

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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EXAMINING SHARED PERCEPTIONS AND AWARENESS OF GENDERED
ORGANISATIONAL POLITICAL CLIMATES IN MALE-DOMINATED
ORGANISATIONS: A POWER BASE MODEL

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
PhD THESIS
Academic Year 2016–2022

Supervisor: Professor David Denyer
Associate Supervisor: Professor Emma Parry
September 2022

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered, and this contributes to gender differences in building and maintaining power at work. This research utilises a systematic review to elicit mechanisms from the extant literature relating to organisational political climate (OPC) and power sources and their bases. Adopting semi-structured interviews and an abductive reasoning process, this research then examines how and why OPC and political behaviours are gendered by examining how power sources and bases are activated in two organisations (renamed EnergyCo and FinanceCo to ensure anonymity), where women make up less than 10% of senior positions at the time of undertaking the interviews. Examining how OPC and political behaviours are gendered within male-dominated organisations is important, as the gendered nature of these constructs is more likely to be heightened within this environment. The findings reveal that perceptions of OPC and political behaviours are gendered through the perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker, which is both gendered and political. The gendered nature of both OPC and political behaviours results in differential outcomes for men and women at work, reinforcing the gender power gap.

Keywords:

Organisational politics, political behaviour, gender, gendered organisation, systematic literature review

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OPC	Organisational Political Climate
POP	Perceptions of Organisational Politics
SLR	Systematic Literature Review

1. INTRODUCTION

This research explores how organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered and how this contributes to the persistent gender power gap in organisations, whereby men continue to dominate powerful positions in most corporations today (Gipson et al. 2017). Specifically, this research explores the relationship between gendered organisational political climates (OPCs) and gendered political behaviours. I was inspired to understand this relationship based on nearly two decades of practical experience working in human resources for large multinational organisations in different countries and operating contexts. Over the years, I consistently encountered women who would share the challenges they faced navigating organisational politics to advance at work. For example, women would describe being left out of decision-making processes and informal networking events or not having access to critical information to fulfil their role requirements. I have only worked in organisations throughout my career where women comprised 10%–15% of all senior executive leadership positions. My initial reaction to the challenges women shared was to assume they must lack the political skill needed to navigate organisational life, which might explain these organisations' persistent gender power gap. I hoped that in researching this topic, I might be able to find a solution to the challenges women encountered, such as providing women with political skill development training. However, researching the topic made it evident that organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered, contributing to the persistent gender power gap.

1.2 The Gender Power Gap

Over the last 50 years, there has been a significant increase in research dedicated to exploring the nature of organisational politics and political behaviour (Kimura 2015). Still, very few studies have examined the gendered nature of these phenomena (Kimura 2015). However, power, politics, and influence in organisations have remained intimately linked constructs for decades. The relationship between power and politics in organisations can be traced back to Weber's (1947) work on bureaucracy, which argues that the ideal organisation is bureaucratic, rational, and efficient. The rational view of organisations considers power as legitimate and relies on the use of sanctioned authority, and beyond

this, power is primarily viewed as illegitimate and disruptive (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012).

Conversely, the political perspective of organisations considers individuals as having limited knowledge of decisions and alternatives (Pratt, Pradies, and Lepisto 2013). This limitation means that individuals need to engage in influencing behaviours to access information, resources, and power (Treadway et al. 2013a). Therefore, organisations are not comprised of singular actors with singular goals but multiple actors with multiple goals (Pratt, Pradies, and Lepisto, 2013). Organisational politics is considered the exercise of power to negotiate different interests (Dhar 2011). Therefore, the very nature of organisations is political because they are comprised of individuals with different and often competing interests who engage in political behaviour to access and maintain power.

It is essential to consider a gender perspective when examining the nature of power in organisations; despite the gap in existing literature, these constructs are inextricably linked (Kanter 1987). The rational view of organisations adopts the perspective that they are 'sex-neutral machines' despite the masculine principles dominating them (Kanter 1987). Alternatively, Acker (1990) proposes that organisations are gendered through a continuing process of forming and conceptualising social structures. To illustrate, Acker (1990) argues that organisational hierarchies are inherently gendered as they are constructed to assume that those in paid employment are better suited to leadership roles. This is intrinsically disadvantageous to women who must take time off to have children or raise them. Financially, men gain from the existing organisational hierarchy as the opportunities they need for advancement depend on denying women the same opportunities (Acker 1999). Power relationships are often taken for granted because they are so deeply embedded in organisational structures and procedures (Buchanan and Badham 2014). Subordinate groups do not challenge the existing system because they have been socialised into accepting the status quo (Buchanan and Badham 2014). Therefore, understanding gender in organisations is fundamental to understanding both the pervasiveness of male power in organisations and the very nature of organisational politics and political behaviours, which are also gendered (Davey 2008).

Even in post-industrial societies, a power gap between men and women remains firmly entrenched in most organisations (Gipson et al. 2017). Men hold most leadership positions, and women mainly comprise support positions (Eagly and Fischer 2009). Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) maintain that masculine structures generally dominate organisations, making it difficult for women to succeed; despite the hypothesis that they have the social and cultural capital to succeed. While female participation in paid work has significantly increased, women remain in positions under men's control and supervision (Walby 1990). As a result, career mobility for women is limited despite their extensive qualifications and experience. This limitation is known as the glass ceiling effect, whereby invisible barriers exist in organisations that prevent career advancement for women (Acker 1999). Mann (1995) argues that the underrepresentation of women in top management is partly due to them being less successful in acquiring organisational power than their male counterparts. As men preserve power in organisations, exploring how this is achieved and maintained may help resolve the persisting gender inequalities in organisations.

Specifically, Acker (2006, p.443) defines inequality in organisations as “*the systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes; workplace decisions; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations.*” Acker argues that organisations have gendered processes, and race, class and gender intersect to produce and reproduce inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Specifically, Acker (2006, p.443) maintains that all organizations have inequality regimes, defined as “*loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organizations*”. Acker argues that the informal interactions employees engage in while undertaking work is one of the key organising processes that produce inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Furthermore, research by Healy et al. (2011) and Wright (2011) highlight the importance of informal interactions in reproducing inequalities and undermining formal processes that exist to ensure greater equity. This study supports the argument that inequality is created and reproduced through individuals' informal interactions. Specifically, this thesis argues that informal interactions, specifically as it

relates to political behaviour at work, create and re-create inequality despite the formal processes that might exist to prevent this. Supporting this argument, Nicolson (2015) maintains that power is embedded within social interactions in organisations, and those with power are aware of the need to maintain their influence. Gender relations at work are the site for power struggles and power-based conflicts. To succeed, women and men need to respond to or negotiate around the political rules set by leadership by engaging in political behaviour (Nicolson 2015). As leadership positions are primarily comprised of men, norms regarding informal political behaviour (often referred to as the political rules of an organisation) are established and maintained by men. Therefore, organisational politics can be considered a gendered phenomenon (Davey 2008).

Research investigating individual differences in political behaviour suggests that men are more involved in informal influence tactics than women, as men are more likely to accept and engage in organisational politics to their benefit (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Existing research has investigated individual differences in political behaviour but failed to explore whether these differences result from gendered organisational practices. Evidence supports the argument that women face more barriers and different types of barriers to career advancement than men (Lyness and Thompson 2000). For example, one of the key barriers women face is being excluded from traditionally male-dominated informal networks. According to Kanter's (1987) structural theory, men predominantly hold leadership positions in organisations, and this affects the interactions between men (the dominant group) and women (the token group). To maintain their dominant position, men exaggerate differences between themselves and women, resulting in negative consequences for women, including stereotyping, exclusion from informal networks, and performance pressures. Lyness and Thompson's (2000) research found that mentoring is more strongly related to success for men than for women, as organisational processes associated with career advancement, such as informal network support, may serve to keep power with men who make up the dominant group. Women's experience of the organisational culture differed from men's, as they reported fewer perceived career opportunities than their male counterparts.

Political behaviours, social networks and career success are inextricably linked with gender. Davey (2008) states that research into organisational politics is a valuable way

to investigate the gendered experiences of organisations. Exploring organisational politics and political behaviour from a gender perspective may explain why women do not engage in political behaviour and the associated consequences (Doldor, Anderson, and Vinnicombe 2013). The gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour is not well understood. This study will examine the relationship between power, politics, and gender in organisations to better understand the persistent gender gap in leadership positions. Specifically, the overarching research question that this research study addresses is: “How are organisational politics and political behaviour gendered, and how does this contribute to the gender power gap?” The following section will provide background literature on this research question.

1.3 Background to the Research

1.3.1 Power and Politics in Organisations

For decades, power, politics, and influence in organisations have remained intimately linked constructs (Buchanan and Badham 2014). According to Buchanan and Badham (2014), there are three perspectives of power in organisations, including power as the property of individuals expressed in terms of power sources and bases; power as the property of interpersonal relationships between organisational members; and power as an embedded property of the structures, procedures and norms of the organisation.

Initial research by Dhal (1957) and Emerson (1962) examining power as the property of individuals within organisations emphasised the role of power in the ability of actors to overcome resistance and bring about the outcomes they desire (Pratt, Pradies, and Lepisto, 2013). Emerson (1962) argues that power is something a person possesses, like a set of resources that can be accumulated (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Following this approach, Pfeffer (1992) identified critical sources of individual power such as controlling information, irreplaceable, network communication, and managerial power. This perspective considers politics to be power in action. An individual can accumulate power by strengthening both structural and individual sources, and the associated outcomes are then a function of power, and decisions reflect the powerful (Pratt, Pradies, and Lepisto 2013).

In terms of the perspective that power is the property of interpersonal relationships among organisational members, Crozier (1973) argues that power develops over time through relationships between individuals and groups in organisations. Therefore, power is considered a relational phenomenon in that it can only be accumulated, maintained, and lost in relationships with others (Buchanan and Badham 2014). French and Raven's (1959) research identified five bases of power: coercive, legitimate, expert, referent, and reward. Individuals can influence others through these bases, which are relational in that they depend on the perception of others, and this, in turn, affects the makeup of power within the larger organisation (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Buchanan and Badham (2014) argue that power's property and relational perspectives do not differentiate power-related tactics from other behaviour. Given how broad these tactics are, it could be argued that power tactics are used in most interactions.

Additionally, these perspectives do not account for the structural elements of power inherent in organisations. In comparison, structural perspectives consider how power is embedded within the organisation, such as culture, procedures, norms, and routines (Huczynski and Buchanan 2001). Supporting this perspective, Lukes (2005) identifies power ranging from visible or overt to covert or embedded forms. Power relations can become institutionalised as employees are socialised over time to accept the status quo (Lorenzi 2005). Given this, power considers the views and interests of some individuals or groups over others (Buchanan and Badham 2014). Power is widespread and inherent in organisations but exercised using norms and discourse. Therefore, an organisation's power distribution is jointly and simultaneously determined by the interaction of structure and behaviour (Brass and Burkhardt 1993).

Following a review of these three perspectives, this thesis considers power to be derived from informal relationships and to permeate individual interactions (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Power is subjective as it is subject to individual perceptions, which are formed through individual skill, manipulation and interpretation (Treadway et al. 2013a). Organisations can therefore be viewed as political entities in that they are composed of individuals with differing and often competing interests. Individuals engage in political behaviours to negotiate their various interests, which is why power and politics are inextricably linked constructs and an inevitable part of organisational life.

1.3.2 Political Behaviours: Power in Action

In his interpersonal influence theory, Goffman (1955) first proposed that individuals could use influence tactics to consciously manage other people's perceptions of them (Higgins, Judge, and Ferris 2003). Interpersonal power is the potential influence that one employee has over another. Individual task performance is insufficient to obtain power; instead, influence tactics can be used to enhance favourable performance ratings, get a job or gain a pay rise (Higgins, Judge, and Ferris 2003). Existing research examining the nature and use of interpersonal influence in organisations has highlighted the need to focus on the behaviours individuals use to advance themselves in organisations (Ferris and Treadway 2012).

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing recognition of the critical role political behaviours play in advancing individual and organisational outcomes (Kimura 2015). Political behaviour is described as aligning various interest groups and coalitions to enhance organisational power (Ferris and Treadway 2012). In a traditional matrix structure, coordination is achieved by using political tactics, such as influencing and negotiation. However, the ability to influence others at work is becoming increasingly important with the rise of flatter organisational structures, because traditional sources of power, often embedded in hierarchies, have been replaced with informal sources, such as influencing and negotiating (Zanzi and Neill 2017). Within these flatter organisational structures, political tactics can be considered a requirement of most roles.

Mintzberg (1983) states that power sources must be exercised in a politically skilful way (Brass and Burkhardt 1993). Pfeffer (1981) first introduced the term political skill, arguing that individuals must engage in political behaviours to secure power and success (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Similarly, Mintzberg (1983) considered political skill to be an effective use of power, which had several associated behaviours such as securing resources, information and organising alliances (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Therefore, it can be argued that political skill is a necessary component of power. However, Mintzberg (1983) maintained that political skill alone is insufficient, as individuals need both political will and political skill to acquire power in organisations (Treadway et al. 2013). Individuals engage in political behaviour based on what they consider most

important; therefore, political behaviour comprises both the willingness to engage and the skills needed to engage effectively (Kapoutsis et al. 2017).

Following the initial introduction to political skill by Pfeffer (1981), there was little mention of it in the literature for a couple of decades until Ferris et al. (2005) created the Political Skill Inventory (PSI). The PSI has four underlying dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. Recent research has examined how political skill enhances relationship-building related to networks in organisations (Kimura 2015). The network perspective of organisations maintains that individuals are embedded within a network of relationships that provide access to resources and help explain power relations in organisations (Brass, Butterfield, and Skaggs 1998). Some scholars have argued that political skill overlaps with other social competencies such as interpersonal acumen, social intelligence, or emotional intelligence; however, research findings only reflect modest-sized relationships, reinforcing the view that political skill is an independent construct (Ferris et al. 2005).

1.3.3 Gender, Power, and Politics in Organisations

Scholars investigating the gender gap in leadership positions primarily examine why women encounter obstacles to being promoted despite earning more educational degrees and increasing participation in the labour force (Rink et al. 2019). Eagly and Fischer (2009) state that, even in post-industrial societies, a power gap exists between men and women in most organisations. Men still make up the majority of leadership positions, and women continue to take up positions of support (Eagly and Fischer 2009).

Further, Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) maintain that masculine structures generally dominate organisations, making it difficult for white women to succeed; despite the hypothesis that they have the right social and cultural capital to succeed. Mann (1995) argues that the underrepresentation of women in top management is partly due to them being less successful in acquiring organisational power than their male counterparts (Buchanan and Badham 2008). As men continue to have substantial power bases in organisations, exploring how this is achieved and maintained helps resolve the persisting gender inequalities.

Research supports the notion that there are individual differences in power acquisition from a gender perspective. In organisations, power is embedded in social interactions; those with power know the need to maintain their influence (Nicolson 2015). This subjective/interactive perspective of organisations considers the gendered meaning of workplace interactions by viewing the relationship between men and women within the broader context of society (Nicolson 2015). This view finds that gender relations are the site for power struggles and power based conflicts in organisations. To succeed, women and men need to respond to or negotiate the political rules set by leadership (Nicolson 2015). As leadership positions are primarily comprised of men, it can be argued that norms regarding political behaviour (often referred to as the political rules of an organisation) are established and maintained by men (Davey 2008). Therefore, politics in organisations can be considered gendered (Doldor, Anderson, and Vinnicombe 2013).

This thesis explores the relationship between organisational politics, political behaviours, and gender in organisations. In doing so, this research will examine how political environments shape political skill and motivation to engage in organisational politics and the associated consequences. Additionally, examining the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours will provide insight into women's lack of engagement in the political aspects of organisational life and the associated outcomes. These aims will advance the theoretical and empirical understanding of the combined and largely unexplored literature areas, including organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender.

The central theme of this thesis is to make a case for how organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered. In doing so, this research will challenge the rational perspectives of organisations, arguing that politics and power are inherent in organisational life. Power develops from an accumulation of resources throughout a person's career (Ragins and Sundstrom 1989). Therefore, the development of power parallels the development of a person's career – known as the path to power hypothesis. Research by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) reveals a consistent difference favouring men with access and development of power in organisations. They suggest that the processes involved in power development differ for men and women as the path to power for men resembles the traditional career ladder. For women, it resembles more of an obstacle

course. Therefore, this thesis aims to examine how organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered and serve to limit women's access to power in organisations.

The following section will introduce the overall structure of the research study.

1.4 Structure of the research

Figure 1-1 Overall Structure of the Research Study below introduces the overall structure of the research. The following section will provide a brief outline of the development of each stage of the study.

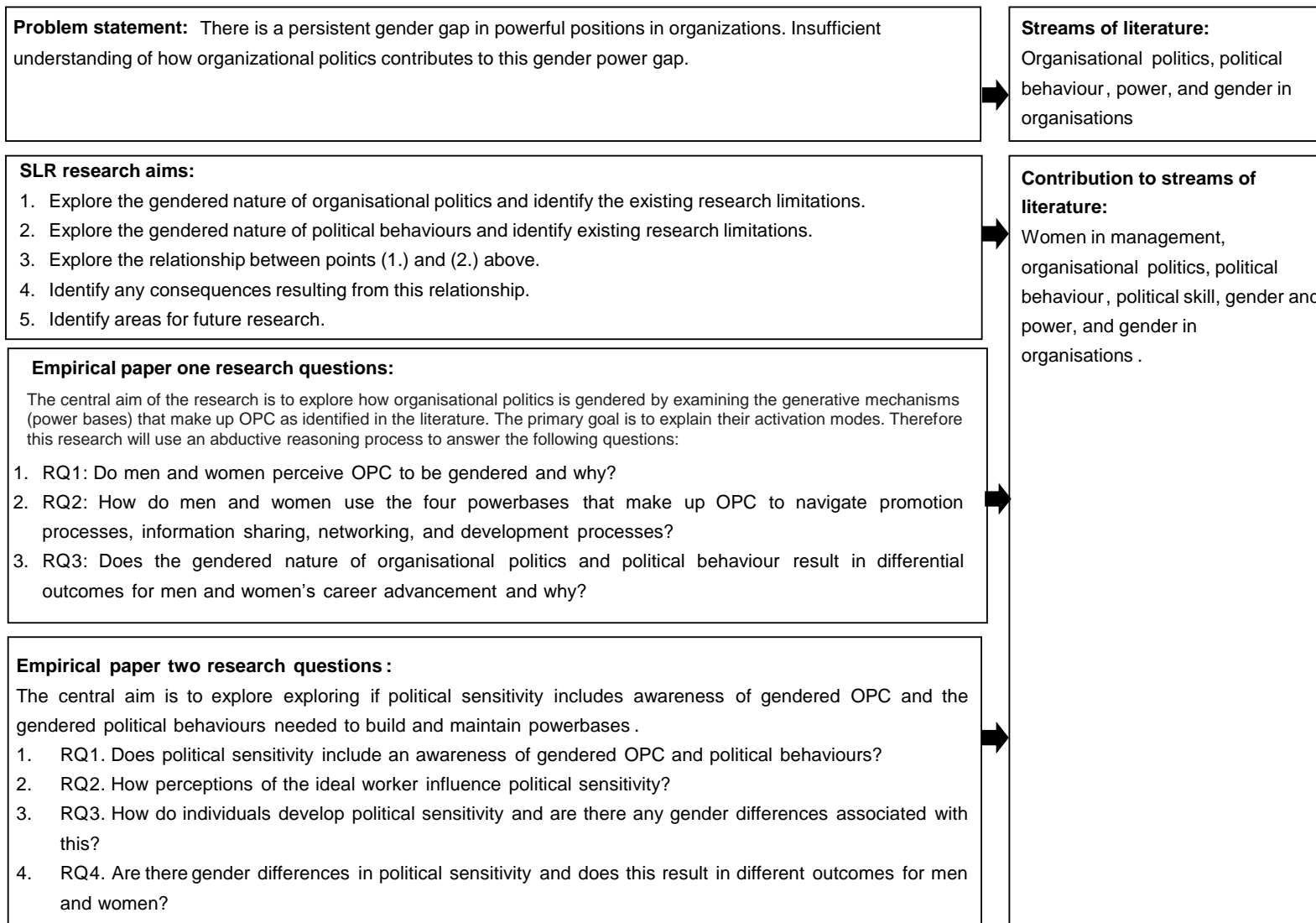


Figure 1-1 Overall Structure of the Research Study

1.4.1 Scoping Study Outcomes

Since the 1960s, organisational politics has been featured in management studies; however, research findings remain fragmented, with little consensus on how to define the construct (Kimura 2015). While the broad nature of research into organisational politics reflects an emerging field, it is essential to take stock of the literature and identify the critical research gaps to inform future research efforts.

Following an initial scoping study examining the existing literature domains, this thesis is rooted in the literature on power in organisations, focusing on organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender in organisations. Figure 1-1 illustrates the key literature domains relevant to this thesis, where this thesis is positioned to make an academic contribution. Research examining the nature of organisational politics has yet to fully account for the relationship between perceptions of organisational politics and political behaviour. Kimura (2015) reviewed existing research on political skill and maintains that there is limited understanding of why and how political skill affects certain individual and organisational outcomes. It is also unclear how the political will and political skill framework shape individual motivation to engage in political behaviours and how this shapes the nature of organisational politics. This is particularly relevant when considering the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours. Hall-Taylor (2002), Davey (2008a), and Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013) argue that organisational politics is a gendered phenomenon, as engaging in politics is considered 'doing gender' by women as it represents practices that embed gender inequalities. Future research needs to explore the relationship between organisational politics, political will and political skill from a gender perspective.

While men use informal networks to secure promotions, women tend to rely on a formal process to advance their careers, which is thought to contribute to women's lack of advancement into senior management positions (Lyness and Thompson 2000). This difference in the use of networks may result from different perceptions of organisational networks; individuals need to know where to exercise their political

skills, which requires knowing who is connected to whom. The systematic literature review (SLR) conducted as part of this study helps understand the relationship between organisational politics, political behaviours, and gender in organisations to provide an opportunity to account for the integrated nature of these constructs, which is both timely and relevant.

1.4.2 Chapter 2: Systematic Literature Review (Paper 1)

Conducting an SLR of the relevant literature related to organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender in organisations proved challenging because mainstream approaches to studying organisational politics largely consider politics a gender-free phenomenon (Doldor, Anderson, and Vinnicombe 2013). Therefore, there is little overlap between the three literature domains. Given these challenges, the initial literature search was extensive and found 14,552 journal articles, with an average of 3,638 per database. With duplicates removed and articles reviewed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Chapter 2, the final number of articles included in the SLR was 326. The aims associated with reviewing this literature included:

1. Explore the gendered nature of organisational politics and identify the existing research limitations.
2. Explore the gendered nature of political behaviours and identify existing research limitations.
3. Explore the relationship between points (1) and (2) above.
4. Identify any consequences resulting from this relationship.
5. Identify areas for future research.

1.4.3 Systematic Literature Review

The SLR had three principal findings. First, this review supported the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours. Second, the current perceptions of organisational politics (POP) conceptualisations and measures have several important limitations, which can be addressed by adopting the organisational

political climate (OPC) framework outlined by Landells and Albrecht (2013). Third, a gendered OPC framework was outlined, which provides the means to explore the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of power bases in organisations and the gendered practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases. This framework provides the means to explore the gendered nature of organisational politics. It connects these perceptions to individual behaviour and differential outcomes related to building and maintaining organisational power. Therefore, this research adopts an abductive reasoning process, drawing on existing literature, this study has identified the generative mechanisms (power bases), that make up OPC and therefore the research seeks to explain their activation modes.

1.4.4 Chapter 3: Empirical Study 1 (Paper 2)

The SLR identified the need to investigate further the shared perceptions of organisational politics, how gendered political behaviours are used to build power bases in organisations, and the differential outcomes for men and women using the OPC model. Therefore, the central aim of this research was to examine how and why organisational politics is gendered. Specifically, this research addressed the following questions:

- Research question 1: Do men and women perceive OPC as gendered and why?
- Research question 2: How do men and women use the four power bases that make up OPC to navigate promotion processes, information sharing, networking, and development processes?
- Research question 3: Does the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour result in differential outcomes for men's and women's career advancement, and why?

Examining how OPC and political behaviours are gendered within a male-dominated environment is important, as the gendered nature of these constructs is more likely to be heightened within this environment. Specifically, the two organisations (renamed EnergyCo and FinanceCo to ensure anonymity) were selected to

participate in the study as they are male-dominated with women making up less than 10% of senior positions at the time of undertaking the interviews.

For more detail on the choice of male dominated organisations, please see pages 127, 128, 180, 214, 215, 246 and 308 of this thesis.

The study utilised semi-structured interviews, with a sample comprising 12 non-managerial, 12 managerial, and 12 senior leadership participants identified from two organisations, as outlined in Table 3, resulting in 72 participants. The study identified how OPC is gendered: gendered perceptions of informal processes, gendered political behaviours related to building and maintaining four power bases, and the associated gender differences in career outcomes. The findings from this research assume a certain level of awareness of gendered OPC. However, it can be argued that individual sensitivity to the gendered nature of OPC is a precursor to effectively navigating these environments. Consequently, Study 2 was designed to address how individuals build and maintain their sensitivity to gendered organisational politics and political behaviour.

1.4.5 Chapter 4: Empirical Study 2 (Paper 3)

To account for the persistent gender gap in power, Study 2 examined individual political sensitivity, including an awareness of gendered organisational political climates and engagement in the gendered political behaviours used to build and maintain power bases. Specifically, Study 2 had the following research objectives:

- Research question 1: Does political sensitivity include an awareness of gendered OPC and political behaviours?
- Research question 2: How do perceptions of the ideal worker influence political sensitivity?
- Research question 3: How do individuals develop political sensitivity?
- Research question 4: Are there gender differences in outcomes associated with political sensitivity?

Study 2 utilised the same data as study 1. This included the same semi-structured interviews, with a sample comprising 12 non-managerial, 12 managerial, and 12 senior leadership participants identified from two organisations, resulting in 72 participants. This study makes several significant contributions to gender, politics, and power in organisations. First, it examines how individuals become aware of organisational politics and engage in gendered political behaviours. Second, in terms of theoretical contributions, this study supports Acker's (1990) gendered theory of organisations and extends it by identifying that gendered political behaviours are one of the key homosocial practices that men engage in, limiting women's ability to build and maintain their power bases. Third, one of the critical contributions of this study includes finding that women encounter a political double bind, whereby engaging in gendered political behaviours may reduce their likability and limit opportunities to acquire power in the way men do. Fourth, this research identified four subcategories of the awareness–engagement link, which accounts for individual differences in awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. Finally, this study found that awareness of gendered political practices increased with their years of experience in organisations. These findings indicate the challenges women encounter engaging in the required political behaviours to build and maintain power, which may further answer the practical question of why there are so few women in powerful positions in organisations.

1.4.6 Chapter 5: Overall Discussion

Chapter 5 provides a detailed overview of this thesis's essential findings and contributions from the SLR, and Papers 1 and 2. This chapter provides an overall discussion that presents the insights and combined findings of the SLR and the empirical research studies. This chapter concludes by summarising the overall theoretical contributions of the study.

1.4.7 Chapter 6: Overall Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

The thesis concludes with Chapter 6, which summarises the overall conclusions, limitations, and research agenda. The research agenda includes recommendations related to the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications identified in the study.

1.5 Philosophical Orientation

The chosen research methodology in any study is informed by the philosophical position which underpins the research design and the claims about the knowledge generated from this research design (Brinkmann 2017). While research is largely based on the rational development of explanations and theories about the world, critical realism does not reject the idea of cause-and-effect relationships; instead, it offers a more nuanced understanding by examining patterns of events and manifestations of real structures (Collier 1997). Critical realism combines a realist ontology (the world contains properties that exist independently of us) with a constructivist epistemology, as knowledge is constructed through human activities (Brinkmann 2017). The central argument of critical realism is that meanings are a real force in social life that can operate beyond human awareness. The aim is to understand the underlying mechanisms within the social world (Brinkmann 2017).

The research philosophy for this design follows that of critical realism. Specifically, this research will explore and identify patterns of subjective meanings and individual experiences related to the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour in organisations (Collier 1997). The aim is to explain why and how individuals engage in organisational politics and political behaviour, considering the gendered nature of both constructs. This perspective is particularly relevant to this research as it accounts for subjective meanings and contextual factors that shape those meanings (Collier 1997). The central argument of critical realism is that meanings are a real force in social life that can operate beyond human awareness. The aim is to understand the underlying mechanisms within the social world (Brinkmann 2017).

This research will adopt a critical realist perspective for several reasons. First, typical positivist and empiricist approaches to research often disregard the broader context and how this shapes the research phenomena (Brinkmann 2017). Consequently, research findings are limited to describing but not explaining empirical events. A critical realist perspective is particularly relevant to this research as it accounts for subjective meanings and contextual factors that shape those meanings (Collier 1997). This research aims to understand the relationship between gendered organisational politics and individual political behaviours. Adopting a critical realist perspective will help explain why and how individuals engage in organisational politics and political behaviour, considering the gendered nature of both constructs.

Second, in contrast to a positivist ontology, which equates reality to a set of recordable events, or a constructivist approach, which reduces ontology to discourse, critical realists adopt a stratified ontology that separates the empirical from the actual and the real (Edwards et al. 2014). Reality is created across three domains, as outlined in Table 1-1 The Three Domains of Critical Realism. The three domains in question include the empirical (including what we perceive to be real), actual (including the events that occur in space and time that might be different from what we perceive), and real (including mechanisms and structures that generate the world). Examining the actual properties of gendered organisational politics in different contexts will further our understanding of the mechanisms that make up political environments and answer the question of how organisational politics is gendered.

Table 1-1 The Three Domains of Critical Realism

Domain	Research Questions
Empirical: including what we perceive to be real.	Does the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour result in differential outcomes for men and women?

Actual: including the events that occur in space and time that might differ from what we perceive.	How are organisational politics and political behaviour gendered?
Real: including mechanisms and structures that generate the world.	How and why do men and women engage in gendered political behaviours?

Following this philosophical orientation, this research aims to contribute to the current understanding of how organisational politics is gendered and why men and women have different paths to power in organisations.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Systematic Literature Review

This thesis consists of one systematic literature review (SLR), followed by two empirical research studies. The process of conducting an SLR, as outlined by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003), is beneficial as it identifies key research themes and developmental patterns and the specific areas for future research. Given the complexity of investigating organisational politics, political behaviours, and gender in organisations, the SLR methodology is proposed.

There are three benefits to conducting an SLR on organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender in organisations. Firstly, the review identifies existing research on organisational politics and political behaviours regarding the political will–political skill relationship. This highlights the current research findings and gaps in the relationship between organisational politics and political behaviours. The review accounts for why individuals engage in political behaviour at work and what they do that makes them successful. Secondly, the review investigates the nature of political behaviours and individual motivation to engage in them, which provides an account of gender differences in political behaviour as well as the associated consequences of this. Lastly, the SLR examines the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours and associated consequences. The SLR will integrate existing literature from two largely separate domains:

organisational politics/political behaviour and gender in organisations, which will inform future related theoretical perspectives and empirical research.

1.6.2 Empirical Research Studies

Gender in organisations and organisational politics studies are dominated by positivist and interpretivist traditions (Bhaskar, 1978). The critical realism epistemological framework, developed by Roy Bhaskar (1978), is a helpful framework for investigating how OPC and political behaviours are gendered and how individuals become aware of gendered OPC and engage in gendered political behaviours. Therefore, the research philosophy underpinning the research design follows that of critical realism. Critical realism holds that the world exists independently of people's perceptions; however, subjective interpretations influence how it is perceived and experienced (Edwards et al. 2014). The central argument of critical realism is that meanings are a real force in social life that can operate beyond human awareness. Therefore, the aim is to understand the underlying mechanisms within the social world (Brinkmann 2017).

Critical realism explores the structures, generative mechanisms, and contextual conditions responsible for patterns of observed events. Based on observed contexts and events (empirical level), some researchers have investigated the deeper causal mechanisms and structures that generate these events (Brannan et al., 2017). This research will follow an abductive approach drawing on Bhaskar's (1998) four steps for abduction. Specifically, the first step is to describe the events of the phenomenon of interest; the second step is to reproductively explain the mechanisms; the third step is to eliminate false hypotheses; and finally, the fourth step is to correctly identify the mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1998). This study follows this approach as the research aims to explain how the gender power gap persists. Therefore, the causal explanation for the gender power gap will be derived from the discovery of how the mechanisms, practices and outcomes that give rise to the gender power gap and interact to generate different paths to power for men and women.

In contrast to a positivist ontology, which equates reality to a set of recordable events, or a constructivist approach, which reduces ontology to discourse, critical realists adopt a stratified ontology that separates the empirical from the actual and the real (Edwards et al. 2014). Reality is then created across three domains these include empirical (including what we perceive to be real), actual (including the events that occur in space and time that might be different from what we perceive), and real (including mechanisms and structures that generate the world).

The real domain includes generative mechanisms and structures with causal powers, which behave in particular ways under certain conditions (Bhaskar, 1978). The activation and interaction of causal powers generate events that compose the actual domain conditions (Bhaskar, 1978). Mechanisms include social mechanisms, that is, a sequence of social events and processes (Gross 2009). Empirical Study 1 seeks to understand the mechanisms that generate gendered OPC and political behaviour. Empirical Study 2 seeks to understand the generative mechanisms that generate political sensitivity to explain the relationship between gendered organisational politics and political behaviour (cause) and the gender power gap in organisations (effect). Specifically, this study aims to explore how individual awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviour in organisations functions to create differential outcomes for men and women in building and maintaining their power bases. Separating mechanisms, practices, and outcomes is essential for understanding the relationship between gendered political contexts, political behaviour and how individuals build and maintain power at work. While mechanisms exist independently of what is observed, specific circumstances and interactions can trigger the activation of the causal power of mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1978).

