408-422.
- Chermack, T. J., Song, J. H., Nimon, K., Choi, M., & Korte, R. F. (2012). The development and assessment of an instrument for measuring mental model styles in Korea. *Learning and Performance Quarterly*, 1(1), 1-20.
- Christie, R., & Geis, F. (1970) *Studies in Machiavellianism*. New York: Academic Press.
- Clegg, S. R., Courpasson, D., & Phillips, N. (2007). *Power and organizations*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Clerkin, R. M., & Cogburn, J. D. (2012). The dimensions of public service motivation and sector work preferences. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 32(3), 209-235.
- Coffman, J., & Beer, T. (2015). The advocacy strategy framework. *Center for Evaluation Innovation*. Retrieved from [https://www. Evaluation innovation. org/publication/the-advocacy-strategy-framework-3](https://www.Evaluationinnovation.org/publication/the-advocacy-strategy-framework-3).
- Cooper-Thomas, H. (2015). Becoming an MP. *The Psychologist*. 28(5), 364-367.
- Darisi, T., Thorne, S., & Iacobelli, C. (2005). Influences on decision-making for undergoing plastic surgery: A mental models and quantitative assessment. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, 116, 907-916.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). The general causality orientations scale: Self-determination in personality. *Journal of research in personality*, 19(2), 109-134.

- Doldor, E (2017) From Politically Naïve to Politically Mature: Conceptualizing Leaders' Political Maturation Journey. *British Journal of Management*, 28, pp.666-686.
- Doldor, E., Anderson, D., & Vinnicombe, S. (2013). Refining the concept of political will: a gender perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 24(3), 414-427.
- E. Clary, M. Snyder, R.D. Ridge, J. Copeland, A.A. Stukas, J. Haugen, et al. Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74 (1998), pp. 1516-1530
- Elias, S. (2008), "Fifty years of influence in the workplace: The evolution of the French and Raven power taxonomy", *Journal of Management History*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 267-283.
- Ellen III, B. P. (2014). Considering the positive possibilities of leader political behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(6), 892-896.
- Ellen III, B. P. (2016). Politics and pigskins: Leader political support and Doug Williams's termination from Grambling State University. *Journal of Applied Sport Management*, 8(3), 17.
- Ellen III, B. P., Ferris, G. R., & Buckley, M. R. (2013). Leader political support: Reconsidering leader political behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(6), 842-857.
- Elsawah, S., Guillaume, J. H., Filatova, T., Rook, J., & Jakeman, A. J. (2015). A methodology for eliciting, representing, and analysing stakeholder knowledge for decision making on complex socio-ecological systems: From cognitive maps to agent-based models. *Journal of environmental management*, 151, 500-516.

- Emerson, R. M. (1962). Power-Dependence Relations. *American Sociological Review*, 27(1), 31–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2089716>
- Faye, B. (1975). *Social Theory and Political Practice*. George Allen and Unwin. London.
- Fedor, D., Maslyn, J., Farmer, S., & Bettenhausen, K. (2008). The contribution of positive politics to the prediction of employee reactions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38(1), 76-96.
- Fedor, D., Maslyn, J., Farmer, S., & Bettenhausen, K. (2008). The contribution of positive politics to the prediction of employee reactions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38(1), 76-96.
- Ferris GR, Russ GS, Fandt PM. (1989). Politics in organizations. In *Impression Management in the Organization*. ed. RA Glacalone, P Rosenfeld, pp. 143–70. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum
- Ferris, G. R., & Kacmar, K. M. (1992). Perceptions of organizational politics. *Journal of management*, 18(1), 93-116.
- Ferris, G. R., & King, T. R. (1991). Politics in human resources decisions: A walk on the dark side. *Organizational dynamics*, 20(2), 59-71.
- Ferris, G. R., & Treadway, D. C. (2012). Politics in organizations: History, construct specification, and research directions. In G. R. Ferris & D. C. Treadway (Eds.), *Politics in organizations: Theory and research considerations* (pp. 3–26). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group
- Ferris, G. R., Ellen III, B. P., McAllister, C. P., & Maher, L. P. (2019). Reorganizing organizational politics research: A review of the literature and identification of

future research directions. *Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior*, 6, 299-323.

Ferris, G. R., Fedor, D. B., & King, T. R. (1994). A political conceptualization of managerial behavior. *Human Resource Management Review*, 4(1), 1-34.

Ferris, G. R., Frink, D. D., Galang, M. C., Zhou, J., Kacmar, K. M., & Howard, J. L. (1996). Perceptions of organizational politics: Prediction, stress-related implications, and outcomes. *Human relations*, 49(2), 233-266.

Ferris, G. R., Harrell-Cook, G., & Dulebohn, J. H. (2000). Organizational politics: The nature of the relationship between politics perceptions and political behavior. In *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., Kolodinsky, R. W., Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C. J., Douglas, C., & Frink, D. D. (2005). Development and validation of the political skill inventory. *Journal of management*, 31(1), 126-152.

Fiol, C. M., O'Connor, E. J., & Aguinis, H. (2001). All for one and one for all? The development and transfer of power across organizational levels. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 224-242.

Fiske, S. T., & Dépret, E. (1996). Control, interdependence and power: Understanding social cognition in its social context. *European review of social psychology*, 7(1), 31-61.

Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological bulletin*, 51(4), 327.

- Fleming, P., & Spicer, A. (2014). Power in management and organization science. *Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 237-298.
- Flinders, M., Weinberg, A., Weinberg, J., Geddes, M., & Kwiatkowski, R. (2020). Governing under pressure? The mental wellbeing of politicians. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 73(2), 253-273.
- French, J. R., Raven, B., & Cartwright, D. (1959). The bases of social power. *Classics of organization theory*, 7, 311-320.
- Furnham, A., Sadka, V., & Brewin, C. R. (1992). The development of an occupational attributional style questionnaire. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13(1), 27-39.
- Galehbakhtiari, S. (2015). A hermeneutic phenomenological study of online community participation: Applications of fuzzy cognitive maps. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 48, 637-643.
- Galinsky, A. D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Magee, J. C. (2003). From power to action. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 85(3), 453.
- Gallagher, S. (2012). What is phenomenology?. In *Phenomenology* (pp. 7-18). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Gandz, J., & Murray, V. V. (1980). The experience of workplace politics. *Academy of Management journal*, 23(2), 237-251.
- Gill, M. J. (2014). The possibilities of phenomenology for organizational research. *Organizational research methods*, 17(2), 118-137.