Consequently, the activation and effects of mechanisms vary depending on the context. Therefore, this thesis argues that it is more likely that organisational politics will be gendered—through the gendered political behaviours individuals engage in to build and maintain their power bases—within male-dominated environments. In

less male-dominated environments, these mechanisms still exist, but they may not contribute to the gender power gap in the same way—as the effects may differ.

Therefore, given the emphasis on context in examining shared perceptions of gender in organisational politics, this research adopts a critical realist perspective. Furthermore, each empirical paper outlines a further justification for adopting this philosophical perspective. Adopting this approach ensures both empirical studies will account for subjective meanings and the contextual factors that shape those meanings (Collier 1994).

The methodological aim of both empirical studies is to elicit contextual rich data about gender in organisational politics. While critical realism does not specify a particular methodological approach, both empirical papers used Edmondson's (2014) approach to methodological fit. Specifically, as both studies are exploratory, the methodology relies on a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews to explore the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. These domains are an emerging field of interest with developing theoretical and empirical literature and an appropriate exploratory approach. Methodological fit refers to the internal consistency of the research as it relates to the research question, aims, design, and theoretical contribution (Edmondson and McManus, 2007).

Broadly Edmondson and McManus (2007) outline three types of fit based on the state of prior research and theory, including nascent, intermediate, and mature. Following this framework, this study's research fit is nascent for several reasons. First, the research follows an open-ended enquiry into the gendered nature of politics in organisations. Second, the research will adopt a qualitative approach and examine the data for meaning. Mainstream approaches to studying organisational politics largely consider politics a gender-free phenomenon (Doldor et al. 2013). Buchanan (2008) states that the nature and significance of gender differences in organisational politics are poorly understood, and the subtle and complex nature of these differences lends itself to qualitative research. Third, in terms of data collection, the research will rely on semi-structured interviews, as gendered OPC and political

behaviour are relatively new constructs, with no formal measures for gathering data (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Fourth, the goal of the data analysis undertaken in this study is to identify patterns; therefore, this study uses thematic content analysis to code the data for evidence of the constructs (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Finally, in doing so, this study aims to contribute to existing theoretical perspectives on organisational politics and gender in organisations by demonstrating how organisational politics is a gendered phenomenon and enabling future empirical research to explore these issues (Edmondson and McManus, 2007).

Following Edmondson's (2014) approach to methodological fit, this study is exploratory; therefore, the methodology relies on a qualitative approach. Buchanan (2008) recommends a qualitative research methodology for researching politics in organisations as it accounts for context and individual experiences. The existing positivist research on organisational politics is fairly removed from managers' day-to-day experience, as researchers appear to not speak with research participants to discover how they perceive, use and are affected by political behaviour (Buchanan and Badham 2014). Both empirical studies utilise qualitative research methods, specifically semi-structured in-depth interviews, to capture participant meaning related to individual experiences of organisational politics and gender in organisations (Merriam 2009). A qualitative approach provides the flexibility needed to account for the contextual factors that shape gender and politics at work perceptions. Therefore, this research adopts a critical realist perspective, using a qualitative methodology with semi-structured interviews to address the overarching research question: "How are organisational politics and political behaviour gendered, and how does this contribute to the gender power gap?"

Ethical approval for both empirical studies was sought and obtained from Cranfield University. Both the SLR, as outlined in Chapter 2, and the two empirical studies summarised in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 provide a detailed overview of the philosophical orientation and research design related to each of these papers.

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2 . GENDERED ORGANISATIONAL POLITICAL CLIMATE FRAMEWORK: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a gendered organisational political climate framework based on a systematic review of the literature on organisational politics and gender in organisations. Although organisational politics is an emerging field of research, many theoretical and empirical studies have been conducted using the Perceptions of Organisational Politics (POP) model developed by Ferris and Kacmar (1989), which has several limitations. A critical examination of previous empirical studies that draw on the POP framework reveals that existing approaches fail to account for the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours and the associated differential outcomes for men and women. The Organisational Political Climate (OPC) framework addresses the limitations of the POP model and provides the means for investigating the gendered nature of political behaviours. Using the OPC framework, this review identified four major themes: (a) gender differences in political will and differential access to positional power; (b) gendered political skill and differential outcomes in personal power; (c) gendered barriers to network access and differential outcomes in connection power; and (d) political sensitivity and gender differences in informational power. These findings are presented in a gendered OPC framework, which can be used to examine gender in organisational politics further. In addition, several areas for future research are proposed, which will further the empirical and theoretical understanding of organisational politics and gender in organisations.

Keywords:

Organisational politics, political behaviour, gender, gendered organisation, systematic literature review

2.1 Introduction: Power, Politics and Gender in Organisations

Women remain systemically and systematically excluded from full participation in organisations because of gendered power relations (Nicolson 2015). This power is embedded within the social interactions that make up political environments (Buchanan and Badham 1999). Powerful individuals, the majority of which tend to be men, are aware of the need to maintain their influence (Davey 2008a). Consequently, they engage in gendered political behaviours and often disadvantage those in less powerful positions (Nicolson 2015). Accounting for the lack of women in leadership requires examining the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. Specifically, this includes an examination of the gendered nature of power dynamics in organisations and considering how these dynamics develop and maintain inequality.

Acker (1990) argues that gender acts as an inescapable force that shapes processes and systems in organisations, perpetuating gender inequality. Acker (2006, p.443) defines inequality in organisations as *“the systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes; workplace decisions; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations.”* Race, class, and gender intersect to produce and reproduce inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Specifically, Acker (2006, p.443) maintains that all organizations have inequality regimes which are *“loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organizations”*. For Acker (2006), inequality regimes have six components, including *“bases of inequality, the shape and degree of inequality, organizing processes that create and recreate inequalities, the invisibility of inequalities, the legitimacy of inequalities, and the controls and compliance that prevent protest against inequalities”* (pp.44-454). Inequality results in systematic disparities in employees' power and control over resources, decision-making processes, promotion and development opportunities, remuneration and

rewards, and workplace relations (Healy et al., 2017). Additionally, in outlining how inequality regimes maintain race, class, and gender-based inequality in organisations, Acker (2017) argues that the informal gendered interactions people engage in while undertaking work are one of the key organizing processes that produces inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Additionally, research by Healy et al. (2011) and Wright (2011) find that informal interactions reproduce inequalities and undermine formal processes that exist to ensure greater equity.

This study supports this argument, as it aims to explore how inequality is created and reproduced through the informal gendered political interactions individuals engage in to build and maintain power (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Individual and group self-serving interests are the building blocks for organising activity and maintaining power in organisations. In following a political theory of organisations, March and Simon (1958) account for decision-making in organisations as the process of conflict, power struggles and consensus-building. Decisions are made under bounded rationality, whereby those in powerful positions, which tend to be dominated by men, control the decision-making process through political behaviour.

Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) maintain that masculine structures dominate organisations, making it difficult for women to succeed. Hall-Taylor (2002), Davey (2008a), and Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013) argue that organisational politics is gendered, as organisational structures bias power in favour of men. The gendered nature of power and political behaviour makes it harder for women to advance and easier for men to acquire power (Acker 1999a). Closing the gender gap in leadership positions requires understanding the gendered nature of political behaviours and the associated differential outcomes for men and women.

This paper presents key findings from a systematic review, which seeks to understand the relationship between organisational politics and gender in organisations. This review makes several significant contributions. Firstly, the review provides a detailed account of the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. Most of the theoretical and empirical studies on organisational

politics consider the construct to be a gender-free phenomenon; however, there is a growing body of research, including Hall-Taylor (2002), Davey (2008), and Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), that has examined the gendered nature of the construct. Through a detailed examination of the theoretical and empirical literature on organisational politics and gender in organisations, this review adds to the existing literature by providing a detailed account of gendered organisational politics and why this creates differential outcomes for women and men at work. Secondly, although organisational politics is an emerging field of research, many theoretical and empirical studies have been conducted using the Perceptions of Organisational Politics (POP) model developed by Ferris and Kacmar (1989), which has several limitations. Drawing on the Organisational Political Climate (OPC) framework, this review provides a revised framework for examining the gendered nature of OPC. The organisational politics literature is somewhat fragmented across several domains, including power, social networks, coalitions, decision-making, top-management teams and social influence tactics (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Each domain offers a different and independent perspective of organisational politics. Given the broad range of separate theories of organisational politics, there remains a lack of consensus regarding the nature of the construct (Drory and Romm 1990; Drory and Vigoda 2000; Ferris et al. 2002; Landells and Albrecht 2013). This review seeks to understand the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour in organisations and offers a gendered OPC framework for understanding these largely separate domains. Lastly, the gendered OPC framework provides a model for future research investigating gender in organisational politics. Several areas for future research are outlined, which will further empirical and theoretical efforts to understand organisational politics and gender in organisations.

The review is structured as follows. First, it provides an overview of the broader foundational empirical and theoretical literature on organisational politics and gender in organisations. Next, the existing POP framework and its limitations are outlined, and an alternative OPC framework is proposed. The findings are presented following an overview of the review methodology, and a gendered OPC framework is

developed and presented in the discussion section. Finally, the review concludes with an overview of the critical contributions and opportunities for future research.

2.2 Foundational Literature

2.2.1 Organisational Politics: Limitations of POP

Research investigating organisational politics has primarily followed the influential work undertaken by Ferris et al. (1989), which proposes a causal model of POP (Kimura 2013). This approach defines POP as *“an individual’s attribution to the behaviour of self-serving intent, and it is 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 et al. 2000, p.90). The first POP scale (POPS) was developed by Ferris and Kacmar (1989) and has since been refined into a much larger pool of items (Miller, Rutherford and Kolodinsky 2008). However, current research on POP has predominantly relied on the POP scale, which is now considered the default framework for understanding organisational politics.

The POP scale has validated the POP model, which identifies a generalisable set of causal links between antecedents, political behaviours and consequences (Kimura 2013). Antecedents include personal factors, such as personality, attitudes, ethnicity, gender, age, and situational factors, such as organisational level and job level (Ely and Padavic 2007). Political behaviours include descriptions of how politics is played, tactics used, and how common they are (Buchanan 1999). In terms of consequences, research to date has identified a range of psychological, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes using the POP scale (Ely and Padavic 2007). An extensive review of POP conducted by Ferris et al. (2002) concluded that most research had been negatively framed through POP.

Several research papers, such as Zani and O’Neill (2001), Ammeter et al. (2002), Ellen et al. (2013), Doldor (2017), and Yates and Hartley (2021), have identified positive outcomes associated with political skill. Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) note

that one of the failings of research in the organisational politics field is that it tends to view political behaviour as negative. The common perspective is that political behaviour is dysfunctional and illegitimate (Yates and Hartley, 2021). This negative perspective has dominated theoretical approaches and empirical assessments like the POP scale (Fedor and Maslyn, (2002). The scale draws on a negative definition of POP; the associated measures and research findings reflect this (Schmitt et al. 2002). Future research, therefore, needs to provide a more comprehensive account of the related outcomes of organisational politics by accounting for both the positive and negative effects (Bedi and Schat, 2013).

Despite the widespread use of the POP scale, the measure has several limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the POP model fails to account for contextual factors fully. Miller, Rutherford and Kolodinsky (2008) propose that future research needs to identify why individuals view their organisations as politically charged and why certain contextual factors are associated with specific outcomes. While the POP model has been widely examined and empirically tested, it has failed to account for perceived politics in the overall conceptualisation of the model (Valle and Perrewé 2000). One of the fundamental assumptions of this model is that POP is directly related to political behaviours. However, there is no research investigating if this relationship exists or what the exact nature of this relationship is (Valle and Perrewé 2000). Future research needs to explore the relationship between perceptions of political environments and political behaviour.

Secondly, the current POP framework and measure lack an integrated theoretical approach. Specifically, the literature on organisational politics is moderately fragmented across several domains, including power, social networks, coalitions, decision-making, top-management teams and social influence tactics (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Each domain offers a different and often independent perspective of organisational politics. There is limited research that aims to combine several or all these fields. Given the broad range of largely independent theories of organisational politics, there remains a lack of consensus regarding the construct

definition (Drory and Romm 1990; Drory and Vigoda 2000; Ferris et al. 2002; Landells and Albrecht 2013). The existing literature is relatively fragmented, with several perspectives not combining to form a comprehensive '*theory of organisational politics*' (Buchanan 2008). This is further supported by Ferris et al. (2002), who conclude that existing research investigating POP has yielded conflicting findings regarding the dimensionality of the POP construct. These various conceptualisations of organisational politics make it difficult to validate one measure of the construct over another (Kacmar and Baron 1999). Even though it may be argued that the POP model provides a coherent framework for researching organisational politics, this model tends to focus on antecedents and outcomes of political behaviour, limiting current research findings to understanding *what politics does* rather than *what politics is*. While organisational politics has received increased research attention over the last three decades, it remains a relatively under-theorised field. Therefore, future research should consider developing a more comprehensive theoretical framework of organisational politics.

The third key challenge researchers face with the POP measure is the different levels of analysis (Schmitt et al. 2002). Political behaviours are an ongoing response to specific contexts. Organisations are made up of individuals who work within dyads, groups, and the organisation itself. Therefore, the goal is to match the levels of analysis with the levels of inference about the organisational phenomenon of interest (Schmitt et al. 2002). POP proposes to measure organisational level attributes, but existing research typically measures individual perceptions of political behaviour. While political behaviours and influence tactics may occur at the level of the individual, POP is formed through an interaction of individual, dyad, group and organisational levels, which therefore relies on accurate modelling to research these multi-level factors (Schmitt et al. 2002). Maslyn and Fedor (1998) found that individuals distinguish between group and organisational level politics and that this results in different subsequent behaviours. Researchers investigating organisational level effects have avoided multi-level issues by measuring individual POP, which reduces an organisational level of phenomena to an individual level. Ferris et al.

(2002) state that this approach neglects cross-level differences and can result in threats to statistical conclusion validity. Organisational politics is inherently multi-level, and future research must fully account for the relationship between political environments and political behaviours (Buchanan 2008).

These three limitations are significant when considering the gendered nature of organisational politics. First, the POP framework and measure provide very few empirical or theoretical insights into the gendered nature of organisational politics. For example, a review of POP literature by Ferris et al. (2002) concluded that research investigating gender differences as they relate to POP is inconclusive and does little to further the current understanding of power dynamics and gender differences in organisations. This may be a result of the three issues underpinning POP. As Krackhardt (1990) states, it is essential not to ignore critical contextual and structural factors that give some individuals power and privilege over others. Gendered organisational environments ensure that women do not benefit from organisational politics as men do because they do not have the same access to power bases within organisations (Mann 1995). Existing studies on POP and gender have failed to account for this. The POP framework provides a limited understanding of power dynamics related to organisational politics (Ferris, Harrell-Cook and Dulebohn 2000). It also does not provide a theoretical basis for connecting gender and power dynamics with organisational politics. As Pfeffer (1981) states, it is not enough to have power; individuals need to know how much and what kinds of power others have (Krackhardt 1990). Understanding gender differences in political behaviour in organisations will provide insight into persistent gender inequality that exists when it comes to power in organisations.

2.2.2 Organisational Political Climates

Given the limitations associated with the POP model, the organisational political climate (OPC) construct provides a fuller account of the shared perceptions of organisational politics and a framework for investigating the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours (Landells and Albrecht 2013). The

organisational climate concept dates back to Lewin (1951), who suggests that the climate or atmosphere of an organisation is a salient environmental stimulus and an essential determinant of motivation and behaviour (Drory 1993). However, using the OPC framework, the individual is analysed as separate from the context of the situation. POP research has largely ignored the effects of climate on the individual; instead, existing research assumes that individuals interpret their social environment within a vacuum with little consideration of how the broader context shapes these perceptions (Treadway, Adams and Goodman 2005).

OPC represents characteristics of organisational events, processes and decision-making from which employees form cognitive interpretations, including their shared perceptions regarding the nature and meaning of these events. OPC can be defined as *“[t]he shared perceptions of the building and use of power in practices and workarounds regarding policies and procedures to influence decision making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals”* (Landells and Albrecht 2013, p. 358). While climate perceptions occur at an individual level, it is noted that similar individuals are attracted to similar environments. They also tend to be socialised similarly within these environments because they are exposed to similar features (Drory 1993). This interactive and reciprocal process then facilitates the development of shared interpretations of the OPC and provides the basis for behaviour and affect.

Shared perceptions of OPC influence the relationship between organisational context and individual responses (Drory 1993). OPC then provides a framework to account for political context and behaviour in organisations and integrates the different levels of analysis when investigating organisational politics. For example, Maslyn and Fedor’s (1998) research found that individuals can distinguish between work-group and organisational-level politics. Furthermore, employees are differentially affected by the level at which they perceive political activity. These findings support applying the person-climate framework to organisational politics.

Furthermore, Christiansen et al. (1997) used this framework to investigate the effects of organisational politics on work attitudes. Their findings indicate that individuals whose influence tactics fit the overall political climate report more favourable work outcomes. Nevertheless, Christiansen et al. (1997) acknowledge the limitations of existing measures investigating OPC and recommend that future research identify more robust measures of the construct.

Furthermore, Drory (1993) investigated OPC (using a political climate scale) and concluded that the OPC measure assesses climate as an organisational attribute rather than a personal one. The findings also indicate that employees who lack means of influence and power bases perceive organisational politics as a source of frustration, particularly non-supervisory and female employees who often lack the power bases to influence effectively. Based on these findings, Drory (1993) argues that the organisational politics process involves winners and losers, which may benefit some organisational members while being detrimental to others. Therefore, employee status is a significant predictor of political power and includes actual and perceived status (Drory 1993). This research highlights the link between OPC and individual power, which relates to individual motivation and performance. Drory (1993) calls for future research to provide a more comprehensive account of OPC, accommodating positive, negative, and neutral perceptions of political climates.

Furthermore, Treadway, Adams and Goodman (2005) investigated whether organisations have a singular shared political climate or whether political sub-climates exist. Their research findings suggest that pockets of politics will form based on members' differing life and organisational experiences from different demographic backgrounds using the POP scale. This research provides support for the existence of political sub-climates in organisations. In addition, Landells and Albrecht (2013) reviewed the literature on power, climate and organisational politics. They propose that OPC consists of shared perceptions of how individuals build and use power bases. They suggest that measures of OPC include four critical dimensions of power positional, personal, informational and connection (see Figure

2-1). Therefore, this research study will use an abductive reasoning process, drawing on the OPC framework, which identifies four (power bases) generative mechanisms, that make up OPC. The aim of the study is to explain their activation modes.

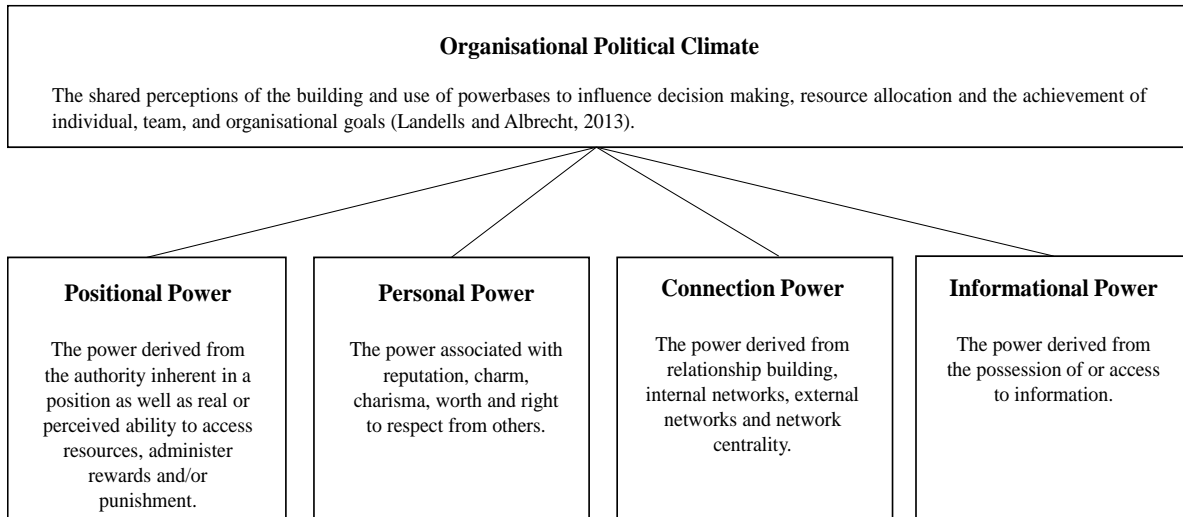


Figure 2-1 Organisational Political Climate (Landells and Albrecht 2013)

It is important to note that, unlike existing measures of organisational politics, the OPC framework accounts for both positive and negative political behaviour in organisations. Taken together, existing research, including Drory (1993), Maslyn and Fedor (1998), Christiansen et al. (1997), Treadway, Adams and Goodman (2005), and Landells and Albrecht (2013), makes a case for using OPC to investigate how political context shapes individual perceptions and behaviour. It also provides a conceptual framework for analysing the relationship between organisational politics and political behaviours in organisations that addresses POP's current limitations.

2.2.3 Gendered Organisational Political Climates

OPC not only provides a strong link between power, politics, and behaviour in organisations, but we argue that it also provides the means for investigating gender differences in access to power. The OPC accounts for the shared perceptions of how individuals use power bases to influence organisational decision-making, resource allocation and achievement of goals. Employees with access to sources of

organisational power are in a better position to take advantage of organisational politics using political behaviour derived from these power bases. For example, Kanter (1977), in researching a case study of a single organisation, found that there were three sources of power women have less access to: resources, information and support. Harlan and Weiss (1982) replicated and supported these findings, further highlighting the differences in power bases that men have compared with women (Ragins and Sundstrom 1989).

Additionally, Schein (1978) and Mann (1995) argue that future research needs to be directed at the differential opportunity men and women have to acquire and exhibit behaviours associated with these power bases. For example, personal power may be limited for women who face sex-role stereotyping, which reduces their opportunity to acquire and utilise work-related power acquisition behaviours (Schein 1978). Sex-role stereotyping may foster exclusions from these networks and make it more difficult for women to become active participants in organisational politics. Therefore this power-base may not serve women the same way as it does men (Schein 1978). Another example includes informational and connection power, as Mann (1995) argues that informational power is often used against women, as men exclude women through homosocial practices. In doing so, men limit or control the information women receive by limiting the connections and networks they can form. In turn, this limits women's access to power.

Landell's and Albrecht's (2013) OPC model provides a framework for investigating the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. This OPC model is primarily based on the work of French and Raven (1959) and includes four power bases, namely positional, personal, informational and connection, as detailed in Figure 1. This OPC model provides a framework to investigate how the use and development of power bases create and maintain gender differences in organisational politics and political behaviour. This argument is supported by Bentley et al.'s (2015) investigation into the process by which expatriates acculturate into the politics of an organisation. Their findings reveal that situational characteristics cause

individual political behaviour and that this, in turn, affects an employee's experience of work. One example provided is how gender norms regarding power bases can create inherent power differentials, allowing existing influential members to engage in political behaviour and circumvent formal procedures. This heightens their informal power within the organisation and associated perceptions of their social influence. OPC can motivate powerful individuals to engage in the political behaviours required to create and maintain their power bases.

Suppose political behaviours are thought to be power in action. In that case, the gendered nature of organisational politics may reduce women's motivation to engage in political behaviours, limiting their ability to build and maintain power bases. Understanding the relationship between organisational politics and gender is key to unpacking differences in men's and women's access to power. Davey's (2008) research found that women perceive organisational politics as irrational, aggressive, competitive and instrumental for advancing individual, not organisational success, limiting their engagement in it and consequently their ability to benefit from it. Additionally, organisational politics is fundamental to gendering organisations because the political activity is gendered. A gender perspective of OPC maintains that organisations are gendered through a continuing process of forming and conceptualising social structures (Acker 1999). Political behaviours are perceived as masculine and contrary to female identity but integrally linked with career success. Therefore, women may not engage in the required political behaviours to build their power bases, limiting their access to power.

Researchers need to account for politics and gender to understand the power in organisations, which the OPC framework enables. Drawing on the OPC framework outlined by Landells and Albrecht (2013), this review will examine the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. Specifically, this review provides a comprehensive account of gender in organisational politics for the first time, which reveals why there are persisting gender inequalities in organisations. The review will utilise the OPC model to:

- (1.) Explore the gendered nature of organisational politics and identify the existing research limitations.
- (2.) Explore the gendered nature of political behaviours and identify existing research limitations.
- (3.) Explore the relationship between points (1.) and (2.) above.
- (4.) Identify any consequences resulting from this relationship.
- (5.) Identify areas for future research.

The following section outlines the specific methodology used to conduct this review.

2.3 Methodology

This review followed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology outlined by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003). The SLR process provides the structure required to select and appraise relevant, empirical and theoretical research studies, regardless of their underlying discipline (Thorpe et al. 2005). In addition, this process is beneficial for identifying the key research themes and limitations within the existing literature domains and the recommended areas for future research (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart 2003). This SLR strategy is outlined in Appendix A and detailed in the following section.

2.4 Review Strategy

The first stage of the review was to develop an SLR protocol document to plan the review, which outlined the literature search strategy, the inclusion and exclusion review criteria, the quality appraisal criteria, and the data extraction and synthesis plan. In terms of the search criteria, this included relevant key search words, which, if used, would ensure all relevant literature would be included. Keywords were selected from a review of the literature and findings outlined in a scoping study. This process produced a final list of 24 keywords, of which ten were associated with organisational politics (i.e. “organi?ation* politics” OR “workplace politics” OR “office politics”) and 14 were associated with gender in organisations (i.e. gender* OR sex OR male OR female). These keywords were combined with the use of Boolean

operator AND, resulting in a total of 140 search strings. A data extraction form was developed by drawing on reviewer guidelines from journal articles used in this review. Each article was assessed against the quality appraisal criteria using the form provided in Appendix B. This included the relevance of the research aims, theoretical contribution, quality of the argument, comprehensive nature of the literature review, methodological rigour, data analysis and findings, and contribution to the literature. Following the recommendation of Podsakoff et al. (2005), this review primarily included academic journals. These are regarded as having the highest impact in the field, given that they contain validated knowledge. As organisational politics is a new research field, the inclusion of journal articles was not limited by the impact factor, as recommended by Meier (2011). Finally, the research protocol also included a plan for synthesising the key findings, following a thematic analysis as outlined by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003).

2.5 Data Collection

The second stage of the SLR process was to select the relevant studies (following the quality appraisal process). Using the search strings developed, this review searched four citation databases, including ABI/INFORM Complete, EBSCO Business Source Complete, Pysch Info and Scopus. The initial search found 14,552 journal articles, with an average of 3,638 per database. These citations were exported and saved as files in RIS format and then imported in Zotero to enable import into Excel. Once in Excel, the articles were sorted alphabetically, and 3,757 duplicates were removed, leaving 10,759 articles. Citations were then reviewed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Appendix C. This review was completed in two phases. First, the titles were reviewed to exclude citations that did not meet the criteria. Then, a second review of the citation abstracts against the criteria determined those that did not meet the criteria. This resulted in the removal of 10,433 articles, with 326 remaining.

Full-text analysis was used to examine the remaining 326 articles. This included carefully reading each study and assessing it for relevance against the inclusion and

exclusion criteria. Each study was separated into three categories of relevance. This included 72 highly relevant, 194 moderately relevant and 120 low relevance. Each of the highly relevant articles was then reviewed again, and their reference lists were examined to add 23 additional relevant research papers using a snowball sampling technique. This left a final list of 95 highly relevant articles. Each of the 95 articles was then reviewed against the quality criteria in Appendix B. Following a comprehensive quality appraisal, 11 articles were then removed as they did not meet some or all the quality appraisal standards. This process led to 84 articles being identified as highly relevant to our review and fulfilling the quality requirements. The final list of highly relevant articles was then coded in Excel according to their content and relevance. Following this, descriptive and thematic analysis was undertaken. Appendix D summarises this data collection process.

2.6 Results

2.6.1 Descriptive Analysis

A total of 84 articles were included in the final sample. *The Journal of Management*, *Human Relations* and *The Journal of Organisational Behaviour* appear to be the major publications that contributed to this systematic review, accounting for a total of 17% of the publications sourced, as outlined in Appendix E. Overall, the academic debate surrounding the organisational politics literature seems to be located within the fields of management and organisational development. Since 1999, there has been a trend in the number of research articles related to organisational politics, as outlined in Appendix G. Based on this high-level analysis, this review concludes that organisational politics is a growing area of research. In terms of the sample composition, empirical studies accounted for 70%, and theoretical studies accounted for 30% of all research papers. A total of 80% of the journals were geographically sourced from the United States, followed by 7% from Asia and 7% from Europe, as outlined in Appendix F. Therefore, the main observation from the descriptive analysis is that while there is growing interest in organisational politics, from a gender perspective, existing research is limited to American contexts. This is potentially one

key limitation within the current field, as culture is a contextual variable that may influence behaviours and organisational politics. Overall, organisational politics is a growing area of research, which is somewhat limited by research undertaken in American cultural contexts. Future research needs to examine the applicability of these findings across different cultures and environments.

2.6.2 Thematic Analysis

This review analysed all 84 highly relevant articles included in the final sample in terms of the thematic analysis. Each of these was initially coded based on the three primary research interests, including (1.) organisational politics, (2.) political behaviour, and (3.) gender in organisations as it relates to (1.) and (2.). Each of these primary research interests was then reviewed again. The articles were coded based on the most common themes for secondary research interests, including (1.) perceptions of organisational politics, (2.) organisational political climates, (3.) political will, (4.) political skill, (5.) networks and political skill, and (6.) political sensitivity. The coding process for each paper included in this review is detailed in Appendix A. Following this coding process, the emergent themes were identified, and studies were grouped according to their overarching themes, as outlined in Appendix H. While each of these themes is discrete, they relate to one another and inform the development of the gendered OPC framework presented.

The primary purpose of this paper is to review the theoretical and empirical studies that examine organisational political climates and gender in organisations to provide an overview of research in this field. Appendix I, Appendix J and Appendix K reveal the empirical and theoretical studies related to the key literature domains, including organisational politics, political behaviour and gender in organisational politics and political behaviour. Based on this review, four major themes were identified: (a) gender differences in political will and differential access to positional power; (b) gendered political skill and differential outcomes in personal power; (c) gendered barriers to network access and differential outcomes in connection power; (d) political sensitivity and gender differences in informational power. The secondary

purpose of this paper is to identify gaps in the existing literature domain and recommend areas for future research. This paper will outline the four themes and the areas identified for future research.

2.6.3 Gender Differences in Political Will and Differential Access to Positional Power

Over the last four decades, there has been growing research examining the nature of political behaviours and how they are used to acquire power and navigate organisational life (Kimura 2015). Political behaviour has been described as aligning various interest groups and coalitions to enhance power in organisations (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Existing research broadly examines gender differences in outcomes associated with engaging in political behaviour rather than the gendered nature of political behaviour (Davey 2008). Krackhardt and Mintzberg (1985) and Pfeffer (1992) argue that individuals need to influence others to succeed in organisations and that this requires political skill (Brass and Burkhardt 1993). However, Mintzberg (1983) maintained that political skill alone is not sufficient; rather, individuals need both political will and political skill to acquire power in organisations (Treadway et al. 2013b). Individuals engage in political behaviour based on what they consider important (Kapoutsis et al. 2017). In this way, political behaviour is comprised of both the willingness to engage as well as the skills to engage effectively. Treadway (2012, p. 533) defines political will 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.”* From a theoretical standpoint, Ferris et al. (2007) draw on the conservation of resources theory to explain political behaviour in organisations, proposing that political skill activation is dependent on the salience of any personal or organisational resource, which is the product of individual motivations. Motivation then explains the likelihood that an individual will engage in political behaviour. Political will is considered a dispositional antecedent or precursor to developing political skill (Treadway et al. 2005).

Existing research, while limited, has generally taken the view that political will helps an individual achieve functional outcomes. For example, Treadway et al.] (2015) argues that political will includes the motivation to engage in goal-directed behaviour (both the need for achievement and intrinsic motivation). This serves as an antecedent to political behaviour (Treadway et al. 2015). Their findings support this conceptualisation and the notion that an individual's willingness to engage in political behaviour is essential for developing political skill (Treadway et al. 2005). Political will has been conceptualised and measured by focusing on the dispositional antecedents of political behaviour (Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe 2013). Existing research efforts have mainly focused on how personality characteristics (such as the need for achievement, intrinsic motivation, Machiavellianism or active influence) relate to political behaviour in organisations (Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe 2013).

In contrast with these approaches, Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013) offer an alternative conceptualisation. Specifically, they argue that political will is better understood by focusing on managerial attitudes toward politics and engagement in politics instead of a general need for power and influence. Their research findings indicate that managers' willingness to engage in politics is informed by their views and experiences of organisational politics and that these attitudes will change over time. Based on 14 semi-structured interviews, they investigated what drives managers to engage in organisational politics and whether there are associated gender differences in this engagement. They concluded that political will consists of three dimensions, namely, functional (i.e., is it useful?), ethical (i.e., is it moral?) and emotional (i.e., how do I feel?). Their research found gender differences across all three dimensions and concluded that organisational politics is a gendered phenomenon.

The gendered nature of organisational politics may also explain why women are less motivated to engage in it. Arkin (2004) states that some women may reject management roles because of their distaste for political behaviour (Buchanan 2008).

Davey's (2008) research found that women's descriptions of barriers to their advancement described political obstacles. Women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours as these were described as aggressive, competitive, overconfident, and anti-social traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity. These accounts suggest that this type of political climate is incompatible with femininity. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to advance into positions of power. Women viewed organisational politics as gendered, which impacted their sense of fit with the organisation.

Additionally, Fritz and van Knippenberg's (2017) research investigated the relationship between cooperative climates and women's motivation to aspire to leadership positions. Their findings indicate that women have a greater communal tendency and are sensitive to climates that foster cooperation, teamwork, and support. Cooperative climates moderated women's motivation to advance into leadership roles.