Godfrey-Smith, P. (2003) *Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*.
The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

<https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226300610.001.0001>

Gold, G. J., & Raven, B. H. (1992). Interpersonal influence strategies in the Churchill-Roosevelt bases-for-destroyers exchange. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 7(2), 245.

Gotsis, G. N., & Kortezi, Z. (2010). Ethical considerations in organizational politics: Expanding the perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93(4), 497-517.

Graham, J. W., & Van Dyne, L. (2006). Gathering information and exercising influence: Two forms of civic virtue organizational citizenship behavior. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 18(2), 89-109.

Graham, S., & Folkes, V. S. (1990). *Attribution Theory: Applications to Achievement, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Conflict*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grams, W. C., & Rogers, R. W. (1990). Power and personality: Effects of Machiavellianism, need for approval, and motivation on use of influence tactics. *The Journal of General Psychology*, 117(1), 71-82.

Grenier, R. S., & Dudzinska-Przesmitzki, D. (2015). A conceptual model for eliciting mental models using a composite methodology. *Human Resource Development Review*, 14(2), 163-184.

Guarino, N., Oberle, D., & Staab, S. (2009). What is an ontology?. In *Handbook on ontologies* (pp. 1-17). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.

- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Guinote, A. (2007). Power and goal pursuit. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(8), 1076-1087.
- Guinote, A. (2013). Social power and cognition. In D. E. Carlston (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of social cognition* (pp. 575–589). Oxford University Press
- Hagemann, K., & Scholderer, J. (2007). Consumer versus expert hazard identification: A mental models study of mutation-bred rice. *Journal of Risk Research*, 10(4), 449-464.
- Hammergren, L. (1998). Political will, constituency building, and public support in rule of law programs. *Center for Democracy and Governance Fax*, 202, 216-3232.
- Harris, J. N., Maher, L. P., & Ferris, G. R. (2016). The roles of political skill and political will in job performance prediction: A moderated nonlinear perspective. In *Handbook of Organizational Politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Haugaard, M., & Clegg, S. R. (2009). Introduction: why power is the central concept of the social sciences. *The SAGE handbook of power*.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *The principle of reason*. Indiana University Press.lagh
- Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/10628-000>
- Hochwarter, W. A., Ferris, G. R., Laird, M. D., Treadway, D. C., & Coleman Gallagher, V. (2010). Nonlinear politics perceptions—Work outcomes relationships: A

three-study, five-sample investigation. *Journal of Management*, 36(3), 740-763.

Hochwarter, W. A., Rosen, C. C., Jordan, S. L., Ferris, G. R., Ejaz, A., & Maher, L. P. (2020). Perceptions of organizational politics research: past, present, and future. *Journal of Management*, 46(6), 879-907.

Hochwarter, W.A.. (2012). *The positive side of organizational politics*. Politics in Organizations: Theory and Research Considerations. 27-65.

House, R. J., Shane, S. A., & Herold, D. M. (1996). Rumors of the death of dispositional research are vastly exaggerated. *Academy of management review*, 21(1), 203-224.

Houston, D. J. (2000). Public-service motivation: A multivariate test. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 10(4), 713-728.

Houston, D. J., & Cartwright, K. E. (2007). Spirituality and public service. *Public Administration Review*, 67(1), 88-102.

Howell, J. M., & Higgins, C. A. (1990). Leadership behaviors, influence tactics, and career experiences of champions of technological innovation. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1(4), 249-264.

Humphrys., J. (2021) *Are Our Politicians the Worst Ever?* YouGov. [Online]. Available at:

[John Humphrys - Are Our Politicians the Worst Ever? | YouGov](#)

James, W. (2020). Pragmatism. In *Pragmatism* (pp. 53-75). Routledge.

- Jones, N. A., Ross, H., Lynam, T., Perez, P., & Leitch, A. (2011). Mental models: an interdisciplinary synthesis of theory and methods. *Ecology and Society*, 16(1).
- Kacmar, K. M., & Ferris, G. R. (1991). *Perceptions of organizational politics scale (POPS): Development and construct validation*. Educational and Psychological measurement, 51(1), 193-205.
- Kane-Frieder, R. E., Hochwarter, W. A., & Ferris, G. R. (2014). Terms of engagement: Political boundaries of work engagement–work outcomes relationships. *Human Relations*, 67(3), 357-382.
- Kapoutsis, I. (2016). Playing the political game at work: the roles of political will, political prudence and political skill. In *Handbook of Organizational Politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kapoutsis, I., Papalexandris, A., Treadway, D. C., & Bentley, J. (2017). Measuring political will in organizations: Theoretical construct development and empirical validation. *Journal of Management*, 43(7), 2252-2280.
- Kartik, N., & McAfee, R. P. (2007). Signaling character in electoral competition. *American Economic Review*, 97(3), 852-870. Kartik, N., & McAfee, R. P. (2007). Signaling character in electoral competition. *American Economic Review*, 97(3), 852-870.
- Kearney, A. R., & Kaplan, S. (1997). Toward a methodology for the measurement of knowledge structures of ordinary people: the conceptual content cognitive map (3CM). *Environment and behavior*, 29(5), 579-617.
- Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychological review*, 110(2), 265.