The link between individual perceptions of organisational climates and individual motivation to engage in political behaviour provides the foundation for understanding gender differences in positional power. Positional power refers to power derived from a formal position and the perceived ability to confer rewards or punishment (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Women have traditionally had less access to positional power, as men still hold the majority of leadership positions in organisations; they also maintain a dominant position regarding the control of scarce resources such as money or materials at work and decisions regarding rewards in organisations (Mann 1995). Krackhardt (1990) states that those with more authority will have more power and, therefore, a greater opportunity to participate in the informal aspects of work like politics and networking. The gendered nature of organisational politics negatively impacts women's motivation to engage in political behaviours critical to career advancement and building positional power. Hall-Taylor (2002) argues that political behaviours maintain gender power structures in organisations. For women,

the gendered organisational structures limit their motivation to engage in political behaviours needed to advance and access positional power (Mann 1995).

Even if women engage in the political behaviours needed to access and maintain positional power, they may not benefit from positional power in the same way men do. Ledet and Henley's (2000) research finds that power in organisations appears to be more aligned with male than with female stereotypes; therefore, stereotypical masculinity seems to be a perceptual proxy for power in the workplace. In addition, perceptions of women's power may be distorted through a gender-biased stereotype, so a powerful position may lose its power when a woman assumes it. Given that perceived power predicts career success, gender differences in perceptions of women's positional power are critical to understanding gender differences in career advancement (Ledet and Henley 2000). Gendered organisational structures and gender-biased stereotypes make it difficult for women to attain positions that offer positional power. Even if women advance in organisations, the gendered nature of positional power means it is unlikely that women will benefit from it the same way as men. Consequently, women are less likely to have control over resources, bend the rules to their favour, or utilise their positions to allocate rewards, limiting their ability to influence others and advance at work.

2.6.4 Gendered political skill and differential outcomes in personal power

The conceptualisation of political influence is built on the theories of human agency that Ferris et al. (2007) put forward. They argue that individuals are active creators of their environment rather than passive reactors. Individuals require political skills to effectively engage in their organisational environment (Treadway et al. 2013b). Political skill is defined by Ferris et al. (p.291, 2007) as *“a comprehensive pattern of social competencies with cognitive, affective, and behavioural manifestations, which have direct effects on outcomes and moderating effects on predictor-outcome relationships.”* The political influence process involves individuals engaging in behaviours to influence others to achieve personal or organisational goals

(Treadway et al. 2013b). The political behaviour literature is also related to the broader research domain of influence tactics. This body of research argues that performance in role-related tasks alone is not sufficient to obtain power; instead, to advance, individuals need to utilise influence tactics (Higgins, Judge and Ferris 2003).

Existing research efforts have been underpinned by the influential work of Ferris et al. (2005), who developed the Political Skill Inventory (PSI). This measure has four underlying dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al. 2007). These four dimensions relate to one another. Some scholars have argued that political skill overlaps with other social competencies such as interpersonal acumen, social intelligence or emotional intelligence (Ferris et al. 2007). However, research findings only reflect modestly sized relationships, reinforcing the view that political skill is an independent construct (Ferris et al. 2007).

Using the PSI measure, initial research has investigated gender differences in political activity, individual performance and career success (Kimura 2013). Findings by Brass (1985), Drory and Beaty (1991), Gandz and Murray (1980), Kirchmeyer (1990), Mainiero (1994), Mann (1995), Perrewé and Nelson (2004), Buchanan (2008) and Kimura (2015) have highlighted women's lack of political skill compared with men. This research concludes that men are more involved in informal influence than women. They are more likely to accept and engage in organisational politics to their benefit (Drory and Beaty 1991). Similarly, research investigating gender differences in political skill, focusing on the networking dimension of political skill PSI, suggests that women tend not to engage in networking behaviours in the same way or to the same extent as men, limiting women's access to powerful networks. Drory and Beaty (1991) found that women tend not to develop the political skills or knowledge to utilise informal networks; rather, they rely on formal structures for career progression; however, men tend to rely on informal structures. These findings account for why men maintain their dominant position in organisations; as

Krackhardt (1990) argues, individuals with greater astuteness about their political and social environment were the ones with the most power.

Overall, existing research efforts have identified gender differences in using power tactics, with research findings suggesting that men expect to use influence tactics more bluntly and directly than women (Drory and Beaty 1991). For example, DuBrin (1989) found that women were significantly less likely than men to rely on charm, manipulative tactics, and personal appearance to achieve results. Drory and Beaty (1991) argue that men are more tolerant of influence tactics than women. Furthermore, Kirchmeyer (1990) investigated the profile of individuals active in office politics. For men, the construct of a 'political player' was characterised as an individual that is highly self-monitoring with beliefs that the world is unjust and complicated. For women, this only included women who had a high need for power. This need for power is further evidenced by Mainiero (1994), whose research included 55 interviews with high-profile women over a three-year period. The findings indicate that successful executive women learn politics over time, allowing them to display high levels of political ability. This sample included those with an increased need for power, as participants had to have achieved a minimum of the vice president level to participate in the study. However, these women were the exception, not the norm. Mainiero (1994) argues that most women are unaware of politics, labelling this behaviour as political naiveté and suggesting that it limits women's ability to be promoted.

This conclusion is also supported by Mann (1995), whose findings suggest that women do not recognise the importance of politics because they are unfamiliar with existing informal power structures such as the 'old boys club'. Taking this perspective even further, Perrewé and Nelson's (2004) literature review concluded that women are likely to suffer from political skill deficiency. Developing political skills will help women overcome barriers to career advancement. Also, Buchanan's (2008) survey of 250 British managers found that men are more likely to engage in political behaviours at work. Kimura's (2015) review of the political skill literature concluded

that women's shortage of political will and political skill does hinder their ability to 'break the glass ceiling'. Overall, this literature concludes that women lack the motivation and skill to engage in organisational politics to their benefit. Based on existing research findings, the recommendation is to encourage women to develop political skills, despite their lack of motivation. But this recommendation assumes political skill functions similarly for women and men and results in the same outcomes – but it does not.

While these studies help identify gender differences in political behaviour, they provide a limited understanding of why women may be less motivated to engage their political skills. Mainstream approaches to studying organisational politics largely consider it a gender-free phenomenon. However, Davey (2008), Shaughnessy et al. (2011), Kacmar et al. (2011), and Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013) found that women may not engage in political tactics to the same extent as men because these tactics are gendered. Therefore, engaging in political behaviours may be considered a more stereotypical image for men than women. This argument is supported by the social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983), which holds that gender differences emerge because of social learning and societal power relations. Gender-appropriate behaviours are socially modelled and learnt; and over time they are reinforced through social norms, power relations and status structures (Kacmar et al. 2011). Women and men tend to exhibit behaviours that correspond with the gender stereotype. Women engage in mainly communal behaviour, and men engage in mainly agentic behaviour (Kacmar et al. 2011). While this is not absolute, it is an established pattern that women tend to define themselves in their close relationships and engage in cooperative and supportive behaviours to maintain those relationships. However, men tend to engage in competitive behaviours to enhance their status. Therefore, engaging in political behaviours is more stereotypical for men than women.

This is further supported by Davey's (2008) research, which found that graduate women viewed political behaviours as more masculine and therefore rejected

engaging in them. This is despite knowing that they were needed to attain interpersonal power. Extending this view, the research undertaken by Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013) indicates that there are gender differences in expressed political will and that this is because political practices are perceived as inherently masculine. Women who engaged in political behaviour found it draining because it was primarily associated with masculine norms. Westbrook, Veale and Karnes's (2013) investigation of multi-rater gender differences in political skill found that males and females perceive themselves to be equal in political skill. Women were also found to have greater political skills than men regarding the networking dimension. This was further supported by Phipps and Prieto (2015), whose research revealed that women had higher political skill perceptions than their male counterparts.

While women may perceive themselves to have political skills, engaging in political behaviour is like walking a tightrope. On the one hand, demonstrating typically masculine political behaviour is needed to succeed, but it may also have negative consequences if these behaviours are perceived to violate established gender stereotypes. Also supporting this, Shaughnessy et al. (2011) argue that influence tactics are gendered; and that political skill interacts with gender tactics to affect supervisor liking and promotability ratings. They conclude that influence behaviours are bounded by the gender of the actor and support the gender tactic dilemma outlined by Rudman and Glick (2001). Furthermore, Schein's (1978) research investigating sex-role stereotypes argues that female leaders exhibiting political behaviours congruent with sex-role stereotypes (i.e. consideration, teamwork and communality) will be evaluated more favourably than women who violate these stereotypes by displaying stereotypically masculine behaviours (i.e. assertiveness, decisiveness and aggressiveness). While masculine political behaviours are more strongly associated with career success, engaging in them may not guarantee success for women because these behaviours are gendered.

Consequently, engaging in political skills might not enhance women's ability to influence others, that is, their personal power, to the same extent that it does men. Personal power is associated with interpersonal influence, charisma and charm (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Sex-role stereotyping limits women's opportunities to acquire and utilise work-related power acquisition behaviours (Schein 1978). Gender expectations regarding political behaviours may create difficulties for women who choose to use their political skills to develop and maintain their personal power as they violate established gender expectations. The lack of fit theory outlined by Harris et al. (2007) suggests that women do not advance in organisations because gender stereotypes are misaligned with stereotypes of successful managers. For example, Kacmar et al. (2011) surveyed 288 supervisor–subordinate dyads and found that competitive environments are unlikely to motivate women to engage in communal behaviours. Employees who pursued more communal goals did so in climates that were low in POP. These findings indicate that employees may be more likely to reciprocate gendered behaviours consistent with the POP level. Therefore, women do not engage in political behaviours needed to develop and maintain their personal power base because these behaviours are more strongly associated with men. This is despite the need to engage in these behaviours to enhance career success (Kacmar et al. 2011). Not only does organisational politics not function in the same way for men and women, but a key conclusion of this review is that engaging political skills may not benefit men's and women's power in the same way.

While it can be argued that successful women engage in masculine political practices to advance in organisations, the findings from research like Mainiero's (1994) are built on the assumption that successful women represent the norm rather than the exception. This argument ignores the negative consequences for women engaging in this behaviour. For example, Ragins and Sundstrom's (1989) review of gender differences in organisational power found that men and women follow different paths to power. Women achieve power using an obstacle course, and therefore, powerful women may represent the hardest of survivors. These powerful women differ more from the female population than men in comparable positions

differ from the male population. Those who get through the obstacle course may be quite atypical of the general population. Political behaviour required for leadership roles is associated with male-dominated traits, as Hall-Taylor's (2002) findings indicate.

Furthermore, Kottis (1993) suggests that women who have risen above the ranks of other women have done so by exemplifying male attitudes in language and behaviour. To become a leader, women must demonstrate masculine leadership traits and engage in political skills in a masculine way; unsurprisingly, most women are often found to be lacking. Therefore, given the gendered nature of political behaviour, even if women do learn to engage in gendered political skills, they may not benefit from this behaviour to increase their personal power as men do.

2.6.5 Gendered Barriers to Network Access and Differential Outcomes in Connection Power

Recent research on organisational politics has begun investigating the role of political skill in developing networks by focusing on the networking dimension of political skill. The networking ability dimension includes building relationships and creating vast networks to achieve one's goals (Treadway et al. 2005). Individuals with high levels of political skill will more readily identify resource-laden contacts and make connections with them. Thompson (2005) states that there is evidence that of the four dimensions of political skill, networking ability may be the most important (Todd et al. 2009). Networking ability results in career success because individuals (with high networking ability) who engage their skills can form strong alliances and connections, thereby exerting control over their social capital (Treadway et al. 2005).

Research findings by Ferris and Treadway (2012) and Wei, Chiang and Wu (2012) suggest that politically skilled individuals can build and leverage networks more easily. Networks play an important role in career success because employees with supportive networks receive inside information. They also perceive extra social support in their work, enhancing their perceptions of career success (Forret and Dougherty 2004). Findings support this notion, as Breland et al. (2007) found that

individuals with strong social networks perceive their careers as more successful. This finding was partly due to the positive relationships with supervisors and the role that resources play in securing career advancement (Breland et al. 2007). Furthermore, Seibert, Crant and Kraimer (1999) found that individuals proactively advanced their careers by acquiring information about organisational processes through informal and formal relationships. Overall, an individual's network is developed through political skills, enhancing perceptions of career success.

Social network theory proposes that individuals are embedded within a network of relationships, providing opportunities and constraints. By investigating networks, researchers can identify power relations in organisations (Brass, Butterfield, and Skaggs 1998). In terms of the network structures themselves, social network theory proposes that individuals build power through interpersonal and political skills (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). Descriptors such as centrality, strong versus weak ties, structural cohesion and structural holes are all used in social network theory to identify the quality of an individual's ties (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). Therefore, it is assumed that higher-quality positions in social networks have more significant social capital, which increases personal efficiency, effectiveness, and positions of power within an organisational hierarchy.

Furthermore, social networks determine the value of information an individual receives, which affects the success of their subsequent influence attempts and career success (Kimura 2015). Brass and Burkhardt's (1993) research explored the relationship between potential organisational power, structural position, and behavioural tactics. Their study found that strategic political behaviour leads to an advantageous structural position that translates into increased individual power. Seibert, Kraimer and Liden (2001) argue that social capital theory can be used to explain this relationship. Specifically, they propose that network structures promote objective and subjective career success through social resources, such as access to information and career sponsorship (Kimura 2015). Therefore, career success results from networking and subsequent networking structures (Kimura 2015).

Recent research such as Bolander et al. (2015), Cullen, Gerbasi and Chrobot-Mason (2015), Fang et al. (2015) and Wei, Chiang and Wu (2012) has examined the effects of network structures and political skill (networking ability) on a variety of career outcomes. These findings suggest that political skill supports effective communication and inter-organisational relationships, enabling centrality in networks.

A literature review indicates that political behaviours, social networks, and career success are also inextricably linked with gender. A growing body of literature examines how different types of networks function to exclude individuals based on race, gender, class and other characteristics (Cornwell and Dokshin 2014). This view considers how relationship conditions allow power to be concentrated with elites. This follows Mills's (1956) theory of the 'power elite', which maintains that power remains with a highly cohesive network of well-positioned individuals (Cornwell and Dokshin 2014). Furthermore, the social class theory outlined by Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont (2012) argues that organisations are governed by a 'managerial elite', a group comprised of the chief executive officer (CEO) and board members, connected by generational social ties, education, wealth and status within the community. These networks are self-perpetuating and closed to women and minorities (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). For example, the CEO selects the board members and senior executive team members who support and govern the CEO. Social networks are the mechanism by which the network maintains power. Connections build the social capital individuals need to ascend into positions of power within hierarchies, limiting the ability of members of racial or gender minorities, who lack these connections, to gain power (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). This clearly demonstrates the connection between networks and the attainment and maintenance of power structures in organisations.

In-group members are more likely to be 'in the know' regarding organisational politics. Ferris et al. (1996) suggest that political skill and awareness of a work environment will mitigate the negative effects of politics for the in-group, comprised

generally of white males, but not the out-group, comprised of racial and gender minorities (Kimura 2013). Cohesive networks then serve to keep power within the in-group by linking influential elites with other influential elites. In this way, network density and closure can preserve in-group resources, share interests, and exclude individuals who threaten this (Cornwell and Dokshin 2014). Despite the increased research attention, Brass and Krackhardt (2012) maintain that it is surprising so much research investigating political skill has mainly focused on political tactics and strategies while ignoring the social structure of networks. This is particularly important given that networks strongly affect how these tactics and strategies result in the acquisition and maintenance of power.

Over the last few years, researchers have shown interest in the gender analysis of inter-organisational networks, such as Blass et al. (2007), Brass (1985), Forret and Dougherty (2004), Lyness and Thompson (2000), and Hetty van Emmerik et al. (2006). This research argues that while networks benefit men, they do not advantage women in the same way (Benschop 2009). Women have historically lacked access to organisational networks; networking behaviour has often been cited as the means to break through the glass ceiling (Forret and Dougherty 2004). However, as social class theory suggests, these influence attempts may have limited benefits. Empirical findings support this argument, as Brass (1985) found that men and women do not differ in their networking behaviour; instead, women are perceived as less influential than men and are not included in their networks. While women are aware of informal networks and are more adept at building networks than men, they may not benefit from this behaviour similarly to men.

Gender differences in outcomes associated with networking behaviour limit women's ability to build and maintain connection power. This includes the power derived from access and connections formed with others due to networking and relationship building. For example, Lyness and Thompson (2000) found that mentoring is more strongly related to career success for men than women. This is because organisational processes associated with career advancement, such as informal

network support, may serve to keep power with men who make up the dominant group. Also, Forret and Dougherty (2004) concluded that gender impacts the utility of networking as a career-enhancing strategy because networking behaviour is related to promotions and increased compensation for men but not women.

Similarly, Hetty van Emmerik et al. (2006) found that women engaged more in formal and informal networking than men. However, these activities resulted in stronger career satisfaction for men than women. Also, Blass et al. (2007) found that individuals seek information and cues from their work environment through mentors as part of an ongoing socialisation process. Their findings indicate that men and women did not differ on levels of self-reported mentoring, political understanding, or networking ability. However, only Caucasian men benefited from mentoring by gaining a greater understanding of organisational politics derived from the mentoring relationship. Women may still have difficulty infiltrating influential circles to enhance their connection power despite engaging in networking behaviour. One of the explanations for this is that networking behaviour is a gendered process in organisations (Benschop 2009). For example, Kanter's (1977) and Acker's (1999) gendered theory of organisations maintain that masculinity is created and defended in organisations by men engaging in homosociality, whereby men form solidarity groups that exclude women. This is further supported by the social closure theory, outlined by Tomaskovic-Devey (1993), which states that as men engage in these practices, they may be unwilling to interact with or assist women, as they want to preserve their position and advantage (Watkins and Smith 2014).

Given the gendered nature of OPC, women and men gain differential benefits from their networking behaviour. These findings are supported by de Klerk and Verreyne (2017), who found that due to institutional barriers (i.e. barriers to entry and a lack of inclusion), women have a limited number of strong ties with individuals who lack influence in organisations. Furthermore, Watkins and Smith's (2014) research investigated political skill use and women's advancement in male-dominated environments. When women advance regardless of their level of political skill, they

can more easily attain leadership roles in less masculine environments. Consequently, women lack access to informal networks, ultimately limiting their connection power.

Schein (1978) argues that exclusion from powerful networks within organisations restricts women's ability to advance and function as leaders within the organisation. To the extent that alliances and networks are important for getting work done and achieving results, woman's promotability will be less than some male counterparts (Schein 1978). More importantly, in the long run, it is expected that the gendered nature of networks and differential benefits for women who engage in networking behaviour will diminish women's motivation to network (Schein 1978). This argument is supported by McGuire's (2002) research which surveyed 1000 employees to understand the outcomes of gender inequality in informal networks. The findings reveal that even when women have ties to powerful individuals, they receive less work-related help because these network members were less likely to invest in women than men. Overall, while women may engage in the same gendered networking behaviours as men, they are less likely to benefit. Consequently, women will struggle to build and maintain connection power compared to men.

2.6.6 Political Sensitivity and Gender Differences in Informational Power

Organisational socialisation literature, which is interested in how an individual adjusts to an organisation, holds that the dominant group in organisations sets the norms for all other groups (Chao et al. 1994). When applied to organisational politics, it can be argued that as Caucasian men maintain most dominant leadership positions in organisations, they set the political norms within those organisations. Members who can understand and adhere to those norms are likely to benefit. Blass et al. (2007) argue that politics is a 'white man's game'. They argue that whether consciously or not, organisational politics' rules, boundaries, and intricacies are selectively shared with insiders, predominantly white men. This can create challenges for women or minorities, who may not select appropriate political tactics for each situation or execute them effectively as they lack this information. The

information required to understand political environments is not afforded to women; as such, they do not have the same informational power as men. Building informational power includes investing time in understanding the political environment and who has information and seeking out those individuals to gain access to that information. In turn, this limits women's awareness of the behaviours needed to obtain formal or informal access to information as well as the opportunity to share or distribute information.

It is not just that women lack access to the information needed to navigate political environments successfully; a key component of informational power is knowing who to influence. Krackhardt (1990) states that cognitive accuracy is a base of power because knowing who has power is the first step to influencing influential people. Information can also be used to develop powerful coalitions and informal networks in organisations. Informational power is then built over time through the development of relationships and access to networks. Many aspects of organisational structure, including hierarchy, departments and the number of leadership positions, can impact the flow of information in an organisation. Those in powerful positions often have access to information to use to manipulate situations politically. As women are underrepresented in leadership positions, they may not have access to important information to the same extent as men, which reduces their informational power. This also makes it harder for women to become active participants in organisational politics, as they lack the informational power required to 'play the game' (Schein 1978).

An individual's ability to navigate their political environment depends on their political sensitivity. The concept of political sensitivity was first proposed by Vredenburg and Maurer (1984), who argue that intergroup power and conflict are central to organisational politics. Given this, norms are critical to understanding political behaviour in organisations. According to these norms, individuals judge the extent to which behaviours or goals are acceptable and appropriate. Political activity is generally considered part of an unsanctioned process in organisations, but unofficial

political norms sanction political behaviours. Vredenburg and Maurer (1984) define this as the normative sanctioning mechanism in organisations, whereby informal norms related to power, status, conflict, interpersonal relations, and career management determine the kind of political behaviour sanctioned by the organisation. Individuals make political judgements over time as they interact with their political environment at work. Individuals use these judgements to determine which strategies and tactics to pursue. Political sensitivity then is considered individual awareness and sensitivity to these political norms (Vredenburg and Maurer 1984).

It should also be noted that political sensitivity is considered different from the social astuteness dimension, as outlined by Ferris et al. (2005). Social astuteness is concerned with correctly identifying political behaviour and the political players to engage with. The PSI developed by Ferris et al. (2005) includes a measure of social astuteness. Social astuteness includes understanding others' contributions to social interactions in terms of the potential resources they have and what motivates them. This understanding allows politically skilled individuals to choose who might be beneficial to engage with. However, an individual can be socially astute, as defined by Ferris et al. (2005), but lack the political sensitivity to understand political environments and behaviour and how this applies to them.

Existing research on the nature of political sensitivity is minimal. Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) proposed a theoretical argument expanding on Vredenburg and Maurer's (1984) political sensitivity construct and argued that research should investigate how political understanding (i.e., recognising that politics exists in an organisation) and perceived control (i.e., feeling little control over politics) moderate POP. Several studies, such as Ferris, Fedor and King (1994) and Gilmore et al. (1996) used organisational tenure as a proxy for political understanding, while others, such as Ferris et al. (1996b) and Ferris et al. (1996) examined understanding as a moderator of POP and outcomes by using Tetrick and LaRocco's (1987) understanding scale (Kacmar & Baron 1999). Items for this scale measure the

understanding of events in organisations and control over one's work environment instead of understanding political norms. Another study by Blass et al. (2007) explored political understanding related to organisational socialisation, specifically with a focus on networking and mentoring. This research used Chao et al.'s (1994) six-item measure of political understanding. Their findings concluded that individuals who understand organisational politics do in fact recognise the value of developing and using social networks. Women and minorities were not found to differ on reported levels of political understanding. Overall, these investigations have provided mixed support for the role of understanding as a moderator. Organisational understanding is very similar to the PSI social astuteness measure, in that it measures an individual understanding of who has power in an organisation. Conversely, political sensitivity measures an individual understanding of what behaviours to engage in, specifically, an individual's sensitivity to the informal norms related to power, status, conflict, interpersonal relations and career management as well as the sanctioned political behaviour.

Given the gendered nature of organisational politics, it is argued that women and minorities require heightened sensitivity to determine how to behave and respond to gendered or racial political practices (Kacmar & Baron 1999). Engaging in political behaviour is different for women and men because of the gendered nature of these behaviours. Understanding the gender expectations of political behaviour is key to benefiting from political behaviour. Organisational politics does not function for everyone in the same way. Even when women behave in a consistent way with political norms, they risk being penalised for defying gendered norms, as political behaviour is stereotypically masculine. This argument is supported by Acker (1999), who maintains that through the internal mental work of individuals, they come to understand the organisation's gendered expectations and opportunities, including the appropriate gendered behaviours and attitudes. Gendered expectations of women's behaviour are often ambiguous and contradictory, requiring significant internal mental work to 'get it right'. Men and women need first to recognise what behaviour is appropriate and then try to control and shape their actions to meet that

standard (Acker 1999). Women face career barriers and stressors at work that men do not. These require considerable political skill to manage and overcome. Examples include the glass ceiling, maternal wall, tokenism, exclusion from informal networks and a lack of development opportunities, to name a few (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Women have a very narrow range of acceptable political behaviour, including inherent contradictions (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Given this, it is argued that political sensitivity to the gendered nature of organisational politics is required for women to navigate it and ultimately benefit from it effectively. While both men and women require access to informational power to navigate organisational politics successfully, the type of informational power they receive, and need is different. Women lack access to the information necessary to understand organisational politics because they are not socialised in the same way as men. Even if women do access this information from powerful individuals, which tend to be men, it is unlikely that this information will account for the gendered nature of political practices at work.

Women who advance into positions of authority can do so because they have the political sensitivity required to identify the political norms and navigate the gendered aspects of these norms. As Watkins and Smith (2014) argue, awareness of how to interact with men, speak up and disagree at work could influence women's success at work. Watkins and Smith (2014) called this understanding of gender-based interpersonal challenges. Still, from an organisational politics perspective, it is argued that it is more aligned with the concept of political sensitivity, as political norms (the grounds for interpersonal relations) are gendered. Furthermore, political sensitivity can be applied across genders and races to understand how typically white male political behaviours create additional difficulties for individuals who do not understand or adhere to these norms. Simply being aware of political behaviours and engaging in them to the same extent as men is unlikely to result in the same outcomes. Instead, a specific understanding of gendered norms associated with political behaviour is required. Also, women need to correctly interpret what gendered political norms mean, select the correct political tactic, and deliver that tactic most effectively. These behaviours make up women's political skills, but

developing this skill depends on women's access to informational power, which is often limited because of gendered political practices.

2.7 Discussion and Research Agenda

Overall, Landells and Albrecht's (2013) conceptualisation of OPC is a helpful framework for examining the shared perceptions of gendered political practices. Specifically, this includes the shared perceptions of individuals' political behaviour to build and use power bases to influence decision-making, resource allocation, and individual, team, and organisational goals. The OPC framework addresses the existing limitations of the POP framework by accounting for context by assessing individuals' shared perceptions of how power bases are used in organisations. There is also the potential to separate the different levels of analysis by drawing a distinction between individual behaviours and employees' shared perceptions of how power bases are used, which makes up the political climate in an organisation. Drawing on the organisational climate literature, the OPC provides the theoretical basis to explore the relationship between power, political behaviour, and gender. Additionally, this study argues that existing research tends to view political behaviour as negative (Yates and Hartley, 2021). The common perspective is that political behaviour is dysfunctional and illegitimate. This negative perspective has dominated theoretical approaches and empirical assessments like the POP scale (Fedor and Maslyn (2002). The scale draws on a negative definition of POP; the associated measures and research findings reflect this (Schmitt et al. 2002). The OPC framework accounts for both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics. Therefore, future research needs to examine both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics by using empirical scales and frameworks that account for this (Bedi and Schat 2013).

Specifically, a gendered OPC framework (detailed in Figure 2) was developed based on findings from this review and drawing on the existing OPC framework to offer an account of how the shared perceptions of power bases are gendered, as detailed in the themes outlined in this review. The gendered OPC framework includes the

shared perceptions of the gendered practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals. This framework is based on the person–environment literature, which maintains that the organisation is a salient environmental stimulus and an essential determinant of individual motivation and behaviour (Drory 1993). Separating these levels of analysis, as detailed in Table 2-1, is critical for understanding how shared perceptions of the gendered nature of organisational politics relate to individual gendered political behaviours and how this results in differential outcomes for men and women.

Table 2-1 Gendered Organisational Political Climate Framework

<p>Gendered organisational political climates: The shared perceptions individuals have of the gendered nature of power bases and gendered political practices needed to build and maintain those power bases to influence informal promotion, development, networking, and promotion processes.</p>				
<p>Shared perceptions</p>	<p>Gendered positional power</p>	<p>Gendered personal power</p>	<p>Gendered connection power</p>	<p>Gendered informational power</p>
<p>Environment</p>	<p>Positional power is the power derived from a position as well as the real or perceived ability to access resources and administer rewards and/or punishment.</p> <p>Masculinity is a perceptual proxy for positional power. Powerful positions may lose power when a woman assumes the position.</p>	<p>Personal power represents power associated with interpersonal influence or charm.</p> <p>Sex-role stereotyping limits women's opportunities to build personal power similarly to men.</p>	<p>The power is derived from relationship building, internal networks, external networks, and network centrality.</p> <p>Men engage in homosocial practices when it comes to networking, which limits women's ability to build connection power.</p>	<p>Building informational power includes investing time in understanding the political environment and who has information and then seeking those individuals out to access that information.</p> <p>Political norms are selectively shared with insiders, which are predominantly white men. This can create challenges for women or minorities who may not select appropriate political tactics for each situation or execute them effectively as they lack this information.</p>
<p>Person</p>	<p>Women have less positional power than men. As such, they have less real or perceived ability to access resources and administer rewards and/or punishment compared to men.</p>	<p>Women cannot engage in the political behaviour required to build personal power in the same way as men, as political behaviours are gendered, and sex-role stereotyping limits women's ability to derive the same benefits for engaging in them as men do.</p>	<p>Women do not have the same access to informal networks as men because of organisations' homosocial practices.</p>	<p>Women are unlikely to be socialised into organisational politics in the same way as men and, therefore, may not understand the gendered nature of political behaviours, which may limit their ability to engage in them.</p>
<p>Outcome</p>	<p>The gendered nature of positional power reduces women's willingness to engage in the political behaviours needed to build and maintain this power base.</p>	<p>While women may engage in political behaviours to the same extent as men, sex-role stereotyping ensures they may not receive the same benefits as men.</p>	<p>The gendered nature of networking behaviours limits women's ability to build and maintain informal networks, reducing their connection power.</p>	<p>When it comes to socialisation, gendered practices ensure that women do not have access to the same informational power as men do when it comes to understanding how to navigate gendered organisational political climates.</p>

Overall, the gendered OPC framework provides the means for future research to investigate the shared perceptions of organisational politics, how gendered political behaviours are used to build power bases in organisations, and the differential outcomes this has for men and women. Future research should consider using this framework when examining gender in organisational politics and look to understand the relationship between each power base to provide a more integrated perspective of gendered OPC.

2.7.1 The Gendered OPC Framework: Examining Gender Differences in Political Will

The gendered OPC framework outlines how gendered political environments shape gendered political behaviours and how engaging in these behaviours results in differential outcomes for men and women. Investigating the relationship between gendered OPC and political behaviours might provide a fuller account of what political environments encourage women to engage in political behaviour and whether this results in beneficial outcomes for women's career advancement.

Gender differences in power bases are derived from the gendered nature of social structures. For women, engaging in organisational politics may not serve them in the same way it does men (Schein 1978). Schein's (1978) and Mann's (1995) research argues that men and women have differential opportunities to acquire and exhibit behaviours associated with power bases, making it more difficult for women to participate in organisational politics. Given the gendered nature of political behaviours, understanding the link between organisational politics and political will is critical to understanding gender differences in positional power. This argument is supported by Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), whose research findings indicate that managers' willingness to engage in politics is informed by their own views and experiences of organisational politics and power. The gendered nature of organisational politics and power reduces women's motivation to engage in political behaviours, limiting their ability to acquire and use positional power.

Engaging in political behaviours may be considered a more stereotypical image for men than women. This argument is supported by social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983), which holds that gender differences emerge because of social learning and societal power relations. Gender-appropriate behaviours are socially modelled and learnt; over time, they are reinforced through social norms, power relations and status structures (Kacmar et al. 2011). Therefore, the gendered nature of political behaviours may, in fact, reflect the broader gender stereotypes that society holds of men and women. Specifically, Davey's (2008) research found that women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours, as these were described as aggressive, competitive, overconfident and anti-social traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity.

If political behaviours are thought to be *power in action*, then the gendered nature of organisational politics may reduce women's motivation to engage in political behaviours. This, in turn, limits their access to positional power in organisations. This argument is supported by Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013). Their research findings indicate that managers' willingness to engage in politics is informed by their own views and experiences of organisational politics and power. They argue that these attitudes will change over time. Davey's (2008) research findings, which suggest masculine political climates are incompatible with femininity, highlight how women view organisational politics as gendered. By accounting for the gendered nature of organisational politics, it becomes clear why women are less motivated to engage in political behaviours than men.

This is particularly important given the limited research investigating the political will-political skill framework. Future research is needed to enhance the current understanding of why and how gendered political behaviour occurs in organisations and whether this results in different outcomes for men and women (Kimura 2015). Furthermore, given the career advancement outcomes associated with political behaviour, it is important to also consider how politics will function as an antecedent

to political skill and whether this relationship is different for men and women (Ferris, Fedor and King 1994).

Future research should also consider the interactive effects of political will on individual level outcomes, such as positional power, as well as the gendered nature of these effects to more fully account for the gender gap in leadership. Furthermore, while existing research efforts have advanced the theoretical and conceptual understanding of political will, future research should not be limited to identifying gender differences alone. Rather, as Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013) argue, future research should consider adopting gender as a lens of analysis when investigating organisational politics, as the nature and significance of gender differences in organisational politics are not well understood. Given the subtle and complex nature of these differences, future research efforts should consider adopting qualitative research methods (Buchanan 2008). The OPC framework provides the theoretical basis to examine what political climates enhance an individual's motivation to engage in political behaviours. This understanding could be used to investigate the relationship between gendered political climates, political will, political behaviours and individual differences in positional power.

2.7.2 Gendered OPC Framework: Gender Differences in Political Behaviour

Given the gendered nature of power and organisational politics, the standard for political behaviours in organisations is largely set by men. Sex-role congruency theory argues that women's influence attempts may not be as effective as men's. Even if women engage in political behaviours, it may not increase their personal power to the same extent as it does men. Choosing not to engage their political skills may be detrimental for women because political behaviours are strongly associated with career advancement. For example, Buchanan's (2008) survey findings indicate that 90% of managers agree that political skill is required to succeed and that engaging in political behaviours does improve career prospects.

Additionally, existing research findings have established the relationship between political influence and career success (Todd et al. 2009). A review of the literature (Bing et al. 2011; Douglas and Ammeter 2004; Ferris et al. 2012; Gentry et al. 2012; Kolodinsky, Treadway and Ferris 2007; Todd et al. 2009) revealed that political skill does enhance the impressions and evaluations others form. This results in enhanced performance, reputation, career progression, and leadership effectiveness. Kolodinsky, Treadway and Ferris (2007) found that political skill enhances leaders' influence attempts by moderating the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes. Furthermore, Douglas and Ammeter (2004) found that leaders' political skill explained significant variance in leader performance ratings both in networking ability and interpersonal influence. Clearly, political skill plays a critical role in building positional and personal power, both of which play a central role in the career success of employees and leaders (Buchanan 2008).

However, engaging in political behaviour may have negative consequences for women. Davey's (2008) research finds that political behaviours required to access power in organisations can be thought of as stereotypically male. These findings provide support for the argument that political behaviours and organisational politics are gendered. Norms regarding political behaviours are, in fact, masculine. Women and men tend to exhibit behaviours that correspond with broader gender stereotypes. While demonstrating typically masculine political behaviour is needed to succeed, it may also have negative consequences if these behaviours are perceived as violating established gender stereotypes. Consequently, women are likely penalised for violating these standards and are unlikely to develop personal power by engaging in the same influence tactics as men. Future research should investigate how sex-role stereotyping limits women's effectiveness in engaging political skills to develop personal power. Furthermore, future research should also investigate what types of OPCs support women to engage in political skills, leading to positive outcomes for women's career success.

Future research needs to examine these theories and integrate them to more fully account for women's engagement in political skills and how this serves to limit their access to personal power. An example of this is investigating how OPC that supports sex-role stereotyping may limit women's political will and political skill. Given the double bind women face when engaging in political skills, future research should examine the differential consequences for men's and women's personal power. Furthermore, future research should also account for the positive outcomes associated with political activity. While the POP model is limited to assessing negative outcomes, the gendered OPC framework offers a framework for investigating both positive and negative outcomes and any associated gender differences.

2.7.3 Gendered Political Skill and Gendered Networks

Existing research has largely focused on examining political skill as a unidimensional construct. However, political skill is a multidimensional construct; therefore, it may hold that certain dimensions predict individual career success or organisational outcomes to a greater extent than others. Specifically, Todd et al.'s (2009) research confirm that political skill is a powerful predictor of career success in terms of promotions, career satisfaction, life satisfaction and external job mobility. Out of the four dimensions of political skill, networking ability was found to dominate the relationship with these outcomes. Men maintain their dominant position in organisations and reinforce the gendered nature of organisations through their informal networking behaviour. While there appear to be differential benefits gained from formal and informal networks for men and women, this may not result from networking behaviour or political skill. Rather, these gender differences may highlight the gendered nature of organisational politics.

Networking behaviour does not occur in isolation; it is embedded within broader social structures, particularly regarding gender. For example, men engage in homosocial practices by forming informal networks and coalitions that often exclude women. Kanter (1977) and Acker (1999) support this argument, maintaining that

masculinity is created and defended in organisations by men engaging in homosociality. This is further supported by the social closure theory, outlined by Tomaskovic-Devey (1993), which states that as men engage in these practices, they may be unwilling to interact with women and assist women in order to preserve their position and advantage (Watkins and Smith 2014). Given that the networking ability dimension of political skill is likely to have the strongest impact on the ability of individuals to build and use connection power, future research should examine how homosocial practices and gender bias limit women's access to networks and connection power in organisations.

As women tend to be excluded from accessing male networks, they may perceive that engaging in networking behaviours is of limited value and, therefore, not engage in or benefit from networking behaviour to the same extent as men. This is further supported by Mann (1995), who states that women do not have the same access to power in organisations as men; therefore, the principle of reciprocity is unlikely to apply. Kotiss (1993) suggests that the incentive for developing social relationships at work is built on the expectation that assistance will be exchanged in a mutually beneficial way. However, this may not apply to women, who tend to have limited power at work and therefore cannot provide access to the same benefits. Therefore, women do not have access to informal networks to help them develop the connection power needed to advance into positions of power. Future research should explore how the gendered nature of OPC limits women's ability to develop connection power and the implications this has on career success.

2.7.4 Gendered OPC and Political Sensitivity

Another key conclusion from this review is that OPC shapes political behaviour through the political normative sanctioning process. To be effective, employees must learn the accepted political behaviours. For example, Feldman (1981) argues that there is an organisational learning process whereby an individual not only comes to understand the organisational goals but also becomes aware of the unwritten, informal tactical goals and values of powerful organisational members. This includes

understanding the unspoken rules and norms and how informal networks work. This is further supported by Mainiero (1994), who found that as women advance in organisations, they experience a political seasoning process whereby they become familiar with organisational politics. Chao *et al.*'s (1994) research investigating different dimensions of the organisational socialisation process found that socialisation is significantly related to career success. Given the gendered nature of organisational politics, it follows that women may not be socialised in the same way as men – if, in fact, at all. The dominant group in organisations sets the norms for all other groups. When applied to organisational politics, it can be argued that Caucasian men maintain their dominant position in organisations today as they set the political norms within organisations. Members who can understand and adhere to those norms are likely to benefit. Given the homosocial behaviours in organisations and the exclusion of women from networks, it is likely that women may not experience the same political socialisation process as men. Awareness of gender differences in power bases and gendered expectations of political behaviour is a source of informational power, as it is the key to navigating political environments to advance at work. Gendered organisational practices that men engage in serve to exclude women from accessing the social support needed to develop awareness and understanding of organisational politics, which in turn limits their informational power.

Women either might not recognise the importance of engaging in political behaviours, or they may not understand how to engage in a way that is congruent with gender role expectations. In instances where women are included in the socialisation process, it could be argued that they may not be sensitive to the nuances associated with organisational norms because organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered phenomena. This lack of political sensitivity can create challenges for women or minorities who may not select appropriate political tactics for each situation or execute them effectively. Women who advance into positions of authority are able to do so because they have the political sensitivity required to identify gendered political norms and navigate gendered political

behaviours. For example, should women have the political will to engage their political skill, gender role expectations suggest that sex-role stereotypes may have an impact on how these influence tactics are perceived. This would limit the effectiveness of women's influence attempts. Research findings support the argument that behaviours that violate gender stereotypes may be related to lower perceptions of performance. Thacker and Wayne's (1995) research suggests that demographic variables may be even more important predictors of promotability than influence tactics alone (Shaughnessy et al. 2011).

Furthermore, Tepper et al. (1993) and Rudman's (1998) findings indicate that women who engaged in softer upward influence tactics received more resources and higher favourability ratings. However, gender role incongruent behaviour resulted in negative ratings. The gendered nature of organisational politics and gender role stereotypes create a double bind for women who engage in political skills. Women not only need to have the political will to engage in gendered political behaviours, but they need to demonstrate political sensitivity for these tactics to be effective. Future research should not only investigate political sensitivity as it relates to women but this concept could also be applied to any area of difference, i.e., race, age, and disability, to better understand how typically white male political behaviours create additional difficulties for any individuals who are not sensitive to these norms.

Understanding how women are socialised to engage in gendered political behaviour may help to explain why women engage or not and how this differentially impacts their career success. Future research should explore the nature of political sensitivity and if women who advance into the position of authority require awareness of the gendered nature of organisational politics in order to navigate it effectively. Furthermore, the concept of political sensitivity can be applied to any area of difference, such as race, age, sexuality, or appearance. Therefore, another research opportunity is to examine how political sensitivity can be used to navigate political behaviours that are associated with white, middle-aged, heterosexual, and non-

disabled men, as political sensitivity may be a skill minority groups need in the organisation to navigate political environments that may serve their interests.

2.8 Theoretical Contribution

This paper sought to understand the relationship between organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender in organisations. The findings outlined in the review offer several significant contributions. Firstly, this review found support for the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours. Specifically, women lack access to power in organisations because perceptions of power and political behaviour are gendered, which results in differential outcomes for men and women. Women's motivation to engage in political behaviour is negatively impacted by perceptions that organisational politics is a 'man's game' and that political behaviours are stereotypically masculine. The lack of engagement in organisational politics limits women's access to and development of the power bases, including the positional, personal, connection and informational ones needed to advance. Even if women are motivated to engage in organisational politics, doing so may not enhance their personal power to the same extent as men. Given that political behaviours are critical for career success, future research should consider how political behaviours and perceptions of those behaviours are gendered and the differential consequences this has for men and women.

Secondly, current POP conceptualisations and measures have several important limitations, detailed in this review. These include failure to account for contextual factors in perceptions of politics, a lack of a theoretical framework for understanding what politics do, and failure to account for the different levels of analysis when it comes to understanding individual, group or organisational perceptions of politics in organisations. This review concluded that it is critical to account for different levels of analysis to understand the relationship between organisational politics and political behaviour. However, existing approaches, namely the POP framework, do not separate these levels out, and it is therefore not clear how perceptions of organisational politics shape political will and political behaviour. For the first time,

this review presents an alternative gendered OPC framework based on Landells and Albrecht's (2013) OPC framework, which addresses the challenges inherent in existing conceptualisations of organisational politics. The OPC consists of shared perceptions of how individuals build and use power bases (including positional, personal, connection and informational) to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of individual, group or organisational goals. A major contribution of this review is the finding that the OPC framework provides the means for investigating shared perceptions of the gendered nature of organisational politics and access to power, as well as gender differences in the building and use of power bases and the associated consequences of this. To address the current limitations associated with POP model, it is recommended that future research adopt the OPC framework. Additionally, the OPC framework is useful for investigating gender in organisational politics.

Thirdly, following a systematic review of the literature related to organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender in organisations, a gendered OPC framework was outlined. This framework provides the means to explore the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of power bases in organisations and the gendered practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals. This framework provides the means to explore the gendered nature of organisational politics. It also connects these perceptions to individual behaviour and differential outcomes relating to building and maintaining power in organisations. It is recommended that future research adopt the gendered OPC framework to investigate the gendered power bases, including positional, personal, informational and connection power, to further understand the perpetuating gender inequalities in organisations.

2.9 Limitations

Given that the literature domains of organisational politics, political behaviour, and gender in organisations are relatively broad, this review limited the analysis to peer-

reviewed journal articles. Consequently, this review may have excluded relevant articles or practitioner literature. Additionally, there are very few studies examining gender in organisational politics, and many studies examining the topic are dated. However, this review did utilise the snowballing technique (in addition to the rigour of the search strategy outlined in the SLR process) to identify all relevant literature. Therefore, this review does provide a representative sample of studies in the field, even if it excludes some articles as part of the review process.

Given the high number of journal article sources from the United States and organisational politics' contextual nature, these findings may not apply in different cultures. However, this research does provide a practical person–environment framework for assessing organisational politics, which could be used in different cultural contexts. As organisational politics is an emerging field of study, there is limited empirical literature regarding OPC, political behaviour and gender in organisations. Despite this limitation, this review provides a coherent summary of the current literature related to the identified key themes and outlines future research suggestions.

2.10 Conclusions

This study aimed to review existing literature on organisational politics, political behaviour and gender in organisations to better understand the relationship between organisational politics and gender in organisations. Most theoretical and empirical studies on organisational politics consider the construct to be a gender-free phenomenon; however, this review found that organisational politics is gendered, as political behaviour is gendered, resulting in differential outcomes for men and women who engage in it. The review presented a gendered OPC framework, which provides a model for future research to investigate the gendered nature of organisational politics. The review also highlights several important areas for future research examining organisational politics and gender in organisations.

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3 EXPLORING GENDERED ORGANISATIONAL POLITICAL CLIMATES IN MALE-DOMINATED ORGANISATIONS USING A POWER BASE MODEL

ABSTRACT

Organisational politics is often assumed to be gender-neutral, which limits the current understanding of gendered power relations at work. This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational politics by exploring the gendered nature of organisational political climates using a power base model. The approach includes 72 semi-structured interviews with men and women from two organisations, one from the financial services sector and the other from the energy and resource sector. The findings reveal that organisational political climates are gendered in three ways: gendered perceptions of informal processes, gendered political practices, and gender differences in the outcomes associated with these practices. This research highlights the critical role that shared perceptions of the ideal worker, both gendered and political, shape OPC. Political norms individuals need to engage in to build and maintain power bases are established through the shared perceptions individuals hold of the ideal worker. Alignment to the ideal worker is how men and women 'do gender' and 'do politics' to build and maintain power but engaging in gendered political practices within gendered OPC results in differential outcomes for men and women when it comes to building and maintaining power. The gender gap in political power relations at work is crucial for the persistent gender gap in senior positions. The study's key contributions and practical implications are discussed, and areas for future research are identified.

Keywords:

Organisational politics, political behaviour, gender, gendered organisation, systematic literature review

3.1 Introduction

The persistent gender gap in leadership positions in corporations is a widely examined issue in management research (Rink et al. 2019). Women are almost ten times less likely to be represented in top leadership positions than men (Flabbi et al. 2019). Research has largely examined why women still encounter obstacles in being promoted to senior leadership positions, despite women's increased labour force participation, considerable qualifications, and experience (Rink et al. 2019). This limitation is known as the 'glass ceiling effect' whereby invisible barriers exist in organisations that prevent career advancement for women (Acker 1999). Reinforcing this view, Eagly and Fisher (2009) state that even in post-industrial societies, a power gap exists between men and women in most organisations. Men still occupy most leadership positions, and women continue to hold support positions (Eagly and Fisher 2009).

Furthermore, Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) maintain that masculine structures generally dominate organisations, making it difficult for white women to succeed; despite the hypothesis that they have the right social and cultural capital to do so. Mann (1995) argues that the underrepresentation of women in top management is partly due to them being less successful in acquiring organisational power than their male counterparts. This paper aims to examine the gender power gap in organisations and extend current research by exploring the gendered nature of organisational political climates (OPCs) and political behaviour and the associated consequences for women's and men's career advancement.

An individual's perceived effectiveness and organisational advancement depend on the development, acquisition, and use of power built and maintained by engaging in organisational politics (Aguinis and Henle 2001). Pfeffer (1992) describes politics as power in action. Existing theoretical and empirical studies essentially consider organisational politics a gender-free phenomenon (Doldor et al. 2013). However, over the last two decades, there has been a small body of research examining the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours, such as Hall-Taylor (2002), Davey (2008a), and Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013). Organisational politics and political behaviours maintain gender power structures in organisations (Hall-Taylor 2002), while gender inequality in organisations is maintained through gendered power dynamics and social structures (Acker 1999). Organisational politics can be considered as power in

action and the grounds for power based conflicts and the associated gender-based power struggles (Nicolson 2015b). This paper aims to extend prior research on organisational politics and gender in organisations by examining how and why organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered and the associated outcomes for women's and men's career advancement.

The paper is structured into four sections, starting with an overview of the relevant bodies of literature, including organisational politics and gender in organisations, followed by an outline of the qualitative exploratory methodology used in this research study. Then the empirical findings are presented, including an overview of each of the dimensions that comprise gendered OPCs. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and empirical contributions and future research considerations.

3.1.1 Gender in Organisational Politics

One of the critical challenges facing the field of organisational politics is the fragmented nature of the theoretical and empirical literature across several literature domains, including power, social networks, coalitions, decision-making, top-management teams and social influence tactics (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Each of these domains offers a different and often independent perspective of organisational politics. The existing literature is relatively fragmented, with several views that do not combine to form a comprehensive 'theory of organisational politics' (Buchanan 2008). The various conceptualisations of organisational politics make it difficult to validate one measure of the construct over another. While organisational politics is a relatively under-theorised field, there is a growing body of research examining political behaviours and how they are used to acquire power and navigate organisational life (Kimura 2015). Political behaviour has been described as aligning various interest groups and coalitions to enhance power in organisations (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Krackhardt and Mintzberg (1985) and Pfeffer (1992) argue that individuals need to influence others to succeed in organisations effectively and that this requires political skill (Brass and Burkhardt 1993). As Pfeffer (1992) states, politics and power are intertwined, with political behaviour being considered as power in action.

Power is embedded within social interactions in organisations, and those with power are aware of the need to maintain their influence (Shapiro et al. 2011). Power develops from

an accumulation of resources throughout a person's career. Therefore, the development of power parallels the development of a person's career, known as the path to power hypothesis (Ragins and Sundstrom 1989). Research examining gender in organisations should explicitly address power, as gender relations are power relations (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998b). Examining the informal nature of power, which includes the political behaviours individuals engage in to build and maintain power, is critical to understanding how these practices are gendered (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998b). Men and women have differential opportunities to acquire and exhibit behaviours associated with power, making it more difficult for women to become active participants in organisational politics (Mann 1995). Research by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) reveals a consistent gender difference in power access and development, favouring men. Women continue to lack access to the structural basis of power in organisations, such as positional power because perceptions of power are gendered. Women engaging in organisational politics may not serve them in the same way it does men (Davey 2008a). As men continue to have strong power bases in organisations, exploring how this is achieved and maintained will contribute to resolving persistent gender inequalities in organisations.

Gender differences in power are derived from the gendered nature of social structures, whereby society values men and masculinity more than women and femininity (Schein 1978). Joan Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations recognise that gender is embedded in the social structures and institutions, which shape the processes and systems in organisations (Acker 2006). Gendered substructures, including organisational processes, culture, interpersonal interactions, and the value companies place on different gender identities, are invisible processes that embed and reproduce gendered assumptions and perpetuate gender inequalities (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019). Hall-Taylor (2002) argues that organisational politics and political behaviours are used to maintain gendered power structures in organisations. This perspective argues that women remain systemically and systematically excluded from full participation in organisations because of gendered power relations.

Acker's (2012) theory of gendered organisations includes the concept of gendered substructures, which is helpful for understanding the persistent gender power gap. The gendered substructure in organisations includes invisible processes in organizations in which gendered assumptions about women and men, as well as femininity and

masculinity, are embedded and reproduced, perpetuating gender inequality. Gendered substructures include organising processes, organisational culture, interactions on the job and gendered identities, which continually recreate gender inequalities (Acker, 2012). This study explores how organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered substructures that create and reproduce the gender power gap in leadership positions. This study will examine the gendered nature of organisational politics to better account for why and how the gender gap in leadership persists.

3.2 Examining Gender in Organisational Politics: A Power-Base Model

The organisational political climate (OPC) model, proposed by Landells and Albrecht (2013), is a valuable framework for examining gender in organisational politics. OPC is defined as *“The shared perceptions of the building and use of power in practices and workarounds regarding policies and procedures to influence decision making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals”* (Landells and Albrecht 2013 p. 358). Based on this definition, employees form cognitive interpretations regarding the nature and meaning of organisational events, processes and decision-making; these perceptions inform employees’ behaviour. As outlined in Figure 3-1, OPC consists of the shared perceptions individuals have of the political practices used to build and maintain four power bases, including connection, informational, personal, and positional power (Landells and Albrecht 2013).

Organisational Political Climate			
Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power

Figure 3-1 Organisational Political Climate: A Power-Base Model (Landells and Albrecht 2013)

While climate perceptions occur at an individual level, it is noted that similar individuals are attracted to similar environments (Treadway et al. 2005). They also tend to be socialised in the same way within these environments because they are exposed to similar features within these contexts (Drory 1993). This interactive and reciprocal process then facilitates the development of shared interpretations of an OPC and

provides the basis for behaviour and affect (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Shared perceptions influence the relationship between organisational context and individual responses (Treadway et al. 2005). Therefore, the OPC model provides a useful framework for examining the relationship between gendered OPC (context) and gender differences in political behaviours (individual response) and the associated outcomes for men and women.

Additionally, the OPC framework accounts for both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics. Yates and Hartley (2021) state there is an increasing recognition that organisational politics is a fact of life and engaging in political behaviours is important to achieving personal goals. Ellen III, Ferris, and Buckley's (2013) research argue that leaders engage in political behaviour and effectively influence, persuade, and collaborate with others to achieve outcomes. Therefore, using the OPC framework provides an opportunity to examine both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics.

This research study will explore how organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered to better understand why the gender power gap persists. However, Acker (2012) argues that research also needs to account for racial and class processes, which are essential in the ongoing reproduction of inequalities. Specifically, Acker (2006, p.443) maintains that all organizations have inequality regimes which are *"loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organizations"*. For Acker (2006), inequality regimes have six components, including *"bases of inequality, the shape and degree of inequality, organizing processes that create and recreate inequalities, the invisibility of inequalities, the legitimacy of inequalities, and the controls and compliance that prevent protest against inequalities"* (pp.44-454). Inequality regimes create systematic disparities in employees' power and control over resources, decision-making processes, promotion and development opportunities, remuneration and rewards, and workplace relations (Healy et al., 2017).

As outlined, this research will use the OPC framework to explore how OPC are gendered through developing and maintaining four key power bases: positional, personal, informational and connection. While this study will explore the gendered nature of OPC, following Acker's (2012) recommendation, the framework could be expanded further to

include an examination of racializing and class-creating processes to account for the gender, class, and race power gap.

Therefore, this research study will use an abductive reasoning process, drawing on the OPC framework, which identifies four (power bases) generative mechanisms, that make up OPC. The aim of the study is to explain their activation modes.

Existing research related to the gendered nature of these power bases is outlined in the following section.

3.2.1.1 Gendered Positional Power and Promotion Processes

Disparities in promotion rates are not caused by women's lack of desire to advance. Instead, men and women tend to associate leadership competence and power with displaying masculine behaviours (Rink et al. 2019). Ledet and Henley (2000) argue that perceptions of power are, in fact, gendered, as their research finds that power appears to be more aligned with male than with female stereotypes. Stereotypical masculinity seems to substitute for power in the workplace (Ledet and Henley 2000). Therefore, perceptions of women's power may be distorted by gender stereotypes (Rink et al. 2019). Consequently, powerful positions may lose their perceived power when women take on the roles (Ledet and Henley 2000). Given this, future research needs to examine if women have the same access to positional power, which refers to power derived from a formal position and the perceived ability to offer the rewards or punishment that men do (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Individuals with more authority will have more power and, therefore, greater opportunity to participate in the informal aspects of work like politics and networking, which in turn creates more opportunities to acquire positional power, such as using powerful contacts to gain support for a promotion (Krackhardt, 1990).

Positional power is less available to women, as women are less likely to engage in masculine behaviours that command respect and authority than men do and are less likely to be able to use their position to exert influence over others (Carli 2001). Organisational structures and gender-biased stereotypes can make it difficult for women to attain positions that offer legitimate power. For example, Lyness and Thompson (2000) found that women had to perform better than their male colleagues to prove themselves, and they require more accomplishments than men to be considered for a promotion. Positional power is gendered because power is gendered (Ledet and Henley 2000).

Gender stereotypes ensure that women are expected to be meek, mild, collaborative, and self-sacrificing. Consequently, many women may be reluctant to engage in the masculine behaviours associated with positional power to access opportunities to advance, limiting their ability to build and maintain their positional power-base (Shapiro et al. 2011). Given that Ledet and Henley's (2000) research finds that perceived power predicts career advancement, future research needs to examine gender differences in perceptions of women's positional power and the associated consequences of this to better account for the gender gap in women's advancement.

Positional power also allows individuals to exert influence and control over resources, such as bending the rules to their favour or using their positions to allocate rewards (Landells and Albrecht 2013). From a gender perspective, as men maintain the dominant position in organisations, they are more likely to control resources, rewards, and decision-making processes in organisations to their benefit (Mann 1995). Acker (1999) states that masculinity is created and defended in organisations by men engaging in homosociality, whereby they form solidarity groups that exclude women. This study will investigate if men are more likely to use their positional power to support, promote and reward other men and if women, therefore, have less access to the collective positional power of the dominant group, which contributes to the gender gap in senior positions. Men maintain their dominant position in organisations by using their positional power to advance other men (Kankkunen 2014). For example, Lyness and Thompson's (2000) research finds that mentoring is more strongly related to success for men than for women, as organisational processes associated with career advancement may serve to keep power with men who make up the dominant group. While existing research supports the gendered nature of positional power, research is needed to examine how men and women engage in political practices to build and maintain their positional power and if these practices are gendered, resulting in different career outcomes for men and women. This study will examine the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of positional power, the associated political behaviours men and women engage in to build and maintain this power base, and if this results in differential promotion outcomes.

3.2.1.2 Gendered Personal Power and Opportunities for Development

While women face barriers to opportunities for advancement and development that men do not, empirical research detailing how and why these barriers exist is limited (Rink et

al. 2019). Schein's (1978) empirical investigations into managerial sex-role stereotyping in the 1970s revealed that male and female managers perceived that the characteristics associated with managerial success were more likely to be held by men than women. The think manager–think male belief means that both men and women are likely to favour a male candidate over a female candidate for the same position, resulting in a bias against women in the managerial selection, development, placement, promotion, and training decisions (Schein 2001). It can be argued that women are less likely to be chosen for high-profile development opportunities such as overseas assignments because women are less likely to be perceived as possessing managerial attributes (Lyness and Thompson 2000). Senior male leaders are also more likely to sponsor more junior males by providing them with access to career advice, development opportunities and organisational resources (Rink et al. 2019). Women are less likely to receive this support; they are more likely to struggle to access the development opportunities needed to advance. Additionally, women often receive stereotypical assumptions about their suitability for high-profile assignments – like the belief that women are unwilling to relocate due to family considerations (Lyness and Thompson 2000). While men are more likely to sponsor other men and develop individuals who display the masculine attributes associated with competence, direct evidence is relatively scarce (Rink et al. 2019).

Gender stereotyping also makes it difficult for women to access development opportunities because they may not benefit from using their personal power to access opportunities like men do, as influence tactics are gendered (Lyness and Thompson 2000). Personal power represents the power associated with interpersonal influence, charisma, and charm (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Research investigating individual differences in political behaviour suggests that men are more involved in informal influence tactics than women; however, based on existing research, it is not clear why this is the case (Drory and Beaty 1991). One possible explanation is that playing politics may be considered a more stereotypical image for men than women. Political skill has been found to interact with gender tactics affecting supervisor liking, development and promotability ratings, and consequently, women are more likely to be the target of political behaviour (Shaughnessy et al. 2011). Doldor et al. (2013) found that women do engage in masculine political practices to access career development opportunities; however, engaging in this behaviour was draining for some women because it is primarily

associated with masculine norms. Future research needs to examine how influence tactics are gendered and if this limits women's motivation and opportunity to benefit from engaging in these tactics in the same way as men. Exploring this research gap will help to clarify if women are less likely to engage in informal influence processes such as organisational politics to build their personal power base and more likely to rely on formal means of career advancement, such as obtaining qualifications or working hard, because informal influencing behaviours are stereotypically masculine (Buchanan 2008). Existing research has also failed to explore the role of context in the use of influence tactics, that is, how gendered OPCs shape individual behaviour (Landells and Albrecht 2013). By examining the relationship between gendered OPC and political behaviours, future research can better account for why and how women and men engage in organisational politics and if this results in differential opportunities to access development opportunities.

3.2.1.3 Gendered Informational Power and Information-Sharing Processes

The dominant group in an organisation sets the norms for all other groups (Chao et al. 1994). When applied to organisational politics, it can be argued that as Caucasian men maintain a dominant position in most organisations, they set the political norms. Therefore, members who understand and adhere to those norms will likely benefit (Chao et al. 1994). Blass et al. (2007) argue that politics is a 'white man's game', whether consciously or not. They claim that the rules, boundaries, and intricacies of organisational politics are selectively shared with insiders, predominantly white men. Future research needs to investigate if this lack of information creates challenges for women and minorities who may not select appropriate political tactics for each situation or execute them effectively due to this lack of understanding. When it comes to developing informational power, which includes formal or informal access to information as well as the opportunity to share or distribute information, it can be reasoned that women have less access to informational power than men; however, research supporting this argument is scarce (Landells and Albrecht 2013).

Informational power can be derived from developing personal relationships and investing time and energy to understand a political environment and individual agendas or using the grapevine to share or gain access to information (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Sex-role stereotyping may also exclude women from informal networks, limiting their access to informational power (Schein 1978). As women are perceived as less powerful, the

principle of reciprocity in developing informal relationships will not apply because men have less incentive to invest time in developing informal relationships with women at work (Kottis 1993). Furthermore, Man (1995) argues that informational power is often used against women, as men exclude women through homosocial practices, limiting the information women receive. As men make up most leadership positions in today's organisations, it can be argued that those men have greater control over information because men engage in homosocial practices through the formation of informal networks and coalitions, which often exclude women. Future research should examine if women lack access to informal information because of exclusion from informal relationships with men. This limits their ability to understand and navigate the OPC.

Cognitive accuracy is a base of power because knowing who has power is the first step to influencing powerful people, as individuals are aware of who makes up powerful coalitions and informal networks in organisations (Krackhardt 1990). Informational power is built up over time through the development of relationships and access to networks (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Many aspects of organisational structure, including hierarchy, departments, and the number of leadership positions, can impact the flow of information (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Those in powerful positions often have access to information that they can use politically to manipulate situations (Schein 2001). As women are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions, they may not access important information that men do, reducing their informational power (Schein 2001). This also makes it harder for women to become active participants in organisational politics, as they lack the informational power required to 'play the game' (Schein 2001).

Additionally, women may be less willing to engage in the (masculine) political behaviours required to obtain informational power. Davey's (2008) research found that women's descriptions of barriers to advancement were, in fact, descriptions of political barriers. In this study, women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours as these were described as aggressive, competitive, overconfident, and anti-social traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to achieve it. Future research also needs to examine if women lack less cognitive accuracy regarding OPC because of their lack of informational power and motivation to engage in the behaviours required to build this power base.

3.2.1.4 Gendered Connection Power and Networking

Connection power includes power derived from access to and the connections formed with others because of networking and relationship building (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Connection power is formed through the amount of time the individuals invest in cultivating networks, aligning themselves with powerful individuals and managing relationships at work (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Brass (1984) found that centrality in work-related communication networks is a robust predictor of power (Krackhardt 1990). If power is derived from the ability to influence the target, then meta-power is an indirect power obtained by knowing and using the power others must affect the target. Meta-power is the combined power of the network of powerful others a person has access to (Krackhardt 1990).

Internal networks are developed using connection power. Davidson and Cooper (1983) state that power is derived from politics and networks, and power is still mainly held by men. Mann (1995) states that informal networks often exclude women and are one of the most important sources of power in organisations (Man 1995). Understanding informal networks is critical when considering the power and gender differences in organisations. Acker's (1990) gendered theory of organisations maintains that masculinity is created and defended in organisations by men engaging in homosociality. Additionally, the social closure theory, outlined by Tomaskovic-Devey (1993), argues that men may be unwilling to interact and assist women as they want to preserve their position and advantage (Watkins and Smith 2014).

Consequently, gendered networks and networking practices mean that women have a limited number of connections with powerful individuals (Watkins and Smith 2014). Specifically, de Klerk and Verreynne (2017) found that because of institutional barriers (i.e., barriers to entry and a lack of inclusion), women have a limited number of strong ties with individuals who lack influence in organisations. Watkins and Smith's (2014) research found that when women worked in less masculine environments, they had equal access to positions of authority. This research suggests that women can more easily attain leadership roles in less masculine settings (Watkins and Smith 2014). To better understand why women, lack access to informal networks, which limits their access to resources and power, future research needs to examine how OPC is gendered and how this may limit women's connection power.

Even if women engage in the same networking behaviours as men, it can be argued that they are unlikely to benefit from these behaviours in the same way as men. Specifically, Bras (1985) found that men and women do not differ in their networking behaviour; rather, women are perceived as less influential than men and not included in the same way. These findings concluded that women are not only aware of informal networks but also more adept at building networks than men. While networking behaviours may not differ between men and women, there are differential benefits gained from engaging in these behaviours. For example, Lyness and Thompson (2000) found that mentoring is more strongly related to career success for men than women because organisational processes associated with career advancement, such as informal network support, may keep power with men who make up the dominant group. Also, Forret and Dougherty's (2004) research concluded that gender impacts the utility of networking as a career-enhancing strategy because networking behaviour is more beneficial for men than women. Specifically, increased internal visibility (from networking behaviour) was related to promotions and increased compensation for men but not women.

Similarly, Hetty van Emmerik et al. (2006) found that women engaged in more informal networking than men. However, these activities resulted in stronger career satisfaction for men than women. Connections build the social capital needed to ascend into positions of power and maintain that position within the organisational (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). Future research needs to examine if the homosocial practices men engage in to maintain their dominance limit women's access to powerful networks and if this limits women's career advancement.

3.2.2 Perceptions of the Ideal Worker: Why OPC Is Gendered

Acker argues that the informal interactions people engage in while undertaking work are one of the key organising processes that produce inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Acker (2006) argues that informal interactions and practices in which class, race and gender inequalities are created in mutually reinforcing processes are often overlooked in research. Day-to-day interactions re-create gender and racial inequalities in subtle and unspoken ways, and the informal nature of these interactions makes them difficult to research. Healy et al. (2011) and Wright (2011) found that informal interactions reproduce inequalities and undermine formal processes (like formal promotion and development policies) that exist to ensure greater equity. For example, white men may exclude women

from informal development discussions or networking events, which limits their access to development opportunities. This study argues employee norms and shared understanding of behaviours they need to engage in to navigate informal gendered political interactions are informed by shared perceptions of Acker's (1990) ideal worker.