- Kilduff, M., & Krackhardt, D. (1994). Bringing the individual back in: A structural analysis of the internal market for reputation in organizations. *Academy of management journal*, 37(1), 87-108.
- Kilduff, M., & Krackhardt, D. (1994). Bringing the individual back in: A structural analysis of the internal market for reputation in organizations. *Academy of management journal*, 37(1), 87-108.
- King, N. (2004). Using templates in the thematic analysis of text. *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*, 256.
10.4135/9781446280119.n21.
- King, N., & Brooks, J. (2017). Doing template analysis: A guide to the main components and procedures. *Template analysis for business and management students*, 25, 46.
- Kipnis, D., & Schmidt, S. M. (1988). Upward-influence styles: Relationship with performance evaluations, salary, and stress. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 528-542.
- Kohli, A. (2004). *State-directed development: political power and industrialization in the global periphery*. Cambridge university press. Cambridge.
- Kpundeh, S. & Dininio, P. (2006) Political will. In Staphenurst, R., Johnston, N. Pelizzo, R. (Eds.), *The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption*. The World Bank Institute. Washington DC.
- Kpundeh, S. J. (1998). Political will in fighting corruption. *Corruption and integrity improvement initiatives in developing countries*. New York: UNDP 91-110.

- Krasner, D. (1985): *Structural conflict: The Third World against global liberalism*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Kurchner-Hawkins, R., & Miller, R. (2006). Organizational politics: Building positive political strategies in turbulent times. *Handbook of organizational politics*, 1, 328-351.
- Kvale, S. (2012). *Doing interviews*. Sage.
- Kwiatkowski, R. (2012). Politicians and power: MPs in the UK parliament. *The Psychology of Politicians*, 39-58.
- Lacerenza, C. N., Reyes, D. L., Marlow, S. L., Joseph, D. L., & Salas, E. (2017). Leadership training design, delivery, and implementation: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(12), 1686.
- Ladyman, J. (2007). Ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions. In *General Philosophy of Science* (pp. 303-376). North-Holland.
- Landells, E. M., & Albrecht, S. L. (2016). Organizational politics and a maturity model: An integration and extension of existing models and dimensions. In *Handbook of Organizational Politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- LGA (2018) *Councillor Workbook*. Local Government Association. Available at: https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.141%20A%20councillor%27s%20workbook%20on%20councillor_x3A_officer%20relationships_v03.pdf
- LGA (2021) *Local government workforce summary data*. [online] Available at: [Local government workforce summary data - November 2021 - 24 December 2021](#)

- LGIU. (2021). *Local Government Facts And Figures: England*. [online] Available at:
 <<https://lgiu.org/local-government-facts-and-figures-england/#:~:text=There%20are%20around%2011%2C930%20local%20councils%20in%20the,there%20were%20roughly%2017%2C700%20councillors%20in%20England%20.>>
- Liu, Y., Ferris, G. R., Xu, J., Weitz, B. A., & Perrewé, P. L. (2014). When ingratiation backfires: The role of political skill in the ingratiation–internship performance relationship. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 13(4), 569-586.
- Liu, Y., Liu, J., & Wu, L. (2010). Are you willing and able? Roles of motivation, power, and politics in career growth. *Journal of Management*, 36(6), 1432-1460.
- Machiavelli, N., & Bull, G. (2003). *The Prince*. Penguin Classics.
- Maher, L. P., Gallagher, V. C., Rossi, A. M., Ferris, G. R., & Perrewé, P. L. (2018). Political skill and will as predictors of impression management frequency and style: A three-study investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 107, 276-294.
- Markman, A. B., & Gentner, D. (2001). Thinking. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 223-247.
- Marmot, M. G., Stansfeld, S., Patel, C., North, F., Head, J., White, I., ... & Smith, G. D. (1991). Health inequalities among British civil servants: the Whitehall II study. *The Lancet*, 337(8754), 1387-1393.
- Martinko, M. J., Gundlach, M. J., & Douglas, S. C. (2002). Toward an integrative theory of counterproductive workplace behavior: A causal reasoning perspective. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 10(1-2), 36-50.

- Mason, M. (2010, August). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. In *Forum qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: qualitative social research* (Vol. 11, No. 3).
- McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- McClelland, D. C. (1975). *Power: The inner experience*. New York: Irvington.
- McCormick, M. J., & Martinko, M. J. (2004). Identifying leader social cognitions: Integrating the causal reasoning perspective into social cognitive theory. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 10(4), 2-11.
- Milgram, S. (1965). Some conditions of obedience and disobedience to authority. *Human relations*, 18(1), 57-76.
- Mintzberg, H. (1983). *Power in and Around Organizations*. Prentice Hall. New
- Mintzberg, H. (1985). The organization as political arena. *Journal of management studies*, 22(2), 133-154.
- Moran, D. (2002). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Routledge.
- Morrison, E. W., & Bies, R. J. (1991). Impression management in the feedback-seeking process: A literature review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(3), 522-541.
- Munton, A. G., Silvester, J., Stratton, P., & Hanks, H. (1999). *Attributions in action: A practical approach to coding qualitative data*. London: Wiley-Blackwell .
- Munyon, T. P., Summers, J. K., Thompson, K. M., & Ferris, G. R. (2015). Political skill and work outcomes: A theoretical extension, meta-analytic investigation, and agenda for the future. *Personnel psychology*, 68(1), 143-184.

- Nickerson, R. S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of general psychology*, 2(2), 175-220.
- Parijat, P., & Bagga, S. (2014). Victor Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation—An evaluation. *International Research Journal of Business and Management*, 7(9), 1-8.
- Parry, R. (2012). The civil service and intergovernmental relations in the post-devolution UK. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 14(2), 285-302.
- Perrewé, P. L., Zellars, K. L., Ferris, G. R., Rossi, A. M., Kacmar, C. J., & Ralston, D. A. (2004). Neutralizing job stressors: Political skill as an antidote to the dysfunctional consequences of role conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(1), 141-152.
- Perry, J. L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 6(1), 5-22.
- Perry, J. L., & Hondeghem, A. (2008). Building theory and empirical evidence about public service motivation. *International public management journal*, 11(1), 3-12.
- Persson, A., & Sjöstedt, M. (2012). Responsive and responsible leaders: A matter of political will?. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(3), 617-632.
- Peterson, C., Semmel, A., Von Baeyer, C., Abramson, L. Y., Metalsky, G. I., & Seligman, M. E. (1982). The attributional style questionnaire. *Cognitive therapy and research*, 6(3), 287-299.
- Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in organizations*. Marshfield, Mass: Pitman Pub.

- Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. T. (2005). Building organization theory from first principles: The self-enhancement motive and understanding power and influence. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 372-388.
- Pierro, A., Raven, B. H., Amato, C., & Bélanger, J. J. (2013). Bases of social power, leadership styles, and organizational commitment. *International Journal of Psychology*, 48(6), 1122-1134.
- Plank, R. (2011). Green behaviour: Barriers, facilitators and the role of attributions. *Going green: The psychology of sustainability in the workplace*, 47-58.
- Post, L. A., Raile, A. N., & Raile, E. D. (2010). Defining political will. *Politics & Policy*, 38(4), 653-676.
- Ragins, B. R., & Sundstrom, E. (1989). Gender and power in organizations: A longitudinal perspective. *Psychological bulletin*, 105(1), 51.
- Raile, A. N., Raile, E. D. and Post, L. A. (2018) 'Analysis and action: The political will and public will approach', *Action Research*, 19(2), pp. 237–254
- Raile, E. D., Raile, A. N., Salmon, C. T., & Post, L. A. (2014). Defining public will. *Politics & Policy*, 42(1), 103-130.
- Rohrer, S. R. (2014). What makes a Prime Minister great?: A leadership trait analysis of the effectiveness of British Prime Ministers from 1902 to 2004. *Research & Politics*, 1(3), 2053168014558970.
- Rose, P., & Greeley, M. (2006). *Education in fragile states: Capturing lessons and identifying good practice*. DAC Fragile States Group.

- Rosen, C.C., Levy, P.E., & Hall, R.J. (2006). Placing perceptions of politics in the context of the feed- back environment, employee attitudes, and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(1), 211–220.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.
- Salancik, G. R., & Pfeffer, J. (1977). Who gets power—and how they hold on to it: A strategic-contingency model of power. *Organizational dynamics*, 5(3), 3-21.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 1-65). Academic Press.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2005). Robustness and fruitfulness of a theory of universals in individual values. *Valores e trabalho*, 56-85.
- Searing, D. (1994). *Westminster's world: understanding political roles*. Harvard University Press.
- Seel, N. M. (2001). Epistemology, situated cognition, and mental models:'Like a bridge over troubled water'. *Instructional science*, 29(4), 403-427.
- Selznick, P., (1949). *TVA And The Grass Roots, A Study In The Sociology Of Formal Organization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shaughnessy, B. A., Treadway, D. C., Breland, J. W., & Perrewé, P. L. (2017). Informal leadership status and individual performance: The roles of political skill and political will. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 24(1), 83-94.

- Shuffler, M. L., DiazGranados, D., & Salas, E. (2011). There's a science for that: Team development interventions in organizations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20(6), 365-372.
- Silvester, J. & Wyatt, M. (2015). Developing strong and diverse political leaders. *Psychologist* [Online]: 368-371. Available at: <http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/getfile/4935>.
- Silvester, J. & Wyatt, M. (2018). Political Effectiveness at Work. In: Ones, D. and Anderson, N. eds. *Handbook of Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology*. Sage
- Silvester, J. (2004). Attributional coding. In C. Cassell, & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (pp. 228-241). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446280119.n19>
- Silvester, J. (2008). The good, the bad, and the ugly: Politics and politicians at work. *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 23, 107–148
- Silvester, J. (2012). Recruiting politicians: Designing competency-based selection for UK parliamentary candidates. In A. Weinberg (Ed.), *The psychology of politicians* (pp. 21–38). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Silvester, J. & Dykes, C. (2007). Selecting political candidates: A longitudinal study of assessment centre performance and political success in the 2005 UK General Election. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 80(1), pp. 11-25.
- Silvester, J. (2013). *The Political Skills Framework: A Councillor's Toolkit*. Local Government Association (LGA).

- Silvester, J., & Chapman, A. J. (1997). Asking "why?" in the workplace: Causal attributions and organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (1986-1998), 1.
- Silvester, J., Wyatt, M., & Randall, R. (2014). Politician personality, Machiavellianism, and political skill as predictors of performance ratings in political roles. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(2), 258–279.
- Silvester, J., Wyatt, M., Ellen III, B. P., & Ferris, G. R. (2021). Candidate effects on election outcomes: Political skill, campaign efficacy, and intentions in a British general election. *Applied Psychology*, 70(4), 1628-1668.
- Silvester, J., Anderson, N. & Patterson, F. (1999) ‘Organizational culture change: an inter-group attributional analysis’, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 72: 1–24.
- Silvester, J., Anderson-Gough, F.M., Anderson, N. and Mohamed, A. (2002) ‘Attributions, locus of control and impression management in the selection interview’, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 75: 59–76.
- Simonton, D. K. (1998). Introduction political leadership: PartII-The 1996 US presidential election. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 3(9), 333-334.
- Stainton Rogers, W. (2011). *Social psychology*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Stange, S. (1988). *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*.
- Sturm, R. E., & Antonakis, J. (2015). Interpersonal power: A review, critique, and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 41(1), 136-163.

- Tan, H. (2019) *Former UN chief: A Lack of political will is holding back climate goal achievements*. [Online]. Available at: [Former UN chief: political will problem is holding back climate goals \(cnbc.com\)](https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/26/climate/antony-guterres-climate/index.html)
- Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. (2015). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American journal of evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.
- Thompson, G., Staddon, A., & Stapenhurst, R. (2020). Motivation of legislators and political will. *Public Integrity*, 22(2), 134-153.
- Todd, S. J., & Watts, S. C. (2005). Staff responses to challenging behaviour shown by people with dementia: An application of an attributional-emotional model of helping behaviour. *Aging & Mental Health*, 9(1), 71-81.
- Todd, S. Y., Harris, K. J., Harris, R. B., & Wheeler, A. R. (2009). Career success implications of political skill. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 149(3), 279-304.
- Toffler, A. (1975) *Future Shock*. Pan Books. London
- Trautner, B. W., Bhimani, R. D., Amspoker, A. B., Hysong, S. J., Garza, A., Kelly, P. A., ... & Naik, A. D. (2013). Development and validation of an algorithm to recalibrate mental models and reduce diagnostic errors associated with catheter-associated bacteriuria. *BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making*, 13(1), 1-9.

- Treadway, D. C. (2012). Political will in organizations. In G. R. Ferris & D. C. Treadway (Eds.), *Politics in organizations: Theory and research considerations*: 531-556. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Treadway, D. C., Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C. J., & Ferris, G. R. (2005). Political will, political skill, and political behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 26(3), 229-245.
- Triantafillou, P. (2015). The politics of neutrality and the changing role of expertise in public administration. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 37(3), 174-187.
- United Nations Development Programme (2008) Capacity Development: Empowering People and Institutions. Annual Report. [Online]. Available at: [UNDP-in-action-2008-en.pdf](#)
- Van den Bogaard, K. J. H. M., & Embregts, P. J. C. M. (2020). Attributions of aggressive behaviour: The perspective of people with mild to borderline intellectual functioning in a secure forensic psychiatric setting. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2020.1771613>
- Vecchio, R. P., & Sussmann, M. (1991). Choice of influence tactics: Individual and organizational determinants. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 73-80.
- Vigoda, E. (2002). Stress-related aftermaths to workplace politics: the relationships among politics, job distress, and aggressive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 23(5), 571-591.

- Vinarski-Peretz, H., & Kidron, A. (2018). The shadow dance of political climate: Engagement in political behavior in local government authorities. *European Management Journal*, 36(5), 608-615.
- Vogel, B., & Henstra, D. (2015). Studying local climate adaptation: A heuristic research framework for comparative policy analysis. *Global Environmental Change*, 31, 110-120.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley
- Weber, M. (trans, 1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York : London :Free Press ; Collier Macmillan,.
- Weick, K. E. (1988). Enacted sensemaking in crisis situations [1]. *Journal of management studies*, 25(4), 305-317.
- Weinberg, A. (2017). The mental health of politicians. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), 1-4.
- Weinberg, J. (2021). Who wants to be a politician? Basic human values and candidate emergence in the United Kingdom. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(4), 1565-1581.
- Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological review*, 92(4), 548.
- Westaby, J. D. (2005). Behavioral reasoning theory: Identifying new linkages underlying intentions and behavior. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 98(2), 97-120.
- Wilson, D., & Game, C. (2011). *Local government in the United Kingdom*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

- Winter, D. G. (1987). Leader appeal, leader performance, and the motive profiles of leaders and followers: A study of American presidents and elections. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 52(1), 196.
- Winter, D. G. (1992). *Power motivation revisited*. In C. P. Smith (Ed.), *Motivation and Personality: Handbook of Thematic Content Analysis* (pp. 301–310). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Winter, D. G. (2005). Things I've Learned About Personality From Studying Political Leaders at a Distance 1. *Journal of personality*, 73(3), 557-584.
- Winter, D. G. (2010). Why achievement motivation predicts success in business but failure in politics: The importance of personal control. *Journal of Personality*, 78(6), 1637-1668.
- Wright, B. E., & Pandey, S. K. (2008). Public service motivation and the assumption of person—Organization fit: Testing the mediating effect of value congruence. *Administration & Society*, 40(5), 502-521.
- Wyatt, M., & Silvester, J. (2015). Reflections on the labyrinth: Investigating black and minority ethnic leaders' career experiences. *Human Relations*, 68(8), 1243-1269.
- Wyatt, M. & Silvester, J. (2018). Do voters get it right? A test of the ascription-actuality trait theory of leadership with political elites. *The Leadership Quarterly* [Online] 29:609-621. Available at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.02.001>.

Wyatt, M. R., Doldor, E. R., & Tresh, F. (2022). EXPRESS: To be or not to be political?

Racialized cognitive scripts and political motivation. *Human Relations*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267221083660>

Zahavi, D. (2011). Empathy and direct social perception: A phenomenological

proposal. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 2(3), 541-558.

Zhang, X., & Chignell, M. (2001). Assessment of the effects of user characteristics on mental

models of information retrieval systems. *Journal of the American society for information science and technology*, 52(6), 445-459.

Appendix 1: Sampling of Local Councils

To protect the anonymity of the interviewees within this thesis, the councils that the participants were working for are included in this appendix. However, the job titles are excluded to ensure there is no possible traceability.