Acker's theory of gendered organisations examines the rules and codes that prescribe workplace behaviour based on people's shared perceptions of the abstract 'ideal' worker, which includes someone who can work long hours and is free from dependent care responsibilities (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019). The ideal worker concept, as theorised by Acker (1990), maintains that organisations favour individuals who display stereotypically masculine attributes, as this ideal worker is free from dependent care responsibilities and can dedicate all their time to the organisation as their primary responsibility is to undertake paid work (Poorhosseinzadeh and Strachan 2020a). The ideal worker concept provides a framework for understanding why men maintain their dominant position in organisations (Acker 1999). Specifically, the ideal worker reflects gender stereotypes that society holds for how men and women should behave (Acker 2012). When men and women do not fit the ideal worker image, it challenges and limits their career advancement (Charles 2014). For example, when it comes to promotions, the criteria used are often based on a preconceived idea of who should perform the role, which includes individuals like the ideal worker rather than individuals with the qualifications required to do the job (Cross 2010). The lack of transparency surrounding promotion processes negatively impacts women's advancement into senior management positions. As a result, women are often not free from dependent care responsibilities and cannot commit all their time to the organisation. As women do not fit the ideal worker standard, they are believed to be less suitable for senior positions. Therefore, the 'ideal' worker is associated with stereotypically masculine characteristics; consequently, it is assumed that men are better suited to working life than women (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019).

Shared perceptions of the ideal worker play a part in the day-to-day social practices in organisations (Acker 2006). While the gendered nature of power bases may explain how OPC is gendered, why OPC is gendered is less clear. Ellen III et al. (2013) argue that politics in organisations has been investigated for decades, but despite this research, there is a limited examination of the link between organisational politics and political behaviour, which is often taken for granted. Research has found that many factors can

shape individual perceptions of the political environment, and these perceptions form the basis for individual responses (Ellen III et al. 2013). While many researchers have used Acker's ideal worker to understand gender at work, there is limited research examining how shared perceptions of the ideal worker shape individual behaviour. Additionally, research examining the specific characteristics of the ideal worker is scarce (Poorhosseinzadeh and Strachan 2020b).

This research examines how informal political interactions are gendered and informed through shared perceptions of the ideal worker. Davey's (2008) research finds that political behaviours required to access power in organisations can be considered stereotypically male. Additionally, Nicolson (2015) found that women and men respond to or negotiate the political rules set by leaders in an organisation to be successful. As men occupy the dominant position in most leadership teams, it can be argued that norms regarding political behaviours are masculine. These norms are created and maintained through the shared perception of men. Women have the ideal worker, which sets the standard for the political behaviour individuals to engage in and the perceptions they form of gendered OPC. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how inequality is created and reproduced through the gendered informal political interactions individuals engage in to build networks and access promotions, development opportunities, and information. Additionally, this research aims to understand how gendered informal political behaviours are informed through men's and women's shared perceptions of the ideal worker. In doing so, this study extends Acker's (1990a) work by exploring if the ideal worker is both gendered and political and whether this serves to maintain the gendered nature of political behaviours and OPC.

3.3 Research Aims and Philosophical Approach

Leadership studies are dominated by positivist and interpretivist traditions (Bhaskar, 1978). The critical realism epistemological framework, developed by Roy Bhaskar (1978), is helpful for investigating how OPC and political behaviours are gendered. Therefore, the research philosophy underpinning the research design follows critical realism. Critical realism holds that the world exists independently of people's perceptions; however, subjective interpretations influence how it is perceived and experienced (Edwards et al. 2014). The central argument of critical realism is that meanings are a real force in social

life that can operate beyond human awareness. Therefore, the aim is to understand the underlying mechanisms within the social world (Brinkmann 2017).

Critical realism explores the structures, generative mechanisms, and contextual conditions responsible for patterns of observed events (Bhaskar, 1998). Based on observed contexts and events (empirical level), some researchers have investigated the deeper causal mechanisms and structures that generate these events (Brannan et al., 2017). This research will follow an abductive approach drawing on Bhaskar's (1998) four steps for abduction. Specifically, the first step is to describe the events of the phenomenon of interest; the second step is to reproductively explain the mechanisms; the third step is to eliminate false hypotheses; and finally, the fourth step is to correctly identify the mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1998). This study follows this approach as the research aims to explain how the gender power gap persists. Therefore, the causal explanation for the gender power gap will be derived from the discovery of how the mechanisms, practices and outcomes give rise to the gender power gap and interact to generate different paths to power for men and women.

The central aim of this research is to examine how and why organisational politics is gendered. Specifically, this research will seek to address the following questions:

- Research question 1: Do men and women perceive OPC as gendered, and why?
- Research question 2: How do men and women use the four power bases that makeup OPC to navigate promotion, information sharing, networking, and development processes?
- Research question 3: Does the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour result in differential outcomes for men's and women's career advancement, and why?

Given these research aims, this study will adopt a critical realist perspective for several reasons. First, typical positivist and empiricist approaches to research often disregard the broader context and how this shapes the research phenomena. Consequently, research findings are limited to describing but not explaining empirical events. A critical realist perspective is particularly relevant to this research as it accounts for both subjective meanings and contextual factors that shape those meanings (Collier 1997). One research aim is to understand the relationship between gendered OPC and individual political

behaviours. Adopting a critical realist perspective will help explain why and how individuals engage in organisational politics and political behaviour, considering the gendered nature of both constructs.

Second, in contrast to a positivist ontology, which equates reality to a set of recordable events, or a constructivist approach, which reduces ontology to discourse, critical realists adopt a stratified ontology that separates the empirical from the actual and the real (Edwards et al. 2014). Reality is then created across three domains, as outlined in Figure 3-2. These include the empirical (including what we perceive to be real), actual (including the events that occur in space and time that might be different from what we perceive), and real (including mechanisms and structures that generate the world).

The real domain includes generative mechanisms and structures with causal powers, which behave in particular ways under certain conditions (Bhaskar, 1978). The activation and interaction of causal powers generate events that compose the actual domain conditions (Bhaskar, 1978). Mechanisms include social mechanisms, a sequence of social events and processes (Gross 2009). This study seeks to understand the mechanisms that generate gendered OPC and political behaviour to explain the relationship between these two constructs (the cause) and the gender power gap in organisations (the effect). Specifically, this study explores how individuals engage in gendered political behaviour to build and maintain power at work.

Separating mechanisms, practices, and outcomes is essential for understanding the relationship between gendered political contexts, political behaviour and how individuals build and maintain power at work. While mechanisms exist independently of what is observed, certain circumstances and interactions can trigger the activation of the causal power of mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1978). Consequently, the activation and effects of mechanisms vary depending on the context. Therefore, when applied to this research study, it is more likely, when exploring the nature of gender in organisational politics within male-dominated environments, that organisational politics will be gendered through the gendered political behaviours individuals engage in to build and maintain their power bases. In less male-dominated environments, these mechanisms still exist, but they may not contribute to the gender power gap similarly—as the effects may differ.

Table 3-1 The Three Domains of Critical Realism

Domain	Research Questions	Research Application
Empirical: including what we perceive to be real.	Does the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour result in differential outcomes for men and women in building and maintaining power bases?	Outcomes: Gender differences in experiences of promotions, information sharing, networking, and accessing high-profile assignments.
Actual: including the events that occur in space and time that might be different from what we perceive.	Are power bases gendered, and do men and women use their power bases to navigate promotion processes, information sharing, networking, and development processes?	Practices: Informal promotion processes, information-sharing practices, informal networks, and informal development processes.
Real: including mechanisms and structures that generate the world.	How do men and women engage in political practices to build and maintain power bases across the four organisational processes, and are these practices gendered?	Mechanism: The four power bases that make up organisational political climates.

Third, this research will examine these mechanisms by adopting a power-base model. Specifically, this research will determine if the four power bases that make up gendered OPC, including positional power, informational power, personal power, and personal power, serve as underlying mechanisms that give rise to gendered perceptions of OPC. Examining the actual properties of gendered OPC in different contexts will further our understanding of the mechanisms that make up those environments and, in short, answer the question of how OPC are gendered.

This study follows an abductive reasoning research process, which draws on existing knowledge, as the generative mechanisms that create gendered OPC are already identified in the literature, and the aim is to explain the activation modes (Bhaskar, 1978). While a critical realist approach does not specify the type of data collection, researchers using this philosophical approach are often guided by an underdeveloped domain-specific theoretical framework (Edwards et al. 2014). This study will adopt the OPC model proposed by Landells and Albrecht (2013) to explore the gendered nature of

organisational politics. The existing literature examining gender differences in the four power bases, including positional, personal, information and connection power, links certain organisational processes (practices) to each power base (mechanisms). For example, the mechanism of connection power is used to navigate informal networks; informational power is used to access informal information; personal power is used to access informal development opportunities; and positional power is used to access promotions. As outlined in Table 3-2, the theoretical framework underpinning this research study provides the structure for examining the context, practices, mechanisms, and outcomes. Broadly, Denyer, Tranfield and Van Aken (2008) define context as the external and internal environmental factors that surround human actors and influence behavioural change; for example, this can include gendered perceptions of the ideal worker. Practices include the practices managers can use to influence behaviour, such as informal promotion and development processes, information sharing and networking practices. Mechanisms in certain contexts are triggered by the practices, for example, when an individual uses connection power to access informal networks in organisations. Outcomes relate to the specific intervention, for example, when individuals use connection power to build informal networks, which provides access to informal mentors or sponsors who can advocate for the individual's career advancement.

Table 3-2 A Framework for Examining Gendered OPC

Context	Gendered Organisational Political Climate			
Intervention (Actual)	Networking	Information Sharing	Development Opportunities	Promotion Processes
Mechanism (Real)	Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power
Perceived outcomes (Empirical)				

Therefore, this research will adopt an abductive research approach. Drawing on the theoretically informed gendered OPC framework, this research aims to explain the mechanisms activation modes: how organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered. This study will examine how individuals engage power bases to navigate informal practices and the associated outcomes of this behaviour. This research aims to

contribute to the current understanding of how OPC is gendered and why men and women have different paths to power in organisations.

3.4 Method

This research adopts a critical realism perspective to explore and identify patterns of subjective meanings and individual experiences of gendered OPC, using a power base model. The aim is to explain why and how OPC is gendered. The methodological purpose is to elicit contextual rich data about gender in OPC. Given the emphasis on the context within a gendered OPC model, by adopting a critical realist perspective, this research accounts for both subjective meanings and contextual factors that shape those meanings (Collier 1994). Critical realism does not specify a particular methodological approach. However, given that this study aims to explore the gendered nature of OPC using a powerbase model, which is an emerging field of interest with developing theoretical and empirical literature, an exploratory approach was deemed appropriate. Aligned with the research aim, this study's philosophical and methodological approach examined the context, practices, mechanisms, and outcomes associated with gendered OPC.

Following Edmondson's (2014) approach to methodological fit, as this study is exploratory, the methodology relies on a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews to examine employees' shared perceptions of OPC, as outlined in Appendix M. Specifically, methodological fit refers to the internal consistency of the research when it comes to the research question, aims, design, and theoretical contribution (Edmondson, and McManus, 2007). Broadly Edmondson and McManus (2007) outline three types of fit, based on the state of prior research and theory. This includes nascent, intermediate, and mature. Following this framework, it is clear this study's research fit is nascent for several reasons. First, the research follows an open-ended enquiry into the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. Second, the research will adopt a qualitative approach and examine the data for meaning. Mainstream approaches to studying organisational politics largely consider politics a gender-free phenomenon (Doldor et al. 2013). Buchanan (2008) states that the nature and significance of gender differences in organisational politics are not well understood, and the subtle and complex nature of these differences lends itself to qualitative research. Third, in terms of data collection, the research will rely on semi-structured interviews, as gendered OPC and political behaviour are fairly new constructs, with no formal measures for gathering data

(Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Fourth, the goal of the data analysis undertaken in this study is to identify patterns; therefore, this study uses thematic content analysis to code the data for evidence of the constructs (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Finally, in doing so, this study aims to contribute to existing theoretical perspectives on organisational politics and gender in organisations by demonstrating how organisational politics is a gendered phenomenon and enabling future empirical research to explore these issues (Edmondson and McManus, 2007).

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from Cranfield University.

3.5 Sample

3.5.1 Choice of organisation

This research examines gendered perceptions of OPC in male-dominated organisations for several reasons. Firstly, the overarching aim of this research is to examine why the gender power gap exists. Examining the gendered nature of OPC is vital as research by Broadridge and Simpson (2011) examining 25 years of gender in management research finds that men managers rather than women managers are more likely to be in senior positions, be better paid, have access for formal power and roles models and are less likely to experience harassment and discrimination. Workplaces privilege heterosexual masculine practices and values and suppress feminine and non-hegemonic masculinity (Broadridge and Simpson, 2011).

Their review also found that both men and women can be slow to perceive gender-based disadvantage in the context of work, preferring to believe that the system is fair. Gender issues are also likely to be perceived as solved, despite evidence to the contrary. Broadridge and Simpson (2011) argue that research needs to provide explicit evidence of how workplace practices are gendered and serve to limit women's advancement. Sheerin and Linehan (2017) argue that by examining the lived experiences and everyday practices of employees within an overtly gendered culture, like a male-dominated organisation, researchers will gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between masculine cultures, gendered practices, and inequality at work. Therefore, to understand how gendered political practices contribute to the gender power gap, this research must examine these issues within a male-dominated context.

This is particularly important given that Broadridge and Simpson's (2011) review finds that masculinity in management exists in most organisations and may have even intensified. Management and culture of organisations can privilege some forms of masculinity and shape behaviour as masculinity is intrinsically tied to contemporary management views and practices. Lewis and Simson (2007) argue that while organisations may value more stereotypically feminine practices, gendered hierarchies can re-emerge as stereotypically feminine practices and values are brought into the masculine domain. Using the OPC framework, this research will examine how organisational politics is gendered within male-dominated environments and the differential outcomes this creates for men and women. Future research can then examine how these gendered practices and outcomes differ in less masculine environments.

Examining how OPC and political behaviours are gendered within a male-dominated environment is important, as the gendered nature of these constructs is more likely to be heightened within this environment. Research by Sheerin and Linehan (2017) argues that within male-dominated workplaces, the difference between men and women is heightened, and masculinity is enacted by the exclusionary behaviours men engage in to build and maintain their power, which positions women as the other and sustains masculine cultures. This research aims to understand why the gender power gap remains entrenched in most organisations. Examining this research question within male-dominated contexts is helpful, as men are more likely to engage in gendered practices that sustain the gender power gap.

Additionally, the embedded intergroup relations theory suggests that when the demographic characteristics of individuals occupying positions of power (which tends to be men in organisations) reflect the broader society in which they are embedded (which values masculinity over femininity), those individuals will have a greater advantage in accessing power (Baskerville Watkins et al. 2014). For example, male dominance in society and workplaces is likely to put men at a distinct advantage as stereotypically masculine attributes such as competitiveness, aggressiveness, and the ability to work long hours may be more strongly associated with the 'ideal' worker and perceived as important for success, compared to stereotypically female characteristics such as being democratic, caring and emotionally intelligent. Women working in male-dominated organisations are less likely to occupy powerful positions and more likely to identify the

social and political behaviours that make it difficult for women to advance (Baskerville Watkins et al. 2014).

Therefore, this study will examine the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviours in male-dominated organisations where men make up most positions of power because organisational demography affects the culture and value system within organisations (Baskerville Watkins et al. 2014). Specifically, the two organisations (renamed EnergyCo and FinanceCo to ensure anonymity) were selected to participate in the study as they are male-dominated, with women making up less than 10% of senior positions at the time of undertaking the interviews. However, both organisations claimed to have policies and processes to address the gender gap in leadership, including gender recruitment targets, leadership programs for women, and women-focused networking and mentoring programs.

Additionally, the two organisations are based in two different locations, Australia and England, respectively, and within different operating contexts. The industries include the energy and resource sectors and the financial services sector. Given that any number of causal processes may affect the mechanism observed, by examining two organisations in different operating and geographical contexts, this design will make it possible to understand the mechanisms observed and how they differ in other contexts (Edwards et al. 2014).

3.5.2 Choice of participants

Shared perceptions of gendered OPC may differ by organisational level, as Doldor et al. (2013) findings reveal that an individual's willingness to engage in organisational politics is informed by their views and experiences. These attitudes will change over time. Additionally, Mainiero (1994) argues that individuals develop an awareness of OPC through a political maturation process; as individuals are socialised into an organisation, they become aware of the political norms. To account for individual differences when it comes to political maturation, this research uses a stratified purposive sampling strategy (Ritchie and Lewis 2014). Specifically, a sample of 12 non-managerial, 12 managerial, and 12 senior leadership participants were identified from two organisations, as outlined in Table 3-3, resulting in 72 participants. Of the 72 participants, five were from racial minority backgrounds. Both organisations are overwhelmingly Caucasian, as racial

minorities make up less than 20% of the employee population, and in managerial positions and above, this representation drops to less than 10%.

Each of the groups outlined in Table 5 may display variation in their perceptions of gendered OPC based on their exposure to it, but given that participants within each of these groups will be at similar levels within the organisation, they can be compared (Ritchie and Lewis 2014). As this study used a purposive sampling strategy, participants were selected by a gatekeeper from Human Resources who ensured an equal number of participants in each group.

Table 3-3 Purposive Sampling Strategy

Organisation	Gender	Organisational Level		
		Non-managerial participants: The position does not have any supervisory accountability.	Managerial participants: The position had direct supervisory accountability.	Senior leader participants: The position has leadership accountability within the organisation for teams or groups of individuals.
EnergyCo -Australian-based organisation in the Energy and Resource sector.	Female	6	6	6
	Male	6	6	6
FinanceCo - An English-based organisation in the Financial Services sector.	Female	6	6	6
	Male	6	6	6

3.6 Data Collection and Analysis

A total of 72 semi-structured interviews were conducted across two organisations, including one in Australia from the energy and resource sector and one in England from the financial services sector. These interviews provided access to participants' lived experiences of gendered OPC and gendered political behaviour. While the sample size is large for a qualitative study, the aim is to enable theoretical generalizability rather than statistical generalizability by exploring theoretically and empirically underdeveloped constructs (Flick, 2009).

In terms of data collection and analysis, this study largely followed Kvale's (1996) seven stages of conducting in-depth interviews, including thematising, designing, interviewing,

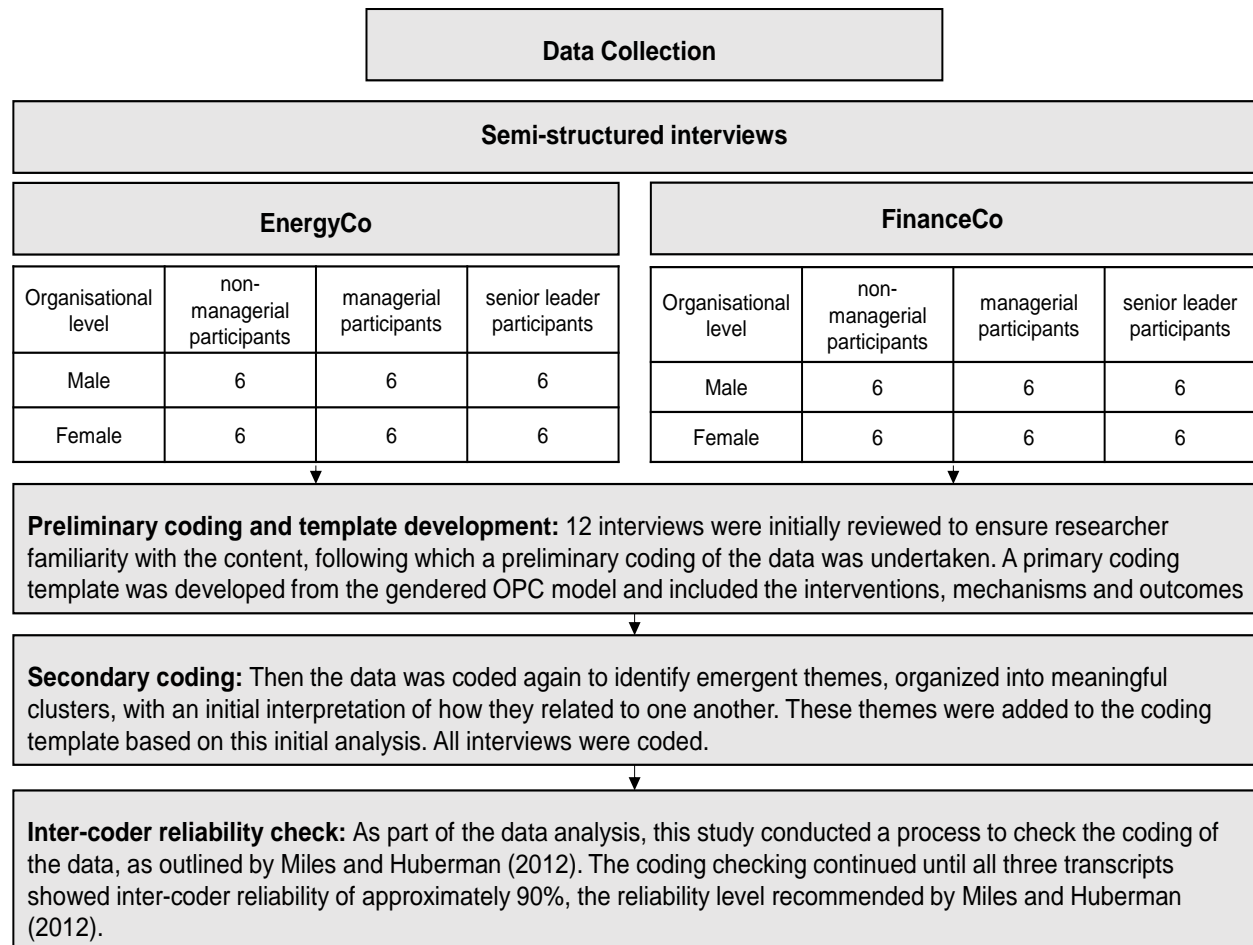
transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting (Kvale 1996). In terms of data collection, this research used semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore participants' meaning of their experiences related to organisational politics and political behaviour in organisations (Merriam 2009). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to gain a rich account of individual experiences of gendered organisational politics (Merriam 2009).

The interviews lasted approximately one hour and explored individuals' experiences using an interview guide developed from the domain-specific theoretical framework, the gendered OPC framework. These questions are outlined in Appendix M, but these are not prescriptive rather, the questions serve to guide the interview process. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify meaning as participants shared their experiences. The study's interview protocol was developed to align the research aims and interview questions. The interview questions served as a guide to the interviews but allowed for flexibility to probe essential issues with participants or ensure clarity. All 72 interviews were conducted virtually, using the virtual meeting platform WebEx, and each participant gave verbal permission for the interviews to be recorded and transcribed.

The data analysis process is outlined in Figure 3-2. Specifically, the first step was coding interviews using template analysis in NVivo software, version 12. In terms of the coding process, 12 interviews were initially reviewed to ensure researcher familiarity with the content, following which a preliminary coding of the data was undertaken. A primary coding template was developed from the gendered OPC model and included the interventions, mechanisms and outcomes detailed in the model and illustrated in Figure 3-1.

Then the data was coded again to identify emergent themes, organised into meaningful clusters, with an initial interpretation of how they related to one another. These themes were added to the coding template based on this initial analysis. The template was then applied to the remaining interviews and modified in an iterative process as the nodes became more interpretive than descriptive (Miles and Huberman 2004). For example, descriptions of the masculine ideal worker in both organisations initially came under the heading 'gendered organisations' but then were categorised under new headings of the ideal worker and then subheadings 'awareness' and 'masculine attributes'. Following a critical realist perspective, the study aimed to identify patterns of subjective meanings and individual experiences and to identify common patterns in participants' awareness of

gendered OPC and the generative mechanisms that account for these patterns (Collier 1997). The aim is to explain why and how individuals become aware of gendered OPC and engage in gendered political behaviours.



The same process was completed with the same data set for both empirical studies included in this thesis.

Figure 3-1 Data Collection Overview

As part of the data analysis, this study conducted a process to check the coding of the data, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (2012). The process included assistance from a fellow doctoral researcher, who reviewed a selection of three transcripts and coded these independently using the coding template provided. The codes applied to the three transcripts and were then compared with the researcher's codes, and discrepancies were discussed. The initial inter-coder reliability was 75%. The discussions centred mainly on clarifying the emergent themes identified and reiterating the coding where possible. The coding checking continued until all three transcripts showed inter-coder reliability of approximately 90%, the reliability level recommended by Miles and Huberman (2012).

Figures 3-2, 3-3, 3-4 and 3-5 provide a summary of the data analysis process as it relates to the key themes identified.

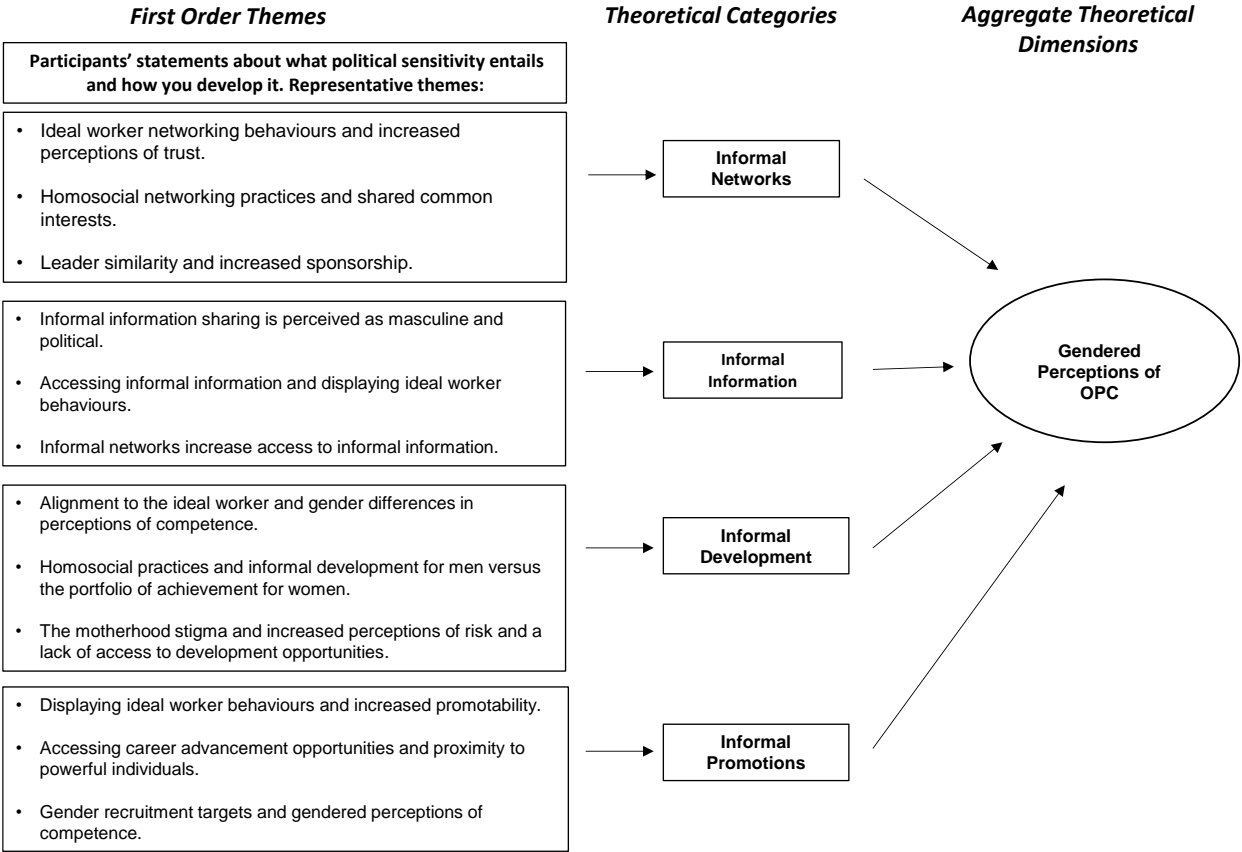


Figure 3-2. Summary of the Data Analysis Process for Gendered Perceptions of Political Behavior

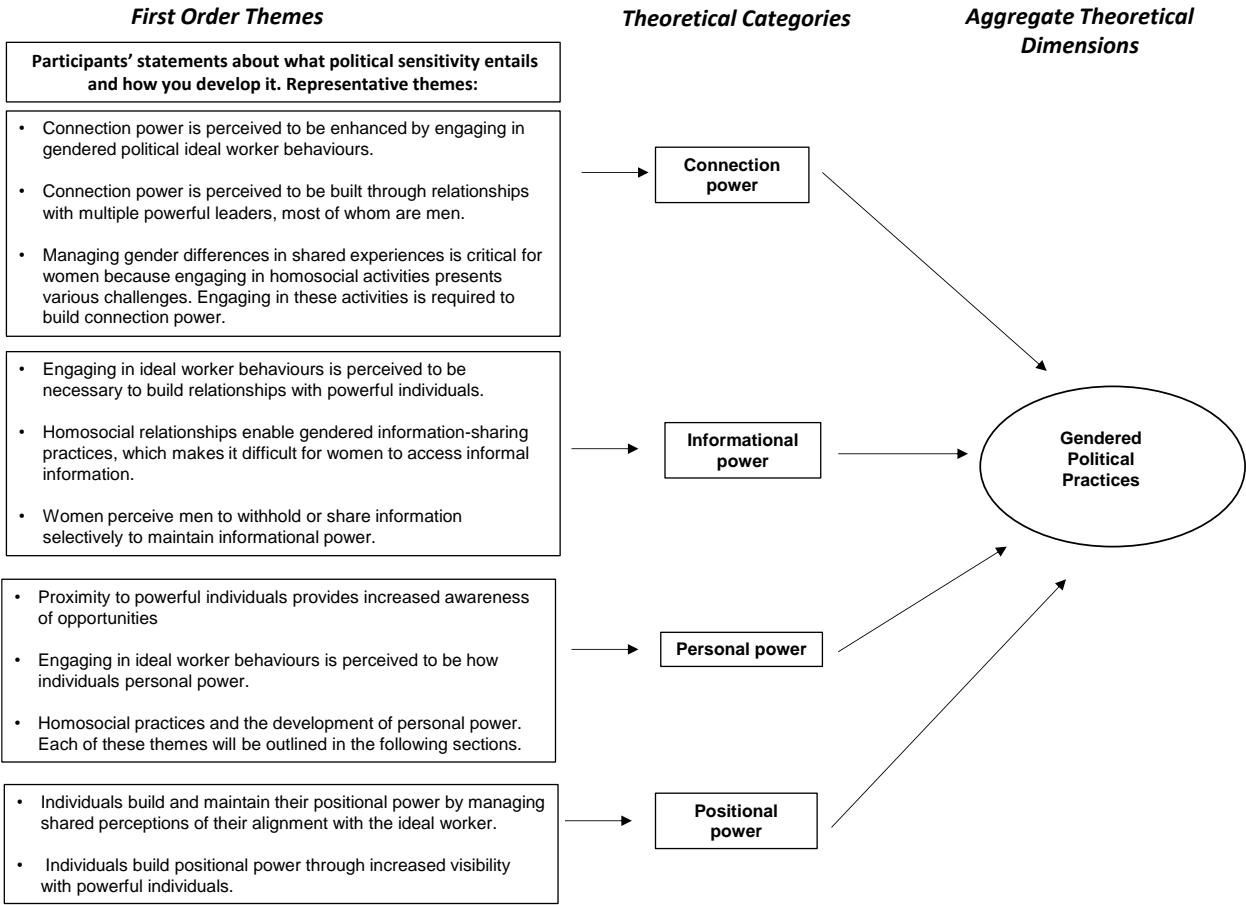


Figure 3-3. Summary of the Data Analysis Process Gendered Political Practices Individuals Engage In

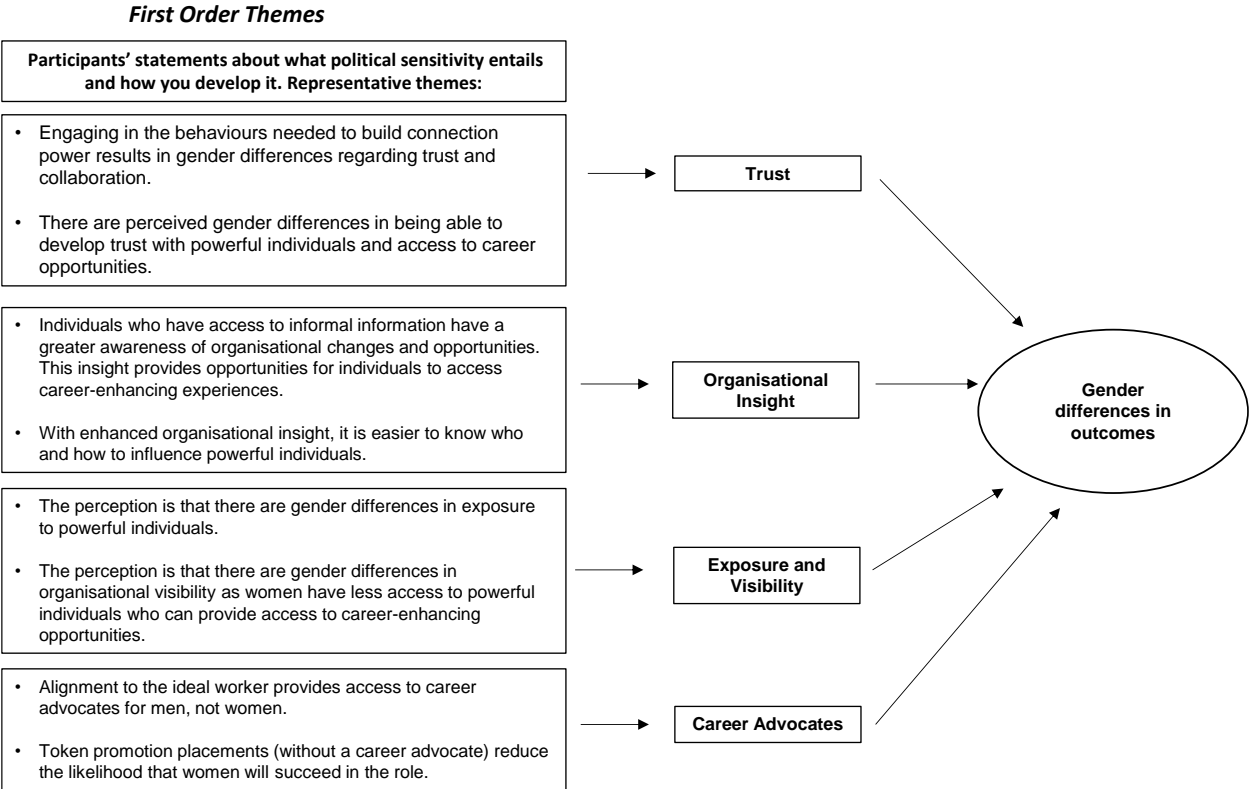


Figure 3-4. Summary of the Data Analysis Process Gender Differences in Outcomes

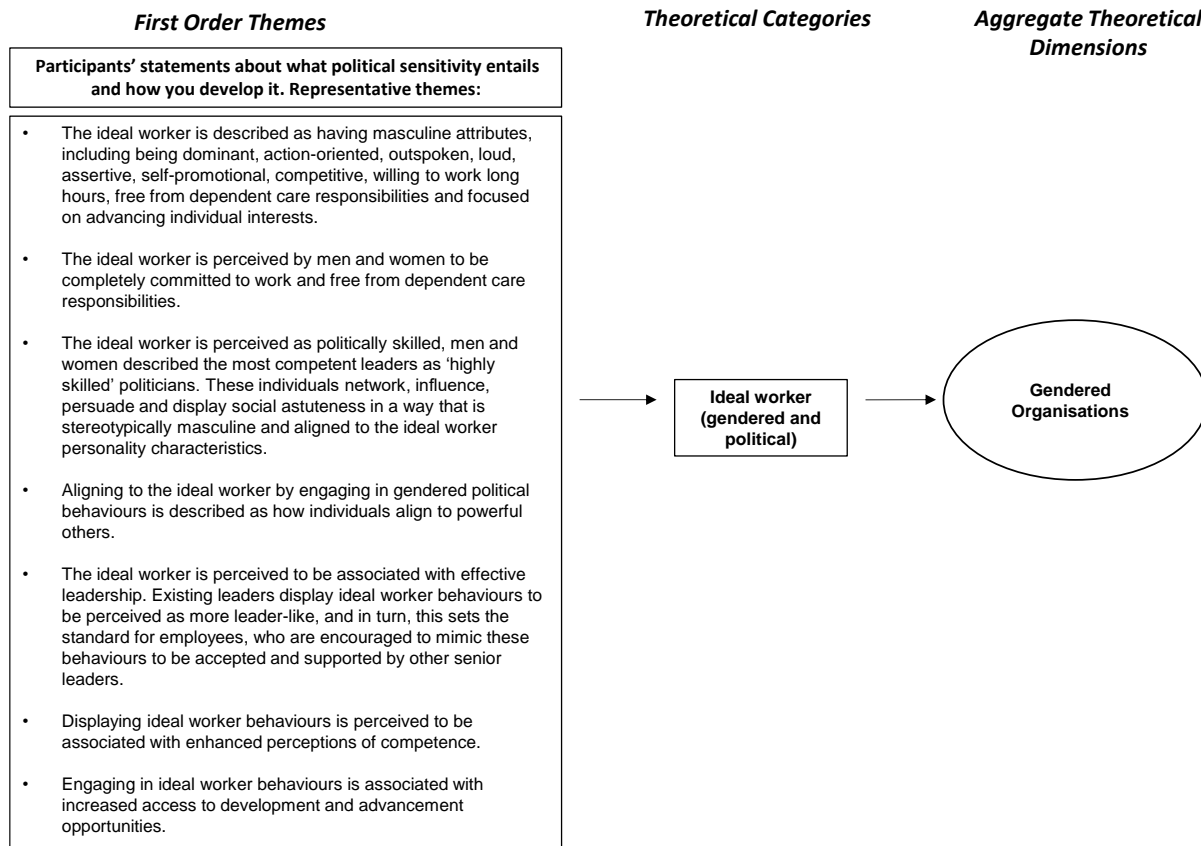


Figure 3-5. Summary of the Data Analysis Process (Gendered Political Perceptions of the Ideal Worker)

Overall, in terms of verifying and reporting on the data, Patton (2002) argues that the validity of qualitative research requires credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This research study is credible given the scope of the study, which includes 72 participants and a comprehensive analysis of this data. The data was anonymised to ensure participants felt comfortable contributing, and assurances regarding confidentiality were provided. In addition, participants were asked follow-up questions or to provide examples to ensure clarity in the interview. In terms of transferability, one of the strengths of this study is that two independent organisations in different operating contexts and countries participated in the data collection process. As a result, the patterns and explanations outlined in the findings are entirely transferable to both contexts, increasing the validity and transferability of the findings. Finally, the specific steps undertaken in the data collection and analysis process have been detailed in this study to ensure the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

3.7 Findings

3.7.1 Gendered Organisational Political Climates

Findings from this study reveal that OPC is gendered in three ways, including gendered perceptions of OPC, gendered political practices and gender differences in the outcomes associated with those political practices, as detailed in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4 The Three Ways OPC Are Gendered

Gendered perceptions	This includes the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of informal processes (practices) in organisations. OPC is gendered through the shared perceptions men and women form of how informal processes work, including informal networks, informal information sharing, informal development opportunities and informal promotion processes.
Gendered political practices	This includes gendered political practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases (mechanisms) to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals.
Gender differences in outcomes	This includes the differential outcomes of gendered political practices and informal processes men and women engage in to build and maintain their power bases.

The following section will outline the gendered nature of OPC in terms of gendered perceptions, practices, and differences in outcomes related to the practices, mechanisms, and outcomes that make up OPC. Table 3-5 summarises the key emergent themes related to gendered perceptions, practices, and outcomes for each of the four practices, mechanisms, and associated outcomes. Each theme in Table 3-5 will be outlined in detail in the following section.

While this study details how OPC are gendered, it also reveals why OPC are gendered in these three ways. Specifically, the findings reveal that individuals' shared perceptions of the ideal worker set political behaviours associated with developing the four power bases. Individuals engage in ideal worker behaviour to acquire and maintain the four power bases. Therefore, aligning with the shared perceptions of the ideal worker serves as a proxy for power. Given the gendered nature of the ideal worker, men and women experience differential outcomes in accessing power in organisations. Therefore, engaging in political behaviours maintains power with men who hold a dominant position

Table 3-5 Summary of the Key Themes Emerging from an Examination of Gendered Organisational Political Climates Using a Power Base Model

Context	Ideal Worker: Described as masculine and political, engaging in ideal worker behaviours serves as a perceptual proxy for power.			
	Gendered Organisational Political Climates			
<p>Gendered Perceptions</p> <p>This includes the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of informal processes (practices) in organisations. OPC is gendered through the shared perceptions men and women form of how informal processes work, including informal networks, informal information sharing, informal development opportunities and informal promotion processes.</p>	Informal Networks	Informal Information Sharing	Informal Development Opportunities	Informal Promotion Processes
<p>Gendered Practices</p> <p>This includes gendered political practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases (mechanisms) to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals.</p>	Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power
<p>Gender Differences in Outcomes</p> <p>This includes the differential outcomes of gendered political practices and informal processes men and women engage in to build and maintain their power bases.</p>	Trust	Organisational Insight	Exposure and Visibility	Career Advocacy

in both organisations. The following section will also detail findings related to shared perceptions of the ideal worker.

In reporting the findings of this study, the two organisations are referred to as EnergyCo and FinanceCo, and participant level and participant number are used when referencing specific quotes to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

3.7.2 Gendered Perceptions of Informal Networks

The data revealed that while there are formal networks in both organisations, such as women-only networks, or online networks on forums like Yammer, most men and women state that informal networks are more important than formal networks when developing connections. Most participants described informal networks as including relationships individuals formed through shared experiences at work, such as working on a project together and socialising after working hours. Of the four informal interventions that make up OPC, informal networks were described by most male and female participants as the most critical to career advancement and job success. Based on the thematic analysis undertaken, informal networks and connection power are gendered, resulting in different outcomes for men and women when it comes to establishing trust in organisations, as outlined in the following section.

Based on men's and women's accounts of informal networks, this study identified four emergent themes relating to gendered informal networks, including ideal worker networking behaviours and increased perceptions of trust; homosocial networking practices and shared common interests; and leader similarity and similarity and sponsorship. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix N.

First, regarding ideal worker networking behaviours and network access, the data revealed that most men and women describe informal networks as being male-dominated, as network members include leaders within the organisation's hierarchy with positional power. Most participants describe informal networks as different from social networks that include peers at the same level within an organisation. The data show that informal networks often include senior leadership team members. Most participants shared that accessing informal networks requires aligning their behaviour to the leaders

within those networks. Some participants describe this process as 'currying favour' or 'managing upwards' as individuals align their behaviour with a senior leader within the informal network.

Most women stated that individuals within the informal networks are willing to engage in stereotypically masculine behaviours such as swearing and being extroverted, loud and outspoken. The data show that network members tend to be free from dependent care responsibilities, enabling them to socialise after work hours, further increasing their opportunities to develop relationships. Additionally, most participants stated that informal network members are more likely to trust individuals who engage in behaviours aligned with other network members' behaviours and provide them with network access. The coding revealed that when non-network members display ideal worker behaviours, it creates an affinity with existing members based on their shared similarity; examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix N.

Most women report having to engage in masculine behaviours to access and maintain their informal network, as this comment from female employee 002 from FinanceCo indicates.

I think there is two types of behaviour of women in a male-dominated environment. One which is that the women become more ladsy. And part of trying to get into that boy's club and maybe swear and whatever, more than they would normally. Or there's women who kind of retreat into their shell. And I think in both cases, the women get judged in some way. So, the very ladsy women are often judged more than the ladsy boys for being outrageous. And then the shy women are probably overlooked and not included.

Some women describe male-dominated social situations where alcohol is consumed as 'risky' and open to men making inappropriate sexual advances. To manage their safety, women shared that they consume less alcohol and leave informal networking events early, which some participants said limits their ability to build relationships and access information even though they have access to the informal network. Some women described even one-on-one informal networking activities with men, like going out for lunch, as 'risky'. Most men stated they are aware that informal networks are perceived as male-dominated. Women may 'struggle' or find it 'awkward' to gain access to and

maintain informal networks as the behaviours required to do so are stereotypically masculine. Some male participants use 'alpha male' and 'bragging and bravado' to describe these behaviours. The data revealed that informal networks or 'boys clubs' that exist in organisations are created and maintained by engaging in ideal worker behaviours. Second, when it comes to informal networking practices and shared common interests, the data revealed that most men engage in homosocial practices centred around their shared interests, like rugby, cricket, and golf, which exclude women who may not share these gendered interests. Most male and female participants stated that informal networks give members access to information, opportunities to engage in decision making, and exposure to senior leaders. Female participants, who said they were excluded from informal networks, believed they did not have the same access to the benefits associated with network membership, as this comment from female manager 006 at EnergyCo indicates.

I do think exposure to upper leadership is something that limits women. To be able to have those discussions, you tend to develop that through a social relationship, and I'm certainly not going to go and play rugby with a male colleague on a weekend because I don't play rugby. But my male counterpart on similar level as I am, and similar exposure would certainly feel comfortable doing that. There is a lot of Friday afternoon drinks. It is very hard to break into those networks. I think you don't necessarily have the same level of exposure because you don't have the same number of opportunities to develop that rapport which eventually leads to a mentor relationship and exposure to very high up people at EnergyCo, and therefore exposure to those high-profile opportunities.

Many women who could access informal networks stated that they were uncomfortable talking in these groups. They felt unwelcome, as they had to manage their behaviour to fit the masculine standard.

Finally, when it comes to leader similarity and sponsorship, most men and women acknowledge that the homosocial practices network members participate in limit women's access to informal networks and restrict women's access to senior leaders, limiting their opportunities to gain advice, assistance, and mentorship afforded to network members. Most men stated that it is easier for men to form a relationship with senior leaders. This

provides men with informal sponsorship in terms of career advice and support needed to advance.

The data also revealed that both organisations had established a women's network, holding events that men could also attend. Most women stated that these formal networking opportunities do not facilitate informal relationship development with senior male leaders as this happens through shared common experiences in informal networking activities. Most male participants stated that women were unfairly advantaged by these formal networking opportunities, which provided women with more opportunities to develop relationships with senior leaders, as this comment from male employee 002 at FinanceCo illustrates.

I feel slightly disenfranchised or disadvantaged when it comes to the networking because there seems to be quite a bit focus on women's network. There is not really any equivalent for men.

3.7.3 Gendered Behaviours: Connection Power

The data reveals that the mechanism individuals use to access informal networks includes the connection powerbase, which is the power that individuals derive from access to, and connections formed through informal networks (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Connection power is gendered through three practices, including connection power and ideal worker behaviours, connection power and relationships with multiple leaders, and managing gender differences in shared experiences. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix O.

First, in terms of connection power and ideal worker behaviours, most men and women stated that it is important to display masculine behaviours, such as working long hours, to access informal networks. Most women felt they had to align their behaviour to the masculine ideal worker to receive support, advice, mentorship, and access to informal information. Still, some described this process as tiring and uncomfortable. Some women even shared that they choose not to engage in informal networks because it requires engaging in masculine behaviours. Most men acknowledge that women lack informal network access but state that women are less likely to engage in the masculine

behaviours needed to fit in and be accepted by the network. The data revealed that informal network access affords men greater awareness of who the powerful individuals are within those networks. This awareness makes it easier for men to know what network members they need to develop a relationship with and what informal networking events are important to attend, as this comment from male senior manager 006 from EnergyCo indicates.

So, my first response is always, "Yeah, that doesn't sound like something I'd like to do," but then it is. You go, "Okay, what's the game here?" And actually, just assessing it on its merits. So sometimes, for sure, you go, "Uh. Yeah, okay. There's this important individual," be they within EnergyCo or government or anything else. Therefore, as much as I want to do that like an extra hole in the head, I better actually go and do it. And then, before you do it, think about what can I bring to the table? What do I potentially want from that person? What can I give that person? Just having that quick run through.

Second, in terms of connection power and relationship with multiple leaders, the data revealed that women face challenges with developing connection power because the lack of access to male-dominated networks reduces their awareness of who the powerful network members are and whom they need to be developing a relationship with to access to informal sponsorship and career advice. Most women stated that as they are often excluded from homosocial informal networks, they are unaware of the informal networking activities that men engage in and who to build a relationship with to access these opportunities. Most men and women stated that connection power is built and maintained by the number of relationships an individual has with powerful individuals within an organisation. While most women are aware of the need to build relationships with multiple leaders, they stated it is harder to form these relationships as leaders are more likely to invest in building relationships with other men who are more like them.

Most men stated that it is easier for them to maintain and build their connection power through the multiple relationships they form with other senior male leaders compared to women, as the quote from male manager 003 at EnergyCo indicates.

I actually spend quite a bit of time, because I'm site based now, I spend quite a bit of time making sure I can catch up with those key people that I've built a relationship [with] over

the last two years to make sure I sustain that, so that like this morning, before I got on the phone with you, I went and had a half an hour coffee with one of the managers in [department] who is very influential, and I want to maintain that relationship, so I think it can take a lot of different forms, whether it's from a phone call to a face to face to a beer or, yeah, any of those sort of things, really.

Third, in terms of managing gender differences in shared experiences, the data revealed that connection power is gendered through men's and women's differential access to opportunities to develop relationships. Most men and women acknowledge that informal networks are developed through shared experiences, including socialising outside of work and working on specific tasks or projects together at work. In addition, most participants stated that when individuals work together, they are more likely to socialise outside of work, which provides further opportunities to build relationships, as this quote from male manager 004 at FinanceCo illustrates.

There will be specific core project teams that do the same type of project every time. And while a few people might rotate in and out, that effectively is a solidarity group. That's how I see it working. That's naturally what seems to be happening and the reason why that is, is because I think we work very closely together and under very extreme pressure. And so generally those sorts of people then, I mean on average then have spent a lot of time with each other and sort of really riled up each other and then figured out how to get on and then socialise together. They go out for a drink to the bar or a pub after and will have their celebratory dinners or project dinners together as well. And that group – even after that project is finished – that's a very tight group.

However, when it comes to socialising outside of work, most men stated that they tend to engage in homosocial practices, which exclude women. Therefore, to develop connection power, most women stated that they focus on developing relationships through shared experiences with the individuals they work with, limiting the opportunities to build interpersonal relationships, as this comment from female senior manager 005 EnergyCo indicates.

It's like you don't know what you don't know, you don't know when things are going on that you don't know about, and when you find out and you're like, "Oh, okay." So, there's

lots of interactions that you could classify as work but classify as social and they blur these lines and if you're not there and part of it, then you don't even realise you're missing out.

Most men stated that they tend to focus on developing relationships through shared experiences with others at work and through socialising outside of work. Most men noted that this becomes a reinforcing cycle over time as the shared interests they engage in outside of work (like cycling) make it easier to work together at work as they have built a connection.

3.7.4 Gender Differences in Outcomes: Trust

It is evident from the data that informal networks are established using the connection power base, which results in differential outcomes for men and women at work. Specifically, the data revealed two key outcomes, including gender differences in trust and collaboration and; gender differences in trust and access to career opportunities. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix P.

First, regarding gender differences in trust and collaboration, most men and women stated that accessing informal networks requires engaging in masculine ideal worker behaviours. This similarity creates an affinity between network members, making it easier to form relationships. Most men stated that similarity between informal network members means that members can predict how other members are likely to behave. This tends to be like their own behaviour and the masculine ideal. Most men stated that predictability in behaviour is the basis for establishing trust, support, and collaboration at work, as evidenced by this comment by male manager 003 at EnergyCo.

If you know a few people and have a relationship with them in and out of work, they do tend to look after you. They trust you because they know how you will show up. So, if someone at work used to be pretty cutthroat with... if you weren't in a meeting, they'd be like, "Oh, that's so and so's patch, blah, blah, blah. He stuffed this up, whatever." But if you got mates there, they'll stick up for you and go, "Oh, hang on. You don't know the full story here." So, if you do have a good network in and out of work, it does help you at work and make work easier. And again, on the career front when there are jobs going as well,

if you got a great network, people would always look out for each other. So, if you're not in that core group, whether it be in or outside of work, it can affect how easy your work-life is.

Conversely, most women stated that it is difficult to know who they can trust as they do not have access to the same informal networks as men, and they cannot form the same relationships with powerful individuals that men do, which limits their access to information and support.

Second, in terms of gender differences in trust and access to career opportunities, the data revealed most men shared that they could develop connection power by socialising outside work and working on a specific task or project with other men. The data revealed that men have greater connection power to leverage when accessing opportunities for advancement. Specifically, most men stated that informal networks provide them with greater exposure to senior leaders, which increases their visibility within the organisation. Some participants referred to this as 'becoming known' or 'talked about'. Most men stated that when senior leaders within the network know and trust other network members, they are more likely to provide these members with the support needed to access career opportunities. Most men and women stated that accessing informal network support is critical to career advancement, especially for senior positions within an organisation. These roles require consensus or approval from leadership teams, as this comment by female employee 001 from EnergyCo reveals.

Even if you do everything well, if you do not play the game, then you will not get recognition, or you will take longer. So, it kind of creates this level of unfairness. People feel like no matter how hard you work, if you are not part of the group, then you will not get the right support from leaders to advance.

Most women report difficulty accessing networks; some state they must work harder to be accepted by engaging in masculine ideal worker behaviours to prove their competence.

3.7.5 Gender Perceptions of Informal Information Sharing

The data revealed while there are formal systems for sharing information, including online chat rooms like Yammer, and companywide communications, such as newsletters and emails, employees tend to rely on informal information-sharing practices to understand the OPC. Most participants state that informal information sharing is perceived to be more valuable than formal information. It includes information that is not widely available through formal channels, and accessing it is a way to build informational power. Based on the thematic analysis undertaken, informal information sharing, and informational power are gendered, resulting in different outcomes for men and women when building and maintaining organisational insight, as outlined in the following section. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix Q.

Based on men's and women's accounts of informal information-sharing practices, this study identified three emergent themes, including informal information sharing is masculine and political, accessing informal information and displaying ideal worker behaviours, and informal networks and access to informal information. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections.

First, regarding informal information being perceived as masculine and political, most men and women describe informal information sharing as like office politics, as it includes accessing, exchanging, and withholding information to understand individual agendas and motivations. This comment from male employee 001 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

Office politics means, essentially, relationships with other people, with the end game to build your profile to go up within the organisation. The way I do it personally is, I will share information, which is personal to me, with the intention that they will then share other things, kind of information with me as well. So, I'll share information, and they'll share information back. That's the way I play it. So, essentially, you must be open for them to be open with you. Office politics is very important. Everyone has got an agenda. Until you know what it is, it's very difficult to succeed, unless you know where they're coming from. Because if you don't find yourself within that... Or you find yourself on the wrong end of that agenda, then it makes your life quite difficult.

Most men state that engaging in informal information sharing builds and maintains informational power in organisations. Some women participants describe informal information sharing as a 'man's game' as men exchange information with other men to build and maintain informational power, which can exclude women. This comment by senior manager female 001 from EnergyCo is an example of this finding.

I think sharing information is what they mean by office politics, so everybody has a sense of a purple circle. A purple circle is an exclusive club with a right of entry. You are never quite sure how you get in, but you might just assimilate in. And in that purple circle is the opportunities, the friendships, the inclusion, the information. It is kind of like the holy grail of the organisational culture. The purple circle will be a different purple circle depending on what team you are, what level you are, what function you are.

Second, in terms of accessing informal information by displaying ideal worker behaviours, the data revealed that accessing informal information is associated with demonstrating masculine ideal worker behaviours by working long hours and being available to socialise outside of work hours. Most women shared that engaging in these behaviours limits their opportunities to build informational power, as women typically have dependents to care for. In this quote, a female senior manager 001 from FinanceCo shares how engaging in masculine behaviours provides access to informal networks where informal information sharing occurs.

I think that I demonstrate several male attributes. That's one of them. I am willing to practically sacrifice being at home and being at work for that period of time. And without me actually being there, I would not have access to information. It's an active choice. And I expect that many of our women will not have that same level of access, because either they cannot make that choice, do not make that choice, or don't even understand that there's a choice to be made.

Most women described breaking into the male-dominated informal networks as complicated, as men are more likely to be accepted by other men and included in homosocial affinity groups like male-only football or golfing teams, which typically exclude women. Most women stated that to break into male solidarity groups, or what some women describe as the 'boys club', they need to engage in masculine behaviours typically

associated with the ideal worker. For example, some women share how they align their behaviour with other men in the office by drinking with them after work hours and engaging in male banter. Some women described the need to do this as emotionally draining.

Finally, in terms of informal networks providing access to informal information, the data revealed that both men and women perceive it to be more difficult for women to support other women; in the same way, men support other men when accessing informal networks to obtain informal information. Largely participants believed this was because the organisation is so heavily male-dominated.

Most men stated that women do not fit in and may find it harder to form relationships with powerful male leaders or access male-dominant informal networks. Some men noted that this limits women's access to informal information. Additionally, some men stated that they share or withhold information to build relationships and get things done, as this comment from senior male leader 005 from EnergyCo illustrates.

For example, just last week I went and had dinner with the boys, a group of guys that have worked together for a while. Did we consciously... I guess it's just a group that gets along well. We're probably at a similar stage of life, common interests, and common backgrounds, and we'll tap into each other for assistance and advice at work.

The data revealed that men, more than women, are willing to engage in exclusionary information-sharing practices, like changing the conversations for male-only groups versus mixed-gender groups, intentionally excluding women from meetings, or withholding information that women need to fulfil their role responsibilities. Most men stated that they engage in exclusionary information-sharing practices to maintain their informational power-base. However, most women were willing to share informal information as they said this would benefit the broader organisation, as the following comment from female manager 006 from EnergyCo illustrates.

I will always provide men with information they need, whereas other individuals in this organisation will... I don't know, stash all that information. They do not like sharing anything. They do not like anybody stepping in their realm. This is their area, and that's

all there is to it. And so, absolutely under no circumstances can you get information from these men.

3.7.6 Gendered Behaviours: Informational Power

The data revealed that the mechanism individuals use to access informal information is the informational powerbase, which includes informal access to information and the opportunity to share or distribute information (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Informational power is gendered through three practices, including engaging in ideal worker behaviours to build relationships with powerful individuals, homosocial relationships and gendered information-sharing practices; and withholding or sharing information to maintain informational power. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix R.

First, in terms of engaging in ideal worker behaviours to build relationships with powerful individuals, most male and female participants stated that they mainly access informal information, including insights into individual agendas, organisational changes, and career opportunities, by establishing relationships with powerful individuals. Most women stated they were less likely to approach a senior male leader for information unless they had proven their capability and competence with this senior leader. Most women said it was important to first build credibility through proven performance and achievements before trying to establish relationships with powerful individuals. However, most men stated that they align their behaviour with the ideal worker to build relationships with powerful individuals who might provide them with access to information. Most women stated that they avoid engaging in these masculine behaviours. When they do, they are often perceived as aggressive or pushy, as female manager 005 from FinanceCo shared in this comment.

To get information I try and figure out how that person likes to work and then I try and fit in with that. For example, the executive director who I was talking about, who I work with quite a lot because I work on his key clients. I know that he is quite aggressive, and he is quite... Likes you to be on the ball, so before I ever have any sort of client meeting, I always make sure I am well prepared, and I have communicated that with him in the way he likes... even if it means that people think I am aggressive.

Second, regarding homosocial relationships and gendered information-sharing practices, the data revealed that building informational power requires awareness of gendered information sharing practices. Specifically, most men stated they are aware of the need to develop strategies for accessing information. They build relationships with other men to know who has access to what information and leverage those relationships to acquire that information. Most men develop their informational power through relationships as they are more likely to engage in homosocial practices, enabling information sharing. While most women state that there is a need to be aware of who has access to what information, they found it more challenging to engage in the behaviours needed to build awareness, as they perceive them to be underhanded and unethical. Most women are aware of developing relationships with powerful individuals to develop and maintain informational power. However, most women stated that when it comes to information sharing, men's homosocial practices reduce their motivation to build their informational power, as this comment from female employee 005 from EnergyCo illustrates.

I think being able to access information that is not, you know, publicly available, like a job being advertised or things, more like potential things that are coming up, require building relationships outside of work. Activities that females are not often particularly engaged in. At the engineering department men are pretty tight. They go on fishing and camping on long weekends. I do not know that most women would want to go out on the boat with, you know ten guys for a weekend, just fishing and stuff. It is not my cup of tea in particular. And I guess naturally, well somewhat naturally, conversations happen in those environments that you are just not there for, so you do not get the same information because of the form in which it's discussed.

Additionally, most men and women said they access informal information by developing a relationship with their immediate line manager. The quality of information shared depends on the quality of the relationship. The data also revealed that as most men have more in common with other male leaders, they find it easier to form interpersonal relationships and access information.

Finally, regarding withholding or sharing information to maintain informational power the data revealed that informational power primarily includes an element of reciprocity, with

some participants describing it as ‘currency’ or ‘political currency’. Most men stated they are willing to ask for information and then selectively share it with others to build and maintain power. Some men and women described knowing what information to share or withhold from which individuals show an individual to be ‘politically astute’ or ‘politically skilled’. Most men and women stated that men are more willing to withhold or selectively share information to build or maintain their informational power. However, men and women stated that women were less likely to withhold or selectively share information to develop or maintain their power-base. Some women said that women are more concerned about sharing informal information that may benefit the broader organisation. The following comment by female senior manager 006 from EnergyCo illustrates the point.

I guess I have had previous male managers down the track, years ago, where they felt that knowledge was power, and they kept things from people, and just filtered it out when they felt that people deserved to know and it was on their timetable, and it always frustrated me that, it was kind of like a power play, and it frustrated me. It was like, “Well, we’re all a team here. If we had all the information, we could actually be all thinking about it instead of just you,” so I’m very quick to roll things up, to disseminate them out, to pass on information. If I get information, if it can be shared, unless it’s confidential, it gets shared with my team pretty much as soon as I get it.

3.7.7 Gender Differences in Outcomes: Organisational Insight

It is evident from the data that informal information sharing is established using the informational power base, which results in differential outcomes for men and women at work. Specifically, the data revealed two key developments organisational insight and enhanced career advancement and organisational insight and influence. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants’ comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix S.

First, in terms of organisational insight and enhanced influence, the data revealed that one of the outcomes of informational power is enhanced organisational insight, which includes the awareness and understanding of organisational politics within a specific context. Most men and women shared that norms regarding political behaviours are

contextual as the individuals who engage in those behaviours do so within a particular context: an organisation, function, department, or team. Most men stated that one of the key benefits of building and maintaining informational power is the enhanced organisational insight they gain. Specifically, most men stated that information power provides them with access to inside information, like knowing why certain decisions are made and how to influence the decision-making processes to achieve the desired outcome. In addition, most men state that their access to informal information provides them with the organisational insight needed to effectively influence powerful individuals and advance their aims. The following comment from male senior manager 001 in EnergyCo illustrates this.

It [office politics] might be about inclusion and exclusion, that people feel that there is an innate level of unfairness in the organisation. That perhaps that there is like secret little gangs, like the Masons that you need to belong to [to] get ahead. That is what I think people mean by office politics and purple circles. Certainly, for some people they don't get a lot of information and a lot of context is not given. And information can be power because information will allow you to triangulate where the organisation is going, how you might refocus or reframe a project, or how you're thinking about some something. There is quite a lot of fluidity and I think that again, that sort of flow of information, also plays into people's perception of office politics. So, if you have a leader who doesn't share, doesn't tell you the direction, doesn't give you the context, doesn't allow you to stand up in the world that is forming, it's really unlikely that you are going to be successful. It's really unlikely that you are going to pitch whatever you're doing correctly.

Some men said they were aware that women did not have the same access to information and therefore lacked the organisational insight needed to influence powerful individuals.

Second, in terms of organisational insight and enhanced career advancement, most women stated that they are aware that informal information sharing builds organisational insight. However, some women indicated that they encountered challenges engaging in the homosocial practices needed to build and maintain informational power. Consequently, some women stated they were less motivated to engage in the gendered political behaviours needed to access informal information sharing. Some women noted

that these gendered behaviours were manipulative, inefficient and unnecessary. Most women felt that their lack of engagement and difficulty engaging in the gendered political behaviours needed to access information and play the political game negatively impacted their career advancement, as this comment by female manager 005 from EnergyCo illustrates.

I don't have it [informal information] but I think it's critical. If you want to move, if you want to progress, if you want to get promoted, I think it's essential. You need to understand how everything works. What's the backdoor way to make things happen, and who really makes a decision? And what is the actual process, as opposed to the one that's written down? It's critical if you want to get anything done or if you want to move up.

However, most men stated that their informal network access provided them with opportunities to develop their understanding of other senior leaders' agendas, which they can then use to position themselves appropriately to take advantage of career opportunities or organisational changes when they arise.

3.7.8 Gendered Perceptions of Informal Development Opportunities

The data revealed that while formal processes exist for allocating development opportunities in both organisations, such as performance review systems, participants report using an informal approach to access development opportunities that are important for career advancement. Most participants stated that the formal development process includes managers or resource managers, allocating development opportunities or projects based on availability and capability. Most men and women noted that the formal process was a last resort and mainly used when the formal process did not provide access to opportunities. Based on the thematic analysis undertaken, informal development opportunities and personal power are gendered, resulting in different outcomes for men and women related to exposure and visibility, as outlined in the following section.

Based on men's and women's accounts of informal development opportunities, this study identified three emergent themes aligned to the ideal worker and gender differences in perceptions of competence; homosocial practices versus the portfolio of achievement, and the motherhood stigma, perceptions of risk and a lack of access to development

opportunities. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix T.

First, regarding alignment with the ideal worker and gender differences in perceptions of competence, most men and women in this study discussed the need to mimic the behaviours associated with the ideal worker to be perceived as competent. Specifically, most participants stated that leaders are more likely to allocate development opportunities to individuals who display ideal worker behaviours, as these behaviours mimic typical behaviours associated with leaders. Additionally, the data revealed that leaders are also more likely to invest time and effort informally mentoring individuals who display ideal worker behaviours and provide these individuals with career advice. The following comment from male manager 001 at EnergyCo highlights the importance of displaying ideal worker behaviours to access development opportunities.

How would I identify the people that have high potential? Well, they would be mimicking the things that I have done to get where I am. And the trade-off to that is that if you have got people who are doing that same thing with mimicking but they're not acting appropriately and that's where you have your problems. I would say that that would be the largest single factor in anyone being developed.

Most men and women stated that accessing informal development opportunities has a domino effect whereby individuals who behave in a way that is aligned to the ideal worker are more likely to be given access to development opportunities, which increases perceptions that they are 'talented', and hence, the likelihood they will be considered for future development opportunities. Most men acknowledged that this domino effect makes it difficult for women to access development opportunities as they are less likely to behave in a way that is aligned to the ideal worker, as the following comment by male employee 004 from FinanceCo illustrates.

People who get picked for high-profile opportunities tend to be similar. Like the ideal. But if someone is picked for it, [and] they do well, they're going to continually get picked. So, I definitely think it plays a huge role in that [women being left out].

Second, regarding homosocial practices versus a portfolio of achievement, most women stated that men engage in homosocial practices, supporting other men who are similar to

themselves by providing them with the informal mentorship and advice needed to access development opportunities. Most men and women stated that leaders tend to favour individuals who are like them and who display ideal worker behaviours by providing them with informal mentoring, public support and advice needed to access development opportunities. Most women felt that these connections (between male employees and senior male leaders) were established by engaging in informal networking practices that are often unwelcoming to women, such as playing rugby or golf outside of work hours. The following comment from female manager 006 in EnergyCo exemplifies men's homosocial practices.