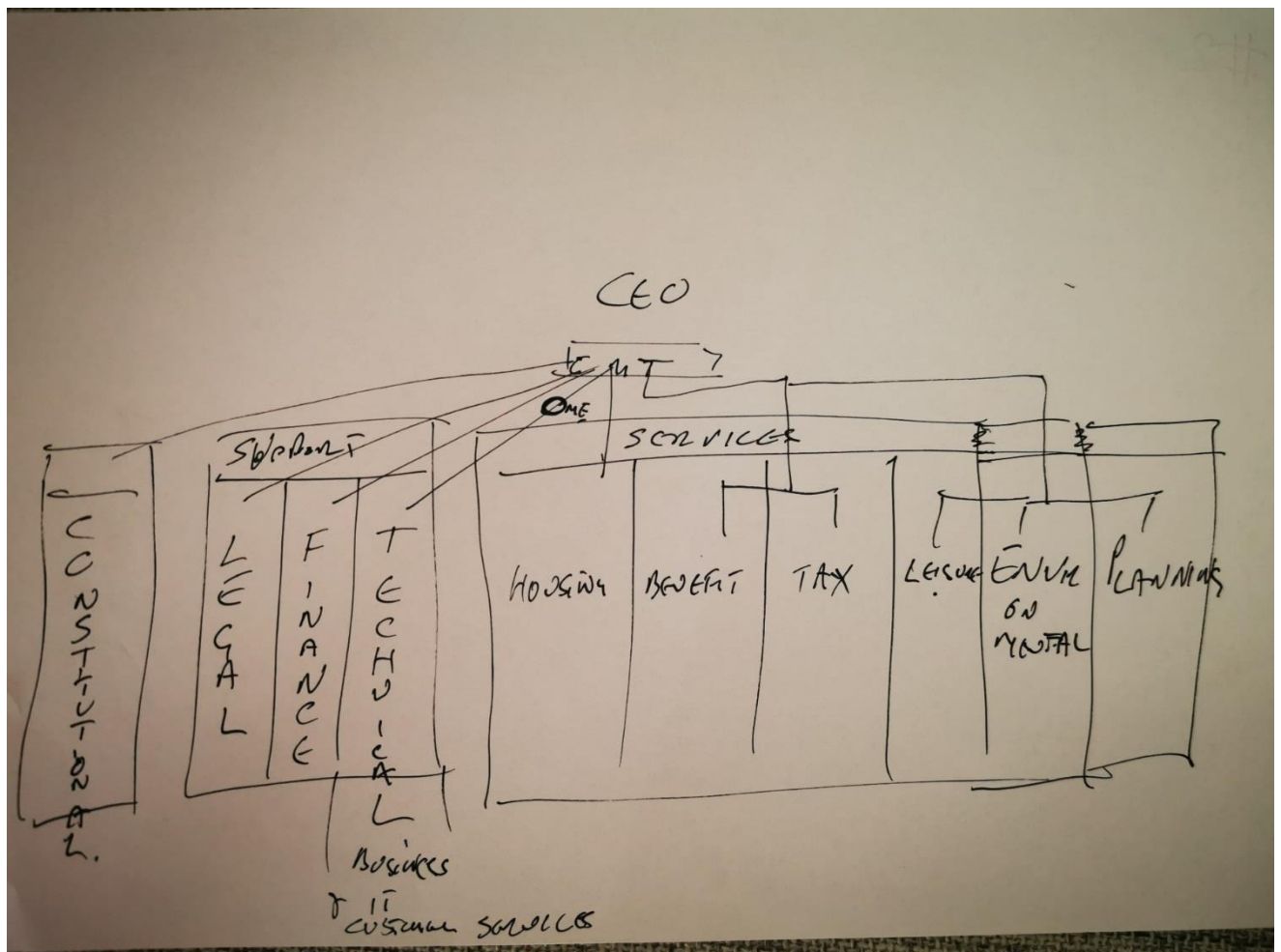
The district councils that were included within this sampling were:

- Canterbury City Council
- Epsom & Ewell Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Reigate & Banstead Council
- Surrey Heath District Council
- Tandridge District Council
- Waverley Borough Council
- Woking Borough Council

The county councils that were included within this sampling were:

- Devon County Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Kent County Council
- Nottinghamshire City Council
- Surrey County Council
- Warwickshire County Council

Appendix 2: Example of interviewee's organisational diagram



Appendix 3: Full Interview Schedule

Below is the interview schedules used within the interviews with all participants. These, however, were used flexibly given the semi-structured process.

1. Could you tell me about your job role?
2. Could you draw me a map/diagram of an organisational hierarchy and outline where you would be within it?
3. What is your understanding of organisational (office) politics?
4. How do you believe office politics has aided your career to date?
5. For politicians: How do you believe behaviours required in office politics differ from those required within Office
6. What are the main organisational political issues within the local council you have experienced as a local councillor (or officer)? Could you give me one of two specific examples of these issues?
7. What responsibilities do you have within this rank you have highlighted in your diagram?
8. Have you benefitted from a network of colleagues? Why did you pick or gravitate towards these individuals?
9. What is your sphere of influence? Do you feel like you have influence over a wide range of people?
10. Can you tell me about a time you were motivated to engage in any form of political activity?
11. Why did you engage in this behaviour?
12. What motivated you to do this?
13. What did you perceive as the potential benefit of doing so? What was your goal? Did you consider any risks this might have caused yourself?
14. How do you think your formal rank/position within the local influenced this outcome?
15. Would you have acted differently if you were in a different role?
16. How does engaging in political behaviours affect people's careers in the council?
17. Without naming any names, do you believe your fellow councillors (or officers) within the council are motivated by self-interested concerns or more benevolent concerns (i.e. concern for others)?

Is there any specific examples you can give me?

How do you feel about this approach?

18. Do you have any comments or anything you would like to add?

Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Purpose

The purpose of the Participant information sheet (PIS) is to help prospective participants to make an informed choice regarding whether or not to participate in the research project. The following points should be included (as relevant to the research project) and the sheet should be provided to prospective participants allowing them sufficient time to make a decision and ask any questions they may have. Before seeking consent, the researcher should read through the information sheet with the participant to ensure they have understood all points.

Research project title

Exploring the motivation to act politically in leadership roles

What is the projects purpose?

The purpose of this project is to investigate the motivation behind an individual's decision to engage in political behaviour within the workplace, in this project, within local councils.

Why have I been chosen?

All participants within this study have been chosen because of their employment within a local council. This study believes that these participants will provide new insights into the organisational politics literature.

Do I have to take part?

No, all participation is entirely voluntary. This is alongside your right to withdraw from the study at any time.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The interview will take around one hour of your time, the interview will be undertaken by the lead researcher Joel Montgomery. These questions will be open questions related to the research project. The interview will be recorded and transcribed, at which point the data will be entirely anonymised for this study and any future publications.

Who is funding this research?

This research is a part of my PhD studies at the University of Kent, funded by the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship.

Who has granted this research project ethical approval?