Not to the same extent as men, no, I do not think these women have exposure to upper leadership to help their development. To be able to have those discussions, you tend to develop that through a social relationship, and I am certainly not going to go and play rugby with a male colleague on a weekend because I do not play rugby.

Given that there are very few women in leadership positions in both organisations, most women at lower levels of the organisation stated that they did not have the same support as men do from leaders within the organisation. Some women described it as tiring and emotionally exhausting to engage in behaviours associated with the ideal worker to access development opportunities because these behaviours conflict with stereotypically feminine behaviours. Most women stated that because they cannot engage in the same homosocial practices as men, they need to demonstrate competence to be considered a high-profile opportunity. One participant described this as requiring a 'portfolio of achievement'. In the following comment, female manager 005 from EnergyCo shares her experience with this.

It's pretty exhausting, to have to prove yourself, over and over again. For me, it would definitely feel like, as a woman, like I said earlier, you've got to build up that portfolio. And that portfolio can't be one achievement. It needs to be multiple, in multiple areas, multiple conditions, to prove yourself over and over again, to be able to be considered. While the men wouldn't have to demonstrate quite as much achievement, to be able to move up.

Third, in terms of the motherhood stigma, perceptions of risk and a lack of access to development opportunities, the data revealed that most women felt that working mothers

face more difficulties accessing development opportunities as they are least likely to fit the ideal worker image and therefore are more likely to be considered less committed and capable. In addition, most men and women discussed how working mothers are perceived as less reliable and ambitious, as they cannot dedicate all their time to the organisation, which results in them being perceived as a poor fit for development opportunities. The following comment from female employee 005 at FinanceCo shares the challenges working mothers face with accessing development opportunities.

For example, like what I was saying maternity leave, so sometimes when they come back because they have kids and family obligations they may not be considered for certain projects.

Most men and women agreed that women, especially working mothers, are likely to be perceived as risky candidates for development opportunities. However, the data also revealed that undertaking development opportunities presents a greater risk for women than men. Most women felt that it was more difficult for them to be perceived as capable. This requires performing to a consistently high standard with no opportunity to make mistakes, as highlighted in this comment from female manager 005 from EnergyCo.

So not only do you have to prove yourself a lot more, but if you do happen to make a mistake along the way, then it's almost starting back from scratch. While it would be a lot more accepted from a man who almost takes it as, "Well, at least he tried. Now, let's try again." It doesn't set him back quite as much. So, it's quite natural to make mistakes along the way. That's the way you learn. But if every time you make a mistake, you step back 10 steps, it's going to take you a lot longer to, then, move up. And I think that's what's happening for women.

3.7.9 Gendered Behaviours: Personal Power

The data reveals that the mechanism individuals use to access informal development opportunities is the personal power-base, which includes the power associated with interpersonal influence, charisma, and charm (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Personal power is gendered through three practices: proximity to powerful individuals and awareness of opportunities, ideal worker behaviours and building personal power; and homosocial practices and the development of personal power. Each of these themes will

be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix U.

First, in terms of proximity to powerful individuals and awareness of opportunities, the data revealed that most men and women use personal power to access development opportunities, as this comment from female senior manager 006 at EnergyCo highlights.

It's the unwritten behaviours, attitudes, and processes that influence people's thought patterns and outcomes or actions in a way that's not aligned with whatever the criteria, the standard criteria, of scoring or the process. It's the coalition behaviours, which can make one candidate artificially seem more skilled than another. It's how you build affinity with somebody so that when they're looking for somebody, they know your name, or they think that you have something in common. Therefore, they are more likely to choose you rather than just on the straight merit.

Most participants describe using personal power to establish an interpersonal relationship with individuals in positions of power who can provide access to development opportunities. Most men and women describe powerful individuals as including a direct line manager or senior leaders within the organisation who provide access to information about what opportunities exist and the advice and public support needed to secure these opportunities. While the data revealed that both companies have formal mentoring programs for women, most men and women stated that these programs had little to no impact on their development. The following comment from female employee 003 in EnergyCo provides an example of the importance of informal mentoring.

I only spoke with my assigned mentor for the first year. Within about my second year, I met another person who actually ended up becoming my mentor, and it just naturally transitioned into a relationship where I felt comfortable talking to them around what I wanted to get out of my career. And I felt that they were really good at providing me with advice, and ultimately lining up a lot of opportunities for me to get that exposure.

Second, in terms of ideal worker behaviours and building personal power, most men and women stated that personal power is built and maintained by demonstrating ideal worker behaviours such as being confident, loud, outspoken, and assertive. However, most women felt that it was harder to build personal power as the behaviours that build and

maintain it are stereotypically masculine. In contrast, most men stated that they could easily connect with senior male leaders, who provided them with access to development opportunities, as the following comment from male manager 002 at EnergyCo illustrates.

I find that the people given the assignments are the people that are outspoken, extroverted and wanting to do... It's always trying to fight for the next big thing mentality. Those are the people that get the projects. Most of the time... If I was to put it bluntly, selling yourself. Selling your soul or selling yourself to your manager. Men are better at selling themselves. Or blowing their own trumpet than women are. That's how big projects get to men more often than females in my opinion.

Men and women shared that employees are also dependent on their manager's personal power to access development opportunities. Specifically, managers build their personal power by engaging in ideal worker behaviours to influence the shared perceptions other managers have of an individual's performance. Managing these perceptions is particularly important as managers need to ensure the collective buy-in from other leaders within the organisation.

Third, in terms of homosocial practices and the development of personal power, most men said they socialise with other men more than women, making it easier for them to access information about what opportunities exist. Most men and women know that homosocial practices make it harder for women to develop personal power and influence powerful individuals to access development opportunities. The following comment from female senior manager 004 at FinanceCo demonstrates the challenges women face engaging in homosocial activities outside of work to build personal power.

I have seen women who have not been given the opportunity to take some of these engagements, purely because they just do not shout and scream, and they do not go for drinks after work every time. Or they do not play in the same cricket club. And a lot the decisions happen, not within working hours. And that is the fundamental thing that sort of excludes a lot of women.

Most women stated that social activities often occur outside of work hours and include typically masculine activities such as playing rugby or golf, which places working mothers at a distinct disadvantage. They are generally responsible for childcare arrangements

outside of working hours. Additionally, some women stated that they were less motivated to participate in typical male homosocial activities, which tend to be male-dominated and stereotypically masculine. They felt their lack of engagement limits their access to opportunities.

3.7.10 Gender Differences in Outcomes: Exposure and Visibility

It is evident from the data that informal opportunities are accessed using the personal power base, which results in differential outcomes for men and women at work. Specifically, the data revealed two key outcomes, including gender differences in exposure to powerful individuals and gender differences in organisational visibility. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix V.

First, in terms of gender differences in exposure to powerful individuals, the data revealed that most men and women access development opportunities by engaging in homosocial activities with them outside of working hours with a powerful individual, including a manager or informal mentor. Most participants stated that exposure to powerful individuals provides opportunities to use personal power to build a relationship and access opportunities and support their development. Most men and women felt that men are more likely to gain access to senior male leaders, as they are more likely than women to be included or engage in homosocial activity. The data revealed that increased exposure to powerful individuals provides men with access to development opportunities, which further enhances their exposure within the organisation, as the following comment from male employee 006 EnergyCo illustrates.

If you have got a good relationship with a leader and go for a beer with them. If you have got a leader who knows where you want to get to and knows the right people that you need to be engaging with, then they will set up some of those opportunities to make that happen. To give you an example, my boss got me doing some extracurricular work. I would guess you would call it around one of the forums that we run on a six-weekly basis and taking more of a leadership role in that because it is getting exposure to general managers and that sort of thing, which is where I want to get to in the future.

Second, regarding gender differences in organisational visibility, the data revealed that development opportunities allow both men and women to demonstrate their visibility with senior leaders. Most male and female participants shared that when individuals undertake a development opportunity, they must behave in a way that is aligned with the ideal worker by working long hours, being physically present in the office or online, socialising outside of work hours, and being assertive, confident, and outspoken. Most participants stated that aligning their behaviours to the ideal worker when undertaking development opportunities is important, as the following comment from a male senior manager 006 from EnergyCo illustrates.

Being highly visible, I think, is something that this organisation really regards well. And when I say highly visible, I mean, whether that's on the floor, so to speak. So if you're in the office, that you're actually there, and accessible, and available to people. Likewise, if you're travelling, that you're not locking yourself away in a room somewhere and not engaging with people locally. People who aren't necessarily able or willing to participate in those sorts of networks. Typically, that kind of [thing] is indicative they're not a highly visible person. And as I said before, people who are more visible tend to be more outspoken and assertive. They are more likely to be considered in those high-profile opportunities.

Men mainly stated that demonstrating these behaviours increases perceptions of their competence, increasing their access to future development opportunities. However, most women said that they find it harder to display these behaviours, including working excessive hours, managing childcare responsibilities, or asserting themselves in the same way as men without being viewed as aggressive. Additionally, men and women stated that women are less likely to receive the informal mentoring that men do when undertaking a development opportunity; consequently, women are not 'set up for success' or provided with the informal guidance and feedback needed to succeed.

3.7.11 Gendered Perceptions of Informal Promotion Processes

The data revealed that there is a formal promotion process in both organisations whereby managers put forward a case to promote an employee based on their performance reviews, or a position becomes available internally. Managers then review potential

candidates to get promoted to the role. Most participants believe leaders have the discretion to make a 'direct appointment' and circumvent the formal process. Most men and women shared that there is an informal promotion process in addition to the formal process, which requires securing the support and influence of powerful individuals to obtain a promotion. Most participants state that the informal promotion process is more important for manager-level and above positions. Based on the thematic analysis undertaken, the informal promotion process and positional power are gendered, resulting in different outcomes for men and women related to career advocacy. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix W.

Based on men's and women's accounts, informal promotion processes are perceived to be gendered in three ways including ideal worker behaviours and promotability, career advancement opportunities and proximity to powerful individuals, and gender recruitment targets and gendered perceptions of competence. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections.

First, when it comes to displaying ideal worker behaviours to increase promotability, most women stated that perceptions of their promotability are linked with displaying ideal worker behaviours as this increases the similarity between leaders and the individuals being promoted. However, most men and women shared that they must display masculine behaviours to get promoted, as the following comment from female employee 006 at EnergyCo highlights.

Well, I mean most of the leaders in the business are men, and so the decisions lie with the leaders, and they are predominately men, and white men, straight men, generally. I think they promote based on likeness, so if they see something in you, when you remind them of [themselves], then they like that. When I have gotten positive feedback from a male superior, it's usually because they have seen me behave in the way they would behave or do something the way they would do it themselves.

However, some men perceive women who get promoted to be more masculine than men, and some participants described these women as 'brutal', 'hard' or 'difficult'. The data revealed that most women feel they need to perform to a consistently high standard to

get promoted, as the following comment from female senior manager 006 FinanceCo demonstrates.

We are more willing to take chances on males than potentially females. I still think we want really, really rounded out women that have ticked everything on the box rather than males who are incredibly confident and have ticked a deal of things in the box. I think the underlying reason is that we are willing to take more risks on men and that an awful lot of the decision-makers are men, so they trust men more.

Additionally, most men and women stated that candidates are promoted based on a collective leadership assessment of their suitability, including how similar candidates are to the ideal worker standard and other leaders. However, some men and women described the informal promotion process as subjective and open to individual and collective leader bias, as the following comment by female senior manager 004 FinanceCo illustrates.

To me, the entire process is not transparent, it is very subjective. There is a systemic bias where the people that assess you believe that you need to look and sound like them, because it is a partnership and that is what they would accept. And if you are any different, it is very hard to actually get through that process itself.

Second, when it comes to accessing career advancement opportunities through increased proximity to powerful individuals. The data revealed that most men and women describe the informal promotion process in relational terms. They believe informal promotion opportunities are accessed by building relationships with individuals in positions of power and then influencing them to support one's advancement. Most men and women state that building relationships with influential individuals requires behaving in a way that is like them. Some men and women describe powerful individuals who can influence promotion decisions as 'alpha males' and part of a 'boys club'. Most men and women state that it is easier for men to build relationships with powerful individuals because they are like each other, as this comment from female manager 003 in FinanceCo demonstrates.

If you look around the firm, and I speak probably more so to the restructuring environment. But there is a certain type of man that does really well in the firm. And that's... Yeah, so

from my perspective, people still can operate within the kind of boy club, kind of alpha male culture where it's like this is my team, where leaders decide these are the people I want to work with. You get your head down, and you work, work, work. But that is not how you move forward because it's up to that particular partner that likes you. And they will staff this guy every time. It's a bit more on the competitive side.

Third, in terms of gender recruitment targets and gendered perceptions of competence, the data revealed that both organisations had made a public commitment to increase the number of women in leadership positions. While there was no explicit gender recruitment target for managers to meet, most men and women stated that there is an implicit mandate to hire more women. Some men described this process as 'positive discrimination' and 'unfair', resulting in fewer opportunities for men. Additionally, most men and women stated that when women are promoted into a position, the broader perception is that they may lack the capability needed to do the job. Most women felt that they needed to work harder to prove themselves and overcome these negative perceptions. Most men and women perceive that women are more likely to fail if they are promoted as they lack the capability needed to fulfil the role requirements, as this comment by female employee 001 from EnergyCo illustrates.

There is that perception of 'oh she got promoted because she was a female'. And that works against you when you are in that role because you are trying to battle people's perception that you are undeserving of the role. Once you are in there, you have got to prove yourself essentially.

An additional challenge most women share is gendered perceptions of competence related to motherhood and working life. The perception from men and women is that the type of women who advances into leadership positions tends to be child-free, willing to work long hours, socialise with colleagues outside of work hours and demonstrate ideal worker behaviours. Most women stated that working mothers need to either delay the promotion process until they can manage the integration of work and home life or get promoted as quickly as possible before becoming mothers. The following comment from female senior manager 004 from FinanceCo illustrates the challenge working mothers face with managing perceptions of competence.

I do think that having children and having a family and it's like, "Oh, have you taken time out or this?" And there's this overarching talk about how flexible we are and work flexibly and all of this. But then when it comes down to it, it's like, "No, I want to see a year of data that shows that you can do the job and you can work these hours ..."

3.7.12 Gendered Behaviours: Positional Power

The data reveals that the mechanism individuals use to access informal promotions includes the positional powerbase, which is power from the perceived legitimacy of individuals based on their position to confer rewards or punishment (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Positional power is gendered through two practices: building positional power by managing shared perceptions and building positional power through increased visibility. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants' comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix X.

First, in terms of building positional power by managing shared perceptions, the data found that most men and women state that building positional power requires managing the shared perceptions of their capability and performance. Some participants referred to this as managing their 'personal brand' or their 'impact'. Most men and women shared that the more an individual displays ideal worker behaviours, the more leader-like and competent they are perceived to be. The data revealed that as employees progress up the organisation's hierarchy, they need to display ideal worker behaviours because these are the attributes associated with power, influence, and leadership. Men and women shared that it is important to create a 'promotion case' when building positional power. Some participants said this process included seeking feedback from individuals who can influence promotion decisions to become aware of how they are perceived and manage those perceptions, which some participants described as 'selling' themselves.

Most men and women said that when individuals align their behaviour with the ideal worker, they can influence powerful people's perceptions of their capability and performance by selling their achievements, being confident, and asserting themselves. Some participants described this process as 'political' or engaging in 'political skill', and most women felt men were likelier to engage in these behaviours than women. Some men and women discussed the need to manage the shared perceptions multiple

individuals might have of their competence, as the following comment from male employee 001 at FinanceCo highlights.

You very much have to coach your counsellor into like, "This is what I want you to say to make me look as impressive as possible." And what I hadn't realised until recently, is that there's men in the office who don't only recruit their counsellors to speak about that, but they also make sure that other people in that room have their back and are willing to vouch for them. So, it's the other counsellors in the room that you need to make your champion.

Second, in terms of building positional power through increased visibility, the data revealed that visibility is critical to building positional power. Most men and women describe visibility as ensuring decision-makers are aware of promotion candidates and their cases for advancement. The following comment from female manager 004 from EnergyCo highlights the importance of visibility in the promotion process.

You need to know the right people and get the right people to know that you would like to move up or that you're interested in other areas. It seems to me that, if there's an opportunity within your team to move up, you might have a chance, internally. If you're looking at something outside the team, your best chance is, if you've got your manager's support, to get your manager involved in trying to get your name out there or if you know the people or the team who are hiring to get you to that next level. Otherwise, I think it's really, really hard to move up. And the higher we go in the organisation, the more it will be about who knows you and how likely you are to get promoted.

Men and women state that building visibility requires engaging in ideal worker behaviours such as working long hours, self-promotion, and being outspoken. Most women said that when men engage in these behaviours, they increase their visibility and perceptions of their competence. However, some women and men felt when women engage in these same behaviours, they are viewed as 'pushy', 'difficult' and 'bossy'. The following comment by male senior manager 004 from EnergyCo illustrates the point.

I think it is lots of those negatives for women, where a male may display some characteristics and they go, "Cool. What a go getter," and females display [them], and

they go, “Yeah, really bossy,” or whatever the terms are. There’s still lots of that stuff that I know goes on.

Most men and women shared that competent candidates are often overlooked for promotions without visibility. However, some men and women also expressed frustration that the informal promotion process is more about ‘who an individual knows’ and their ability to ‘sell themselves’ rather than assessing their task performance and technical capability.

3.7.13 Gender Differences in Outcomes: Career Advocates

It is evident from the data that the informal promotion process results in differential outcomes for men and women at work. Specifically, the data revealed two key differences including alignment to the ideal worker provides access to career advocates for men, not women, and; token promotions placements (without a career advocate) reduce the likelihood that women will succeed in the role. Each of these themes will be outlined in the following sections. Examples of participants’ comments relating to this finding are displayed in Appendix Y.

First, regarding aligning with the ideal worker to access career advocates, the data found that most men and women describe having to sell or market themselves to senior leaders to make themselves known. Some women describe marketing themselves as being able to ‘act like men to get ahead’, which includes engaging in ideal worker behaviours to increase visibility, such as being outspoken, self-promotional and assertive. However, some men describe the process as being ‘political’ and knowing how to ‘present yourself to the right people’ to be perceived as a candidate for a promotion. Most participants agreed that if an individual struggled to engage in these behaviours, it would prevent them from obtaining a promotion because senior leaders are more likely to advocate for promotion candidates who align with the ideal worker.

The data revealed that because ideal worker behaviours are gendered, most women found it difficult to display these behaviours. Additionally, most women state that men are more likely to support other men similar to them, as these individuals are easier to work with. Consequently, most women and some men felt that men are more likely to build the visibility needed to access career advocates, including those in positions of power who

can influence promotion decisions. The following comment from male manager 005 from FinanceCo illustrates this point.

I think that there is a slight element of older, traditionally white men at the top who are looking to pull someone through who they can get on well with. And that tends to be people with the same sort of backgrounds that they have had. And I do not think there's enough positive education to say, "Look, okay, yes, they might have a similar background, but there's no reason why these people are any different."

Second, regarding token promotion placements reducing the likelihood that women will succeed, the data revealed that most participants thought their organisation had an implicit gender recruitment target to address the lack of women in leadership positions. Most men and women felt that more women were being promoted because of their organisation's focus on gender representation targets than because of their capability. Consequently, most men and women discussed how women leaders (who were perceived to have advanced due to representation targets) were not set up for success. They did not have the wider support from career advocates to succeed in the role. One woman stated that when women are promoted, they have to 'sink or swim', as powerful leaders are not invested in their success. The following comment from female manager 001 at EnergyCo illustrates this.

One of our supervisors here, she is a physio by background. And previous to when I got here, one of the leaders put her in as a supervisor in our maintenance teams. And to be different, to actually challenge the team. They convinced her that it was a good opportunity for her to develop and that she will be fully supported. You know, get guidance and feedback, and all that type of stuff, and it never actually happened... I wouldn't have expected someone else to stay as long as she did, in an environment where she wasn't supported.

3.8 The Ideal Worker and Gendered OPC

The data revealed that most men and women perceive the ideal worker as stereotypically masculine and willing to engage in dominant, action-oriented, outspoken, assertive, self-promotional and competitive behaviours. Appendix Z outlines the sub-themes that emerged from participants' accounts of the ideal worker. For example, most participants

viewed the ideal worker as someone willing to work long hours and free from dependent care responsibilities. Additionally, the ideal worker was described by most participants as someone who understands how to navigate organisational politics and influence others to achieve individual outcomes, which at times may be at the expense of others.

The data revealed that the ideal worker sets the standard for the behaviours employees need to engage in to be perceived as leader-like and competent. Most men and women perceived individuals engaging in ideal worker behaviours to be engaging in a political influence process in organisations, which includes demonstrating masculine political behaviours to influence others to achieve personal goals. In addition, most participants stated that leaders reinforce the ideal worker standard by engaging in these behaviours and supporting, rewarding, and advancing individuals who do the same.

Most men and women discussed how engaging in ideal worker behaviours is associated with increased access to career development opportunities. The data reveals that aligning with the shared perceptions of the ideal worker serves as a perceptual proxy for power in organisations. Most men and women shared that they engage in ideal worker behaviours to acquire power in organisations, as illustrated by the following comment from male manager 005 from EnergyCo.

Office politics is playing the power game essentially. The power game can be a couple of factors. One is information. Information is power. Number two, your position. Number three, your experience. Number four is your symbolic nature: where you sit in, on the floor. And definitely your personality. That is definitely I guess the pull of politics in the office.

Some men use the term 'personality' about ideal worker behaviours. Some men state that women lack the personality characteristics needed to succeed, including not being as dominant, outspoken, and assertive. Most men stated that women must display ideal worker behaviours by being confident, assertive, and outspoken if they want to advance. However, some men described women in leadership positions who displayed ideal worker behaviours as 'hard', 'tough', difficult' or an 'ice queen', as this comment from male manager 002 from EnergyCo illustrates.

I've seen some ladies who are incredible actually, at EnergyCo. As I said, they fit all the attributes, the only thing I would say is, that they've got a hard edge to them, more so than the men, because I think they had to be throughout their careers to be able to succeed. There are some leaders who I've worked with, I've been incredibly impressed with, who are both knowledgeable and very, very professional at their jobs. But they are definitely seen as being, you know the kind of ice queen.

Most women stated that engaging in masculine behaviours made them less likeable and often isolated them from both men and women.

3.9 Discussion and Contributions

3.9.1 A power base model for examining gendered in organisational politics

This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational politics and gender by identifying, for the first time, the three ways in which OPC are gendered using a power-base model. These include gendered perceptions of informal processes, gendered political behaviours related to the building and maintaining four power bases, and the associated gender differences in career outcomes.

This study extends Acker's (2006) theory of gendered organisations in several important ways. Firstly, Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations includes the concept of gendered substructures. The gendered substructure in organisations includes invisible processes in which gendered assumptions about women, men, femininity, and masculinity are embedded and reproduced, perpetuating gender inequality. Gendered substructures include organising processes, organisational culture, interactions on the job and gendered identities, which continually recreate gender inequalities (Acker, 2012). This study found that while organisations have formal processes for promotions, development opportunities, networks, and information sharing, informal 'shadow' political processes operate alongside formal processes but are mainly invisible and independent of them. Exploring shared perceptions of gender in OPC, this research found that both men and women perceive these informal processes as political and gendered.

Additionally, this study extends Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations by revealing how OPC are gendered through the four informal political processes. Gandz

and Murray (1980) state that specific organisational processes lend themselves to being perceived as more political than others and recommend future research examine the specific characteristics of informal processes that influence perceptions of organisational politics. This study builds on this recommendation, as the findings reveal four informal gendered political processes associated with OPC, including informal promotion, development, information sharing and networking practices. This research found support for Gandz and Murray's (1980) claim that political processes exist in organisations, including processes with high managerial discretion related to success or failure at work. Specifically, this study revealed that the four informal processes are perceived as both political and gendered. The findings indicate that these processes rely on relationships with superiors or co-workers. They are ill-defined and associated with ambiguous success criteria and decision-making, so they are open to political practices and gendered power plays.

Additionally, this research extends Acker's (2006) perspective on inequality regimes related to gender in informal interactions. This study found that inequality is created and reproduced through informal political behaviours that individuals engage in, which create and re-create inequality despite the formal processes that might exist to prevent this. The findings reveal that organisations are not gender neutral, but rather individuals engage in gendered power relations when navigating informal processes at work by engaging in political behaviour (Acker 1990). Additionally, this research extends Acker's (1992) theory by accounting for how men and women perceive these processes to be gendered and the differential outcomes associated with this. While this finding is limited to gender, the OPC framework can be used to explore how informal behaviour is also racialized and class-based. The gendered OPC framework provides insight into how OPC and political behaviour are gendered and contribute to the persistent gender power gap in organisations. Drawing on Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, future research could expand this framework to include racializing and class-creating processes that combine to create and maintain a gender, race, and class power gap in organisations.

Finally, Acker (2012) argues that gendered substructures are produced and reproduced in the interactions on the job, between colleagues and between those at different levels of power, which may include one on one interactions or group-level interactions as well

as formal and informal interactions. When outlining the concept of inequality regimes, Acker (2006) shares why gender and sometimes race (when it comes to limited opportunities and expectations for behaviour) are reproduced in everyday informal interactions individuals engage in while undertaking work. An essential contribution this study makes is that the informal gendered political interactions men and women engage in are informed through the shared perceptions of the ideal worker, which builds an understanding of the political norms, values, and behaviour. The ideal worker, therefore, is not only masculine but also political.

Ellen III et al. (2013) argue that organisational politics has been investigated for decades. Still, despite this research, there is a limited examination of the link between organisational political and political behaviour, which is often taken for granted. This study found that one contextual factor that shapes the gendered nature of political behaviour is the shared perceptions employees have of the ideal worker. While many researchers have used Acker's ideal worker to understand gender at work, there is limited research examining how shared perceptions of the ideal worker shape individual behaviour. Additionally, research examining the specific characteristics of the ideal worker is scarce (Poorhosseinzadeh and Strachan 2020b). This research found that employees' shared perceptions of the ideal worker inform their political norms and behaviours, which contributes to gendered perceptions of OPC. Therefore, this research extends Acker's (1992) theory regarding the ideal worker, as the findings reveal that OPC is gendered because of the shared perceptions men and women hold of the ideal worker, which influences perceptions of and norms regarding the political behaviours men and women engage in as well as the associated outcomes.

One of the reasons the OPC framework was used to examine how organisational politics is gendered is because the framework accounts for both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics. However, the findings revealed that from a gender perspective, political behaviour is inherently masculine, resulting in differential outcomes for men and women who engage in it to build and maintain power. Primarily, this is because men engage in homosocial practices to build their power bases. Therefore, this study found political behaviour benefits men in a way that it does not women. However,

future research should examine if men could use political behaviour to advocate and support women's advancement at work.

3.9.2 The Political, Gendered Ideal Worker

Much research supports Acker's (1990b) masculine description of the ideal worker; for example, Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell and Ristikari's (2011) meta-analysis, examining masculine perceptions of the ideal worker, found that stereotypical images of the ideal worker and leader are masculine. This study supports existing research and extends Acker's (1990b) original description of the masculine ideal worker in three critical ways.

First, this study finds that the ideal worker is gendered and political. The ideal worker is the shared perception of competence and leadership and sets the norms individuals need to engage in to build and maintain power. Aligning to the ideal worker by engaging in the associated behaviours is how individuals increase perceptions of their power and align themselves with powerful others within the organisation. This study found that engaging in ideal worker behaviours is a proxy for power. Third, individuals' shared perceptions of the ideal worker set the standard for the political practices.

Second, this research found that shared perceptions of the ideal worker set the standard for the political behaviour individuals need to engage in to build and maintain power. Research by Ammeter et al. (2002) found that the powerful mental model individuals hold of their own and others' power informs their behaviour. Individuals' perceptions of the ideal worker inform the mental models they have of their power and other individuals (Ammeter et al. 2002). Specifically, this study builds on existing research as findings reveal that the more individuals engage in behaviours associated with the ideal worker, the more competent, leaderlike, and powerful they and others will perceive them to be. As shared perceptions of the ideal worker are gendered, so too are the practices individuals need to engage in to align themselves to this standard. Nicolson (2015) argues that women and men respond to or negotiate around the political rules set by leadership through political behaviours to be successful. Billing (2011) finds that women and men contribute to the construction of behavioural norms at work through the daily practice of doing gender. This study extends existing research, as the findings reveal the practice of doing gender includes engaging in the political practices associated with the ideal worker.

The ideal worker is the shared perception of the gendered practices individuals need to engage in when building and maintaining connection, informational, personal, and positional power. For example, by engaging in masculine ideal worker behaviours and homosocial practices, men can build and maintain the connection power needed to access the benefits associated with informal networks. This study supports Davey's (2008) research, which finds that the political behaviours individuals engage in are stereotypically masculine. Therefore, this research contributes to the existing understanding of the ideal worker, as findings reveal that shared perceptions of the ideal worker set the political norms that leaders and employees need to engage in to build their power bases.

Third, this study found that engaging in the political norms associated with the ideal worker to build and maintain power bases results in different outcomes for men and women. For example, when it comes to the connection power base, men and women access informal networks by engaging in ideal worker behaviours and homosocial practices, which is more challenging for women than men. Consequently, women are less likely to form relationships with men and receive the same access to information and support needed to advance. Connection power is built and maintained by influencing individuals to align with the ideal worker, such as being dominant, action-oriented, outspoken, loud, assertive, self-promotional, competitive, and free from dependent care responsibilities. Male leaders are more likely to support and engage men who display these ideal worker behaviours than women. Connection power is built by engaging in ideal worker behaviours, which are gendered and result in different outcomes for men and women. This study found that women encounter similar challenges with developing the other three power bases, including informational, personal, and positional. Women need to build relationships with men, who dominate positions of power, to access the organisational insight, exposure, visibility, and career advocacy associated with that power. Building and maintaining power bases requires engaging in ideal worker behaviours. Neel (2020) found that when women are evaluated according to the ideal worker norm, the double bind ensures that women are penalised when it comes to evaluations of their performance and leadership suitability. This study found that while evaluations of women against the ideal worker standard negatively impact perceptions of

performance, they also limit women's ability to build and maintain power. These findings support existing research that successful managers embody masculine values and norms, which give hierarchical privilege, superior status, and increased perceptions of power to individuals strongly associated with masculine ideal worker attributes (Poorhosseinzadeh and Strachan 2020c). Therefore, alignment with the ideal worker is a power base in its own right. Additionally, this study extends existing research, as the findings reveal that successful managers engage in masculine political norms to build and maintain power. Alignment to the ideal worker is how men and women not only 'do gender' but also 'do politics' to build and maintain power.

3.9.3 Gendered OPC: Informal Networks, Connection Power and Trust

This research found that accessing informal networks requires engaging in ideal worker behaviours and homosocial practices, which serve to exclude women from informal networks. This study supports existing research, which finds that homosocial practices generally include men who prefer to seek and enjoy other men's company. This is why informal networks are created and maintained through men preferring to work and socialise with other men (Lipman-Blumen 1976). The connections individuals form through informal networking build the social capital individuals need to ascend into positions of power within the hierarchies (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). This study found that women struggle to build connection power as they lack these connections. These findings support those of Forret and Dougherty (2004), who found that women do not receive the same level of career benefits as men for engaging in similar networking behaviours. While existing research has identified the gendered nature of informal networking, this study extended these findings by identifying the limitations women encounter in building connection power and accessing the same benefits that men do from engaging in networking behaviour because this behaviour is gendered.

This study also extends existing research by Kankkunen (2014) that found that informal networks provide members access to essential resources such as information, influence, and status. This study found that the gendered nature of informal networks reduces women's access to these resources and their ability to build connection power. Consequently, this study found that as men tend to occupy positions of power in

organisations, they have more access to informal networks, which means the information, resources, and opportunities to influence others largely remain with men. As such, informal networks are dominated by men, and the gendered political practices men use to build connection power maintain these dominant positions.

3.9.4 Gendered OPC: Information Sharing, Informational Power, and Organisational Insight

One of the key contributions of this research is the finding that informal processes are distinct but overlap and reinforce one another. The existing literature examining gender in organisations often presents the barriers women encounter advancing at work as separate from each other. For example, research by Cross (2010) presents the challenges women encounter accessing promotions and networks and integrating work and home life as independent from each other. However, this study found that the four informal processes influence one another and can compound the challenges women experience trying to advance at work.

Specifically, when it comes to informational power, this study found that, like informal networks, men use informal information to build and maintain power and networks in organisations. Based on social capital theory, Seibert, Kraimer and Liden (2001) argue that network structures promote objective and subjective career success through social resources, such as access to information and career sponsorship (Kimura 2015). This study supports this argument as the findings reveal that more men than women can gain access to informal networks, where informal information sharing occurs by engaging in masculine ideal worker behaviours. The quality of the social network determines the value of information an individual receives, which affects the success of their subsequent influence attempts and career success (Kimura 2015). This study extends existing research as the findings reveal that women do not have access to the same informal networks as men. As a result, they are also less likely to have access to everyday information. Consequently, this limits their ability to build and maintain informational power, limiting their perceived value as network members.

Homosocial practices limit or control the information women receive by limiting the connections and networks they can form. This study found that the informal processes

reinforce one another. Specifically, individuals use informal networks to access informal information, which is used to build and maintain strong network ties. As these processes are gendered, women do not have the same opportunity to access informal information and build informal networks as men do.

3.9.5 Gendered OPC: Informal Development Opportunities, Personal Power and Exposure and Visibility

This study found that the informal information process also plays a critical role in women's ability to access informal development opportunities. Specifically, this research found support for the affinity bias. Men are more likely to support other men who are like themselves and provide them with access to information about what opportunities exist and how to position themselves to access those opportunities. This finding supports existing research, which finds that supervisors are gender-biased in their task allocation, resulting in fewer development opportunities for women (De Pater et al. 2010). This study also found that men are more likely to be included in informal networks and homosocial activities outside of work, which provides greater exposure to powerful male leaders, enhancing access to opportunities for development. Research by Linehan and Scullion (2008) finds that female managers often miss out on development opportunities because they lack access to mentors, role models, sponsorship, or access the appropriate network, limiting their male counterparts' access to their access to development opportunities.