This research project has obtained full ethical approval via the University of Kent's, Kent Business School Research Ethics Advisory Group (REAG). This means that this research is subject to the ethical guidelines and codes of practice of this ethical advisory group.

Are there any foreseeable risks or disadvantages to your participation in this study?

This research project does not perceive any risks or potential disadvantages to your participation in this study.

How will the data collected be stored and my identity protected?

This study will immediately anonymise all data to ensure that there is no connection to the participant within this study or any future publications. The data collected will also be stored securely on a password protected university-approved systems. Only myself the lead researcher and my PhD supervisor, Dr Madeleine Wyatt, will have access to this data.

At the University level:

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Privacy notice for research – University-level

As a university, we use personally identifiable information to conduct research, including to improve health, care and services. As a publicly-funded organisation, we have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in the research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study. Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible.

The University Charter sets out that 'the objects of the University are to advance education and disseminate knowledge by teaching, scholarship and research for the public benefit' (paragraph 3).

Health and care research should serve the public interest, which means that we have to demonstrate that our research serves the interests of society as a whole. We do this by following the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The University of Kent's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/infocompliance/dp/contact.html>

Who can I contact for answers to pertinent questions about my research and my rights as a participant including who to contact in the event of a complaint?

Any questions concerning the research you have participated in can be directed to the lead researcher at jjwm2@kent.ac.uk

At what point can I withdraw my participation from this study?

You can withdraw at any time from this research without consequences, this includes before your participation, during or indeed after.

Appendix 5: University of Kent: Ethical Approval

Ethics Review Checklist for Research with Human Participants (KBS Student) v16

Dear Student,

The following checklist should be completed in line with the instructions contained on the [KBS Ethics Moodle](#) page (**Guest access password: Ethics**). Once the student has completed the checklist (Sections I, II, IV, Va, Vb and VI) it should be returned to your project supervisor (Principal Investigator).

The Principal Investigator (PI) must then complete sections III and VII and send an electronic copy of the completed and signed form in **Word format** to the KBS REAG Chair via kbsethicsadmin@kent.ac.uk. Data collection can begin once a letter of approval has been received directly from the REAG Chair. A written response will be provided within 10 working days on submission of the checklist by the Principal Investigator.

PLEASE NOTE if any questions in Section Va and Vb are answered 'yes', students and supervisors will need to complete the **full ethical review application form** that can be found on the [KBS Ethics Moodle](#) page. Additionally, if any responses in Section Vb are answered 'yes' you will also need to complete a **Data Protection Impact Assessment form (DPIA)** form which can also be found on the [KBS Ethics Moodle](#). A completed DPIA form should be sent by your supervisor to the School Information Custodian for assessment via g.a.tappenden@kent.ac.uk.

Section I: Project details	
Project title:	Exploring the motivation to act politically within leadership roles
Proposed data collection start date:	10th August 2019
Planned data collection end date:	1 st August 2021

Section II: Student details	
Student name:	Joel John Wark Montgomery
University of Kent e-mail:	jjwm2@kent.ac.uk
Programme title:	PhD Management
Module Code (taught programmes):	N/A
Module Convenor:	N/A

Student Declaration				
- I am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project. - I confirm that I will follow appropriate risk assessment procedures for projects involving fieldwork, lone working and/or data collection outside the UK. - I will abide by the procedures described in this form.				
Student signature:	Please Tick: ☒	By ticking this box I acknowledge I am electronically signing this application. Failure to tick this box will be considered an unsigned application and will be returned.	Date	03/07/2019

Section III: Principal Investigator Declaration				
Principal Investigator name:		Dr Madeleine Wyatt		
- I agree to comply, and will ensure that all researchers involved with the study comply with the University of Kent policies and appropriate professional ethical guidelines during the conduct of this research project - If any significant changes are made to the design of the research I will notify the KBS REAG and understand that further review may be required before I can proceed to implement the change(s) - I agree that I will notify the KBS REAG of any complaints I receive in connection with this research project - I am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project - I confirm that I will follow risk assessment procedures for projects involving fieldwork, lone working and/or data collection outside the UK - I will abide by the procedures described in this form				
Principal Investigator signature:	Please Tick: ☒	By ticking this box I acknowledge I am electronically signing this application. <i>Failure to tick this box will be considered an unsigned application and will be returned.</i>	Date	03/07/19

KBS REAG Chair Signature:	Please Tick: ☒	By ticking this box I acknowledge I am electronically signing and confirming the decision below.	Date	4 July 2019
KBS REAG Chair decision: (delete as applicable)	☒ Project approved ☐ KBS full review required ☐ Refer to University Research Governance Officer for advice ☐ Refer to KBS Health and Safety representative ☐ Not approved			
KBS REAG Chair Feedback:				

Section IV: Project Description
1. Summary of research (100 words maximum):
This research will be seeking to qualitatively investigate the concept of political will in both conventional political settings, where individual's job is to act politically, and in organisational contexts where acting politically can also be imperative for leadership effectiveness. To investigate this, interviews will be conducted with 60 voluntary participants.
2. Description of participants who will be recruited (50 words maximum):
There will be 60 participants recruited from two samples. The first will be individuals elected to office such as local councillors and the other individuals within a UK based organisation. They will be recruited via email. All participants will be voluntary and asked to provide their informed consent.
3. Description of the methods for recruiting participants, gathering data / information (e.g. interviews, questionnaire surveys etc.) and storing the data securely (100 words maximum):

The interviews will take approximately 60 minutes and will ask questions about their motivation to engage in political behaviour. Participants will also be provided with an information sheet before the study, informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage, and will be fully debriefed. Interview data will be stored securely on password protected university-approved systems. Only the PhD supervisor and myself will have access to the data.

4. Description of proposed location(s) and timings for data collection (e.g. day/evening/weekend) if the project involves collecting data from participants in person (e.g. interviews, focus groups) (50 words maximum):

Data collection will be via interviews and will be done face to face during working hours either at the University of Kent, or work environments such as public meeting rooms in official meeting rooms within the local council offices.

Section Va: Research Ethics Checklist		
<i>If you answered yes to any of the questions in this section, please complete a Full Ethical Review Application form (available via Moodle).</i>	YES	NO
5. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	☐	☒
6. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	☒
7. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	☐	☒
8. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	☐	☒
9. Is there a possibility that the safety of the researcher may be in question (e.g. international research; locally employed research assistants)?	☐	☒
10. Does the research involve participants carrying out any of the research activities themselves (i.e. acting as researchers as opposed to just being participants)?	☐	☒
11. Are there any possible conflicts of interest with the proposed research/research findings (e.g. Is the researcher working for the organisation under research or does the research/research findings cause a risk of harm to the participant(s) or the researcher(s) or the institution; is there any benefit for the researcher (e.g. financially)?	☐	☒
12. Does the research have the potential to radicalise people who are vulnerable to supporting terrorism or becoming terrorists themselves?	☐	☒
13. Will it be possible to link identities or information back to individual participants?	☐	☒
14. Following data collection via online, electronic (skype, hand held recorder/phone) or other visual/vocal methods where respondents may be identified, would the source recordings and data be retained after the project ends?	☐	☒
15. Will the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?	☐	☒
Section Vb: Research Ethics Checklist		
<i>If you answered yes to any of the questions in this section, please complete:</i>	YES	NO
• a Full Ethical Review Application form (available on Moodle) • a Data Protection Impact Assessment form (DPIA) (available on Moodle)		
16. Will any activities in this project involve participants who are vulnerable or unable to give informed written consent or in a dependent position (e.g. people under 18, people with learning difficulties, cognitive impairment, illiteracy, groups or people in care facilities)?	☐	☒
17. Will any research activities in this project involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, self-image, drug use, ethnicity, political activism, whistleblowing, redundancy, potentially illegal activities) which is recorded and stored?	☐	☒
18. Will participants be expected to take part in any research without their consent or knowledge at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places, or	☐	☒

within their working environment; ethnographic research), and / or will deception of any sort be used?		
19. Will the research involve the sharing of data or confidential information beyond the initial consent given?	☐	☒
20. Could participants be compelled to participate in your study? (e.g. an employer ordering them to participate in the study; employment status; family relations or other dependencies)	☐	☒
21. Does the project involve the collection of material that could be considered of a sensitive, personal, biographical, medical, psychological, social, physiological nature or biometric (interview recordings which are not going to be deleted at the end of the project etc.).	☐	☒

Section VI: Security-Sensitive Material Agreement	YES	NO
22. Does your research involve access to or use of security-sensitive material covered by the Terrorism Act? (The Terrorism Act (2006) outlaws the dissemination of records, statements and other documents that can be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts. By answering 'yes', you are registering your legitimate use of this material with the Research Ethics Advisory Group. In the event of a police investigation this registration will help you to demonstrate that your use of this material is legitimate and lawful.) Click here for more information.	☐	☒

Section VII: Identifying Potential Risks and Hazards – Project Supervisor to complete		
A. Fieldwork <i>See here for University guidance:</i> http://www.kent.ac.uk/safety/hs/pages/fieldwork/guidance_on_health_and_safety_in_fieldwork.pdf	YES	NO
23. Does this project involve fieldwork or meeting participants to collect data at a location other than the University of Kent? If 'NO', go straight to B (Overseas Travel).	☒	☐
24. Are the proposed location(s) for data collection already familiar to the researcher?	☒	☐
25. Are the proposed location(s) for data collection either a public space (e.g. shopping centre café, airport during opening hours) or work environment (e.g. office, shop, factory during operational hours) where the researcher can reasonably expect basic security measures to exist for visitors?	☒	☐
26. Will the researcher travel to the proposed location(s) using their own transport or a familiar public transport route?	☒	☐
27. Does the researcher need formal permission to collect data in the proposed location(s)?	☐	☒
B. Overseas Travel <i>See here for University guidance:</i> http://www.kent.ac.uk/safety/hs/pages/travel-work-overseas/travel-work-overseas.html	YES	NO
28. Does the data collection take place outside the UK? If 'NO', go straight to C (Lone Working).	☐	☒
29. Is the proposed data collection country also the researcher's home country?	☐	☐
30. Will data collection take place during a University vacation, as part of a visit home to see friends or family?	☐	☐

31. Will the researcher be resident overnight with family or friends during the data collection period?	☐	☐
C. Lone Working See link for guidance: http://www.kent.ac.uk/safety/hs/pages/loneworking/loneworkingperfstandard.html	YES	NO
32. Will the researcher conduct data collection alone at off campus locations, or on campus during evenings or weekends? If NO, go straight to D (Mitigation of Risk)	☒	☐
33. Will data collection take place in public during the normal operational hours of the proposed location(s)?	☒	☐
34. Will a friend or family member be aware of the researcher's location and proposed time of return during the data collection process?	☒	☐
35. Will the researcher be contactable by mobile phone or in person throughout the data collection process?	☒	☐
36. Will data collection take place in a public or work environment where the researcher will be observable throughout the data collection process?	☒	☐
D. Mitigation of Risk 37. If you have answered 'NO' to any questions (excluding questions 23, 28 and 32) in Section VII, please ensure that you provide full details of the proposed measures to mitigate each of the risks identified. Please complete the box with N/A if appropriate.		
Risks with be mitigated by ensuring that data is collected in a public space during normal operational hours and the researcher will be fully contactable during the collection of data, as well as ensuring family and friends are aware of the researchers location and know the proposed time of return after the data collection process.		
E. Insurance/Indemnity 38. Does UoK's insurer need to be notified about your project before insurance cover can be provided? Please give details below. <i>The majority of research carried out at UoK is covered automatically by existing policies, however, if your project entails more than usual risk or involves an overseas country in the developing world or where there is or has recently been conflict, please check with the Insurance Office that cover can be provided. Please give details below.</i> Please complete the box with N/A if appropriate.		
N/A		