Additionally, it is easier for men to fit the ideal worker standard, increasing positive perceptions of their competence, performance, and leadership qualities. This research found that perceptions of competence are measured against the ideal worker standard. The double bind ensures that women are given mixed messages at work about what is considered appropriate behaviour due to the gendered nature of this behaviour, which often includes inherent contradictions (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Consequently, even if women and men engage in the same behaviours, women will not be perceived as competent and leader-like, reducing their access to development opportunities. This issue is further compounded for mothers, who cannot commit all their time to the organisation due to childcare arrangements. Women face numerous challenges when it comes to

fitting the ideal worker standard, which creates career barriers and stressors at work that men do not experience, such as the glass ceiling, maternal wall, tokenism, exclusion from informal networks, and a lack of development opportunities, to name a few (Perrewé and Nelson 2004).

3.9.6 Gendered OPC: Informal Promotion Processes, Positional Power, and Career Advocacy

Alignment with the ideal worker also affects perceptions of promotability. Eagly and Carli (2003) state that women are stereotyped as more communal, caring, and feminine; consequently, women are less likely to secure appropriately demanding assignments, limiting their promotability and rewards. This study concludes that as women are misaligned with the ideal worker, they are perceived as less competent and riskier candidates for development opportunities and promotions. However, women's lack of access to development opportunities limits their ability to demonstrate their competence and reduce risk-associated perceptions. Arguably, development opportunities are more critical to women's advancement than men's, as women in this study discussed the need to continuously prove their capabilities to be perceived as competent and leader-like. Without these opportunities, it is exceedingly difficult for women to navigate the double bind and overcome their misalignment to the ideal worker and the associated negative perceptions of their competence that this creates. Davey (2008) maintains that organisational political processes are fundamental to gender in organisations because political behaviour is gendered, masculine and in conflict with female identity.

3.10 Practical Applications, Limitations, and Future Research

This study offers several practical applications that organisations can use to address the gender gap in leadership. Specifically, this research reveals how informal promotion, development, information sharing, and networking processes are gendered. For example, organisations can examine the informal networks in workplaces and educate employees about the homosocial practices that men engage in and how this excludes and limits women's advancement at work. By raising awareness of the four informal processes and how they are gendered, companies can work with employees to develop solutions for increasing gender equity.

Additionally, companies can educate leaders about the challenges women face engaging in gendered political practices to build and maintain the four power bases that are important for advancement. For example, in understanding how gendered practices limit women's ability to build and maintain positional power, organisations can ensure leaders are more aware and intentional about how they use their positional power to advocate for women's career advancement.

Organisations can also use the findings from this study to educate leaders about how gendered OPC results in differential outcomes for men and women and to diagnose which informal processes might be limiting women's advancement. For example, suppose fewer women are being promoted than men. In that case, companies can review their informal promotion practices to identify if women receive the same access as men when it comes to career advocates and informal mentors, which are critical for accessing opportunities and ensuring individuals are set up for success.

While this study offers several important theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions, there are several limitations that future research should address. Given that OPC includes shared perceptions of gendered political processes, practices, and outcomes, individual awareness of these aspects of gendered OPC is critical. It can be argued that individual political sensitivity to the gendered nature of OPC is a precursor to effectively navigating these environments. Additionally, the findings from this research assume a certain level of awareness of the informal processes, political practices and associated outcomes that make up OPC. Following Mainiero's (1994) political maturation process, it could be argued that individuals build political sensitivity over time as they become socialised into the organisation and build a mental model of the ideal worker. Future research needs to examine how individuals build and maintain political sensitivity and the associated outcomes for men's and women's career advancement.

Additionally, future research should examine if women's sensitivity to gendered OPC limits their motivation to engage in gendered political practices. Davey (2008) found that women's descriptions of barriers to their advancement were, in fact, descriptions of political obstacles. Women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours as these were described as masculine. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in

organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to engage in them. Future research needs to examine the link between gendered OPC and political will.

Additionally, researchers can examine if the gendered nature of OPC functions similarly in less male-dominated environments. This future research will help understand how less gendered contexts potentially shape more positive political behaviours or outcomes for women.

While the sample had balanced gender representation across the three levels of the organisations, the sample was limited in representing racial and ethnic minority groups. Both organisations are overwhelmingly Caucasian, as racial minorities make up less than 20% of the employee population, and in managerial positions and above, this representation drops to less than 10%. This may be why the research findings didn't identify racial differences in gendered political practices. Future research needs to explore the role of race in shaping perceptions of OPC, given that the racial category individuals identify with shapes their social interactions and opportunities to benefit from engaging in political behaviour (Charles and Nkomo, 2012). Like gender, race is a salient, visible, stigma-associated demographic variable that could racialize employees' experiences of OPC and therefore provide an account of the racial power gap in the organisation.

Overall, this study lacked an examination of the intersectional experiences of gendered OPC. Following Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, future research needs to account for how gender, class and race intersect, resulting in different perceptions and experiences of OPC and political behaviour. As Caucasian men maintain the most dominant leadership positions in organisations, they will set the political norms. Members who can understand and adhere to those norms are likely to benefit. Blass, Brouer, Perrewé and Ferris (2007) argue that politics is a 'white man's game'. Whether consciously or not, they discuss the rules, boundaries and intricacies of organisational politics that are selectively shared with insiders, which are predominantly white men.

Additionally, Alegria (2019) finds that white femininity propels white women on a management track but does not extend the same benefits to women of colour. This study provides a powerbase model for future research to examine how race and gender intersect to create challenges for racial and ethnic minorities when navigating OPC.

Future research should expand the gendered OPC framework to include racializing and class-creating processes that combine to create and maintain a gender, race, and class power gap in organisations.

3.11 Conclusions

Understanding gender and power at work requires an examination of both the gendered perceptions of informal processes and the gendered nature of the norms, implicit rules and regulations that influence how individuals build and maintain power (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998a). The four political power bases outlined in this study are the informal mechanisms individuals use to engage in gendered political power relations at work. Power is embedded within the gendered political interactions individuals engage in. The gendered political practices individuals engage in to build and maintain the four power bases can be thought of as power in action and the grounds for gender-based power struggles (Nicolson 2015b).

Shared perceptions of the ideal worker are contextual and influence shared perceptions of gendered OPC and the gendered political norms in organisations. This study contributes to the current literature examining the gender gap in leadership by detailing how OPC are gendered and why the image of the ideal worker serves to keep OPC gendered, limiting women's advancement at work.

Men and women engage in political behaviours to build and maintain the power bases needed to navigate the four informal processes critical to advancement. However, as these behaviours and informal processes are gendered, women remain systemically and systematically excluded from full participation in organisations (Hall-Taylor 2002). For example, when it comes to informal networking, this study finds men are more likely to build informal networks with other men based on their shared similarities. Informal networks provide men with access to resources such as informal information, support, career advice and opportunities for advancement. However, this study found that women's lack of access to informal networks limits their exposure to senior leaders and visibility within the organisations, reducing their access to men's benefits. This study finds that women have less access to powerful individuals in organisations and are less likely to receive access to inside information regarding development opportunities and the

informal mentoring needed to ensure success when it comes to development opportunities.

Additionally, men are likely to withhold informal information from women or selectively share informal information with other men, not women, to maintain informational power, limiting women's access to the organisational insight needed to influence others effectively. This study found that women are less likely to have access to powerful individuals who can advocate for their promotability in terms of promotion processes. Women are also less likely to have the masculine ideal worker attributes needed to be considered a candidate for promotion. Even if companies promote women, they may be perceived as token promotions based on gender representational targets. Therefore, women are unlikely to have the support from powerful individuals needed to succeed in the role. Both informal political processes and political behaviours are gendered, creating barriers to women's advancement that remain entrenched in organisations because of shared perceptions of the ideal worker.

Women's lack of fit with the ideal worker limits their ability to build connection, informational, personal, and positional power, but it also reduces perceptions of their competency and leadership effectiveness. Men can develop and maintain power by engaging in the behaviours associated with the ideal worker. However, the gendered nature of these behaviours ensures that even if women engage in these same behaviours, it will not result in the same outcomes. An essential contribution of this research is using a powerbase model to examine OPC, as the findings provide insight into how gendered perceptions shape gendered political practices through individual perceptions of the ideal worker and associated political norms. Engaging in gendered political practices within gendered OPC results in differential outcomes for men and women when building and maintaining power, which is a critical factor in the persistent gender gap in leadership positions.

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**4 . EXPLORING POLITICAL SENSITIVITY IN MALE-DOMINATED
ORGANISATIONS: AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT IN GENDERED
ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS**

4.1 Abstract

Organisational politics is often considered a gender-free phenomenon; however, this study argues that organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered. Therefore, to successfully navigate political climates at work, individuals must be politically sensitive to the gendered nature of organisational politics. Specifically, political sensitivity includes an awareness of gendered organisational political climates and engaging in gendered political behaviours. Although the existing literature examining gender and organisational politics has explored the gendered nature of political behaviour and gender differences in motivation to engage in this behaviour, few studies have explored how individuals become aware of and engage in gendered political behaviour.

Existing research examining how individuals build their awareness of organisational politics, including Mainiero (1994), Doldor (2017) Ferris et al. (2002), Ferris et al. (2012), Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013), and Yates and Hartley (2021) do not account for the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. Or if this awareness of gendered organisational politics is critical to effectively engaging in gendered political behaviours to build and maintain power. Examining the awareness–engagement will provide insight into the persistent gender power gap, given that individuals acquire power by engaging in gendered political behaviour (King, Denyer and Parry 2022).

This study explores political sensitivity using a power base model to contribute to the existing gender and organisational politics literature. The approach includes 72 semi-structured interviews with men and women from two organisations, one from the financial services sector and the other from the energy and resource sector. The findings reveal that political sensitivity includes an awareness of gendered organisational political climates and engaging in gendered political behaviours. Furthermore, this research highlights the critical role of shared perceptions of the ideal worker in shaping political norms and developing individual political sensitivity. Finally, the study's key contributions and practical implications are discussed, and areas for future research are identified.

Keywords:

Organisational politics, political behaviour, gender, gendered organisation, political sensitivity

4.2 Introduction

4.2.1 The Gender Power Gap And Gendered Organisational Politics

Even though women make up nearly half of the workforce in the United Kingdom and the United States, men continue to hold most leadership positions in the corporate and political arenas (Gipson et al. 2017). Even in post-industrial societies, a power gap exists between men and women in most organisations, as men dominate leadership positions and women largely take up support positions (Eagly and Fisher 2009). The gender power gap exists in organisations because power is gendered (Ledet and Henley, 2000).

In terms of power and gender in organisations, the rational view of organisations is that they are 'sex-neutral machines' despite the masculine principles dominating them (Kanter 1977). Contradicting this view, Acker (1990) proposes that organisations are gendered through a continuing process of forming and conceptualising social structures. Acker argues that organizations have gendered processes that produce and reproduce inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Acker (2006, p.443) defines inequality in organisations as "*the systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes; workplace decisions; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations.*" Inequality results in systematic disparities in employees' power and control over resources, decision-making processes, promotion and development opportunities, remuneration and rewards, and workplace relations (Healy et al., 2017).

Organisational hierarchies are inherently gendered as they are constructed on the assumption that those in paid employment are better suited to leadership roles. This is intrinsically disadvantageous to women who must take time off to have children or raise them. Financially, men gain from the existing organisational hierarchy as the opportunities they need for advancement depend on denying women these same opportunities (Acker 1999). Understanding gender in organisations is fundamental to understanding the pervasiveness of male power in organisations (Acker 1999).

While female participation in paid work has significantly increased, women remain in positions under the control and supervision of men's arenas (Gipson et al. 2017). As a

result, women's career mobility is limited despite their many qualifications and experience (Acker 1999). This limitation is known as the 'glass ceiling effect' whereby invisible barriers exist in organisations and prevent career advancement for women (Acker 1999). Reinforcing this view, Eagly and Fisher (2009) state that even in post-industrial societies, a power gap exists between men and women in most organisations. Men still occupy most leadership positions, and women continue to hold support positions (Eagly and Fisher 2009). Further, Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) maintain that masculine structures generally dominate organisations, making it difficult for white women to succeed; despite the hypothesis that they have the right social and cultural capital to succeed.

The gender power gap in organizations is created and maintained by the gendered political behaviour individuals engage in (King, Denyer and Parry 2022). Power, politics and influence in organisations have remained intimately linked constructs for decades (Treadway et al., 2013). For example, Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983) originally defined politics in organisations as *power in action*, and they propose that individuals need political skills to influence others effectively. Organisational politics is the exercise of power to negotiate different interests (Dhar 2011). The political perspective of organisations considers individuals with limited knowledge of decisions and alternatives (Pratt and Lepisto 2013). This limitation means that individuals need to engage in influencing behaviours to access information, resources, and power (Treadway et al., 2013). Organisations are, therefore, not comprised of singular actors with singular goals but rather multiple actors with multiple goals (Pratt and Lepisto 2013). The very nature of organisations is, therefore, political because they are comprised of individuals with diverse and often competing interests.

Existing research examining organisational politics largely considers it to be a gender-free phenomenon (Davey, 2008). However, recent research by Hall-Taylor (2002), Davey (2008), and Doldor et al. (2013) finds organisational politics is gendered as organisational structures bias power in favour of men. In organisations, power is embedded in social interactions; those with power are aware of the need to maintain their influence (Nicolson 1996). This subjective/interactive perspective of organisations considers the gendered meaning of interactions at work by viewing the relationship between men and women

within the broader context of society (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019). Gendered political relations are the site for power struggles and power-based conflicts in organisations.

Research investigating individual differences in political behaviour suggests that men are more involved in informal influence tactics than women (Drory and Beaty 1991). Men are more likely to accept and engage in organisational politics to their benefit (Drory and Beaty 1991). While existing research has investigated individual differences in political behaviour, it has failed to explore whether these differences exist because of individual differences in awareness of and engagement in gendered political behaviours. For example, Mann (1995) states that women do not recognise the importance of politics because they are unfamiliar with existing informal power structures such as the 'old boys club'. In addition, Doldor et al.'s (2013) research indicate a gender difference in expressed political will, as political practices are perceived to be inherently masculine, reducing women's willingness to engage in these practices. Women cope with various responses, from resistance to reluctance and acceptance (Doldor et al., 2013). Arkin (2004) states that some women may reject management roles because of their distaste for political behaviour (Buchanan and Badham 2008).

As women are less willing to engage in political behaviour to the same degree as men, this may limit their ability to build and maintain organisational power. Buchanan and Badham (2008) argue that women are much less likely to engage in organisational politics to build and maintain power, preferring to rely on formal career advancement, such as obtaining qualifications or working hard. Research by Ledet and Henley (2002) finds that perceptions of power are gendered as stereotypical masculinity serves as a perceptual proxy for power in the workplace. Davey's (2008) research finds that women have difficulty engaging in political behaviours as they perceive them to be aggressive, competitive, overconfident, and anti-social. Therefore, women may be less willing to engage in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power.

Although the existing literature examining gender and organisational politics has explored the gendered nature of political behaviour and gender differences in motivation to engage in this behaviour, few studies have explored how individuals become aware of gendered political behaviour. Or if this awareness is critical to effectively engaging in gendered

political behaviours to build and maintain power. Examining this awareness–engagement link is significant given that political behaviours are how individuals acquire power at work; therefore, this research contributes to understanding men’s and women’s different paths to power (King, Denyer and Parry 2022). This examination is also essential given that the gendered nature of organizations is often taken for granted by those in positions of power, making it challenging to address the barriers women face trying to advance at work.

Acker (2006) maintains that all organizations have inequality regimes, the interrelated practices and processes that maintain class, gender and racial inequalities at work. One of the essential components of inequality regimes is the invisibility of inequality. Acker (2006) argues that the visibility of inequality (which she defines as the level of awareness of inequalities) may vary from one organisation to another. While some individuals may ignore inequality, Acker (2006) states that men believe inequality occurs in some parts of the organisation, not theirs.

Consequently, gender inequality often becomes invisible in organisations. Sheerin and Linehan (2018) state that men, more than women, suffer from a lack of awareness of gendered organisational norms and behaviours. The normalization of patriarchy in organizations prevents men from reflecting and understanding the gendered nature of their workplace. Consequently, while men may be aware that a gender power gap exists (due to the lack of women in leadership positions), men may simultaneously deny the gendered practices—like gendered organisational political practices—that create and maintain this gap.

Limited research has examined how men and women become aware of gendered organisational politics and political behaviour and if this awareness is critical to effectively engaging in gendered political behaviours. Most of the existing research to date examining how individuals develop their political capability, such as Mainiero (1994), Doldor (2017) Ferris et al. (2002), Ferris et al. (2012), Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013), and Yates and Hartley (2021) do not account for the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. The assumption is that organisational politics and political skill are gender-free. Therefore, as individuals become aware of and learn to engage in political behaviour, this too is gender-free.

This study examines men's and women's awareness of gendered organisational politics and engagement in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power at work (King, Denyer and Parry 2022). Given that gender is often invisible in organisations, this study explores if men's and women's awareness of gendered organisational politics is crucial to effectively engaging in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power at work (King, Denyer and Parry 2022). As well as the differential outcomes engaging in gendered political behaviours creates for men and women as it relates to the gender power gap.

Overall, this study makes several significant contributions to the literature domains of gender, politics, and power in organisations. First, this study finds that political sensitivity does include both the awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. Specifically, political sensitivity includes an awareness of the four informal gendered political processes that make up OPC. These include informal networks, informal information sharing, informal development processes and informal promotion opportunities. Second, existing research, including Mainiero (1994), Blass (2007), Doldor (2017), Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013) and Yates and Hartley (2021) assumes the political maturation processes are largely gender-free. However, this research found that the political maturation process, as it relates to political sensitivity, is gendered through the shared perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker, which is gendered and political. Men and women learn how to engage in ideal worker behaviours, which are masculine and political, through a socialisation process as they build relationships and observe the political behaviours and norms that other people engage in.

Third, one of the contributions this study makes is the detailed exploration of the four subcategories that make up political sensitivity, which details the awareness-engagement relationship. Specifically, the findings reveal individual differences in several men's and women's accounts of political sensitivity. The thematic analysis identified four subcategories of political sensitivity, which account for individual differences in awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. While some of these categories confirm prior findings by Mainiero (1994), and Doldor (2017), which identified a seasoning process, as individuals learn political skill, they become less naïve about the reality of organisational politics and learn to navigate this by developing political skill. For

example, Doldor's (2017) study identified a three-stage model of political maturation that leaders encounter. Both these studies examined leaders' perceptions of the political maturation process, assuming this process was gender-free. This study extends existing research by detailing how these four categories are gendered. Additionally, this study examined men's and women's gendered perceptions of the political maturation process across three levels of the organisation to better account for how these perceptions may vary for non-managerial positions.

Forth, while existing research, including Mainiero (1994), Doldor (2017) Oerder, Blicke and Summers (2013), and Yates and Hartley (2021), reveals how individuals develop political skill, these studies do not account for the gendered nature of political behaviour or the differential outcomes engaging in gendered organisational politics has for men and women, when it comes to building and maintaining power at work. This study revealed that the gendered nature of political behaviours creates different challenges for some men and women who engage in these behaviours. Specifically, the findings reveal that women encounter a political double bind, whereby engaging in gendered political behaviours may reduce their likability and limit opportunities to acquire power in the same way it does men, further perpetuating the gender power gap.

Finally, this study found that awareness of gendered political practices increased with an individual's years of experience in organisations. Individuals observe others engaging in political behaviours over time and understand what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain power. Some individuals also receive advice from line managers or other individuals within the organisation regarding how the informal political processes function and what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain their power bases. While the political maturation process may be a function of shared perceptions of the ideal worker, other factors like years of experience, seniority and the nature of the role requirements also play a role.

Overall, the findings indicate the challenges women encounter engaging OPC in a gender-sensitive way, which limits their opportunities to build and maintain power. Taken together, these findings provide insights into why there are so few women in powerful positions in organisations.

The paper is structured into four sections, starting with an overview of the relevant bodies of literature as it pertains to organisational politics and gender in organisations, followed by an outline of the qualitative exploratory methodology used in this research study. Following this, the empirical findings are presented, and the paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and empirical contributions and future research considerations.

4.2.2 Political Sensitivity: The Awareness-Engagement Link

While research increasingly highlights the importance of political skill, it largely overlooks how leaders become skilled and motivated to navigate organisational politics (Doldor, 2017). While gendered perceptions of organisational politics occur at an individual level, it is noted that similar individuals are attracted to similar environments (Treadway et al. 2005). Individuals also tend to be socialised similarly within these environments because they are exposed to similar features within these contexts (Drory 1993). This interactive and reciprocal process then facilitates the development of shared interpretations of an organisations political climate and provides the basis for behaviour and affect (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Shared perceptions influence the relationship between organisational context and individual responses (Treadway et al. 2005). Norms are critical to understanding political behaviour in organisations. According to the political norms in an organisation, individuals judge the extent to which their behaviours or goals are acceptable and appropriate. These judgements are formed over time as individuals interact with their political environment and understand what strategies and tactics to pursue--that is, they develop political sensitivity (Vredenburg and Maurer 1984). Vredenburg and Maurer (1984) first proposed the concept of political sensitivity and argued that intergroup power and conflict are central to organisational politics. Individuals make political judgements over time as they interact with their political environment at work. Individuals use these judgements to determine which strategies and tactics to pursue. Political sensitivity then is considered as individual awareness and sensitivity to these political norms (Vredenburg and Maurer 1984).

Research examining the nature of political sensitivity is minimal. Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) proposed a theoretical argument expanding on Vredenburg and Maurer's (1984)

political sensitivity construct and argued that research should investigate how political understanding (i.e., recognising that politics exists in an organisation) and perceived control (i.e., feeling little control over politics) moderate POP. Several studies, such as Ferris, Fedor and King (1994) and Gilmore et al. (1996), used organisational tenure as a proxy for political understanding. Others, such as Ferris et al. (1996b), examined understanding as a moderator of perceptions of organisational politics and outcomes by using Tetrick and LaRocco's (1987) understanding scale (Kacmar and Baron 1999). However, items for this scale measure the understanding of events in organisations and control over one's work environment instead of understanding political norms (Tetrick and 1987, p. 540). Another study by Blass et al. (2007) explored political understanding related to organisational socialisation, explicitly focusing on networking and mentoring. This research used Chao et al.'s (1994) six-item measure of political understanding, and its findings concluded that individuals who understand organisational politics recognise the value of developing and using social networks. Given that organisational politics is gendered, existing research fails to account for gendered nature of political sensitivity.

It should also be noted that political sensitivity is considered different from the social astuteness dimension of political skill as outlined by Ferris et al. (2005). Social astuteness is concerned with correctly identifying political behaviour and the political players to engage with. The PSI developed by Ferris et al. (2005) includes a measure of social astuteness. Social astuteness includes understanding others' contributions to social interactions in terms of the potential resources they have and what motivates them. This understanding allows politically skilled individuals to choose who might be beneficial to engage with. However, an individual can be socially astute, as defined by Ferris et al. (2005), but lack the political sensitivity to understand gendered political environments and how to engage in political behaviour in a gender-sensitive way.

This study argues that political sensitivity is gendered and includes individual of gendered organisational political norms and sensitivity to these political norms when engaging in political behaviour. Acker (1999) maintains that through the internal mental work of individuals, they come to understand the organisation's gendered expectations and opportunities, including the appropriate gendered behaviours and attitudes. The gendered expectations that men and women need to live up to at work are often

ambiguous and contradicting, requiring significant internal mental work to 'get it right'. These gender expectations for behaviour are reproduced in the political interactions surrounding work. Both men and women must learn about, cope with, and respond to these interactions with the appropriate gender identity (Acker 1999). For example, Shaughnessy et al. (2011) indicate that influence tactics are gendered, as political skill interacts with gender tactics, affecting supervisor liking and promotability ratings. In this study, women engaged in masculine political practices to access career benefits.

The gendered nature of organisational politics ensures that engaging in political behaviour does not result in the same outcomes for men and women. Even when women behave consistently with gendered political norms, which include being dominant, assertive, and aggressive, they risk being penalised for defying the stereotypical standard for feminine behaviour, which provides for being meek, mild, and unassertive (Davey 2008). Women are given mixed messages at work about what is considered appropriate political behaviour. They have a very narrow range of acceptable political behaviour they can engage in, which often includes inherent contradictions (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). In addition, women face career barriers like the glass ceiling, maternal wall, tokenism, exclusion from informal networks and a lack of development opportunities that men do not (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Navigating these challenges requires considerable political skill (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Given the gendered nature of political behaviour, women must walk a political tightrope by engaging in masculine political behaviours that do not defy society's gendered expectations for how women should behave (Kacmar & Baron, R. A. 1999).

While existing research may provide some evidence that political ability can be developed, it fails to examine how sex-role stereotyping might limit women's ability to engage in gendered political behaviours in the same way as men and receive the same benefits (Davey 2008). Even if women are socialised into gendered organisational political environments and provided with the development needed to engage in political behaviours in the same way as men, it does not guarantee that they will receive the same benefits because these behaviours are gendered. Interestingly, recent research by Westbrook et al. (2013) contradicts findings that women lack political ability, as men and women in this study perceive themselves as having similar political capability.

Additionally, Phipps and Prieto (2015) found that female students perceive themselves as more politically skilled than male students. However, these studies also fail to examine how sex-role stereotyping may limit women's ability to benefit from the gendered political behaviour they engage in.

Existing research highlights the challenges women encounter in navigating gendered political behaviour. Still, it assumes that women are aware of the gendered nature of this behaviour and fails to explore how women account for these gendered political norms in their behaviour. Therefore, this study will address existing research limitations by exploring if political sensitivity includes awareness of gendered organisational politics and political behaviours needed to build and maintain power bases.

Although current research investigating the gendered nature of political behaviour is limited. Several studies, including Mainiero (1994), Mann (1995), Ferris et al. (2002) and Perrewé and Nelson (2004), have examined individual differences in political behaviour. These studies argue that women do not advance into leadership positions at the same rate as men because they do not engage in political behaviours to the same extent as men. This behaviour is labelled political naiveté, and it is claimed that this limits a woman's ability to advance at work (Mainiero 1994). Mann (1995) argues that many women, to their detriment, fail to recognise the significance of political competence and deny its value and relevance. Ferris et al.'s (2002) research indicate that politically inept individuals are often unaware that their behaviour might be offensive or disrespectful. Perrewé and Nelson (2004) argue that women tend to overlook the importance of office politics and instead rely on task accomplishment as the primary means of advancing their careers. Existing research argues that women are more likely to suffer from political skill deficiency, and developing political skills will help women overcome barriers to career advancement (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Research by Treadway, Hochwarter et al. (2005) finds that through training and socialisation, political skill, as a competency, can be developed.

However, this body of research does not account for the gendered nature of organisational politics, which may also explain why women are less motivated to engage in it. Arkin (2004) states that some women may reject management roles because of their

distaste for political behaviour (Buchanan 2008). Davey's (2008) research found that women's descriptions of barriers to their advancement described political obstacles. Women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours as these were described as aggressive, competitive, overconfident, and anti-social traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity. These accounts suggest that this type of political climate is incompatible with femininity. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to advance into positions of power. Women viewed organisational politics as gendered, which impacted their sense of fit with the organisation. Additionally, Fritz and van Knippenberg's (2017) research investigated the relationship between cooperative climates and women's motivation to aspire to leadership positions. Their findings indicate that women have a greater communal tendency and are sensitive to climates that foster cooperation, teamwork, and support. Cooperative climates moderated women's motivation to advance into leadership roles. Understanding the relationship between men's and women's awareness of gendered organisational politics and engagement in political behaviours is essential in explaining the gender power gap.

4.2.3 Political Maturation: A Gender-Free Phenomena?

Understanding who has power and who does not, and the behaviours needed to access power, is critical to developing power (Ledet and Henley 2000). In following a political theory of organisations, March and Simon (1958) account for decision-making and actions in organisations as the process of conflict, power struggles and consensus-building, whereby powerful individuals maintain their power by engaging in political behaviour. Decisions are made under bounded rationality, whereby those in powerful positions, which tend to be dominated by men, control the decision-making process by engaging in political behaviour.

According to the theory of organisational socialisation, the dominant group in an organisation sets the norms for all other groups (Chao et al. 1994). Members who can understand and adhere to those norms are likely to benefit. While political activity is generally considered part of an unsanctioned, informal process, political behaviours are sanctioned by unofficial political norms (Treadway 2012).

Vredenburg and Maurer (1984) define this unofficial process as the *normative sanctioning mechanism* in organisations, whereby informal norms related to power, status, conflict, interpersonal relations, and career management determine the kind of political behaviour permitted by the organisation. Individuals make political judgements over time as they interact with their political environment at work and use these judgements to determine which strategies and tactics to pursue (Chao et al. 1994). Individuals become aware of and engage in organisational politics as they are socialised into an organisation and develop a sensitivity to the accepted political behaviours. As women and men understand that to be successful, they need to respond to or negotiate around the political rules set by leadership (Nicolson 1996). As leadership positions are primarily occupied by men, this study argues that the norms regarding political behaviour are established and maintained by men (Davey 2008c). As Caucasian men hold most of the leadership positions in organisations, they set the political norms within the organisation (Benschop 2009).

This argument is supported by Blass et al.'s (2007) research, which finds that politics is a white man's game because, consciously or not, the rules, boundaries and intricacies of organisational politics are selectively shared with insiders who are also predominantly white men. Therefore, existing research finds that women are not socialised into the political aspects of working life in the same way as men are. However, even if women are socialised into organisational politics in the same way as men, it does not guarantee that they will be able to engage in the same behaviours and achieve the same outcomes as men because political behaviours are gendered (Davey 2008).

Existing research examining how individuals become aware of organisational politics assumes the political maturation processes are essentially gender-free. For example, Mainiero (1994) argues that women develop political skills through a 'political seasoning' process, whereby women build awareness of the political behaviours needed to advance at work as they are socialised into organisations. The political seasoning process includes developing political skills by understanding the political environment and building strong relationships with influential individuals in the organisation who can provide further insight into the political aspects of working life (Shaughnessy et al. 2011).

More recently, Blass (2007) found that mentoring could increase individual understanding of organisational politics, as it builds an individual's awareness of the behaviours needed to develop and retain power. Ferris et al. (2012) state that there is limited research examining how individuals develop the skills needed to navigate organisational politics, but that mentoring can help individuals develop their political skills and networking ability. However, this research fails to account for the gendered nature of mentoring, as research by Lyness and Thompson (2000) found that mentoring is more strongly related to success for men than for women, as organisational processes associated with career advancement, such as informal network support, may serve to keep power with men who make up the dominant group.

Extending Mainiero's (1994) political maturation concept Doldor's (2017) research identifies three states of political maturation, including naivete and discovery, coping and endurance, and leveraging and proficiency. However, this paper does not consider the gendered nature of the political maturation process despite previous research by Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), which found women were less willing to engage in political practices as these behaviours were perceived to be gendered and inherently masculine. Both Doldor (2017) and Mainiero (1994) noted that mentoring and other types of relational learning are important for developing political skills. However, this research doesn't account for the fact that as men dominate most leadership positions, the mentoring they provide to women maybe gendered or not account for gender in political behaviours, given the invisibility of inequalities in organisations. Doldor (2017) recommends that future research examines the role of gender in leaders' political maturation experiences, as to date, this remains largely unexamined (Doldor, 2017).

Additionally, research by Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013) examines if employees develop political skill due to contextual factors, like hierarchical position. Their research finds that political skills, especially the networking ability dimension, can be developed autonomously. However, this research ignores the gendered nature of networking and the associated differential outcomes for men and women. Even if women engage in the same networking behaviours as men, it can be argued that they are unlikely to benefit from these behaviours similarly to men. Specifically, Bras (1985) found that men and women do not differ in their networking behaviour; rather, women are perceived as less

influential than men and not included in the same way. These findings concluded that women are aware of informal networks and more adept at building networks than men. While networking behaviours may not differ between men and women, different benefits are gained from engaging in these behaviours. For example, Lyness and Thompson (2000) found that mentoring is more strongly related to career success for men than women because organisational processes associated with career advancement, such as informal network support, may keep power with men who comprise the dominant group. Also, Forret and Dougherty's (2004) research concluded that gender impacts the utility of networking as a career-enhancing strategy because networking behaviour is more beneficial for men than women. Specifically, increased internal visibility (from networking behaviour) was related to promotions and increased compensation for men but not women.

Similarly, Hetty van Emmerik et al. (2006) found that women engaged in more informal networking than men. However, these activities resulted in stronger career satisfaction for men than women. Connections build the social capital needed to ascend into positions of power and maintain that position within the organisational (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). The social closure theory, outlined by Tomaskovic-Devey (1993), argues that men are unwilling to network, interact and assist women as they want to preserve their dominant position and the advantage this creates for them in organisations (Watkins and Smith 2014). The homosocial practices men engage in to maintain their dominance limits women's access to powerful networks that could benefit their career advancement.

Yates and Hartley's (2021) research examined how individuals learned to lead with political astuteness and argued that most research finds that political skill training, employee socialization and mentoring are the most common ways individuals develop political skills. However, given the gendered nature of organisational politics, it follows that women may not be socialised in the same way as men – if, in fact, at all. The dominant group in organisations sets the norms for all other groups (Chao *et al.*'s 1994). When applied to organisational politics, it can be argued that as Caucasian men continue to dominate most leadership positions in organisations today, they set the political norms within organisations. Members who understand and adhere to those norms will likely benefit (Chao *et al.*'s 1994). Additionally, as homosocial behaviours in organisations and

the exclusion of women from networks, likely, women may not experience the same political socialisation process as men.

While existing research provides insights into the political maturation process, in terms of how individuals learn how to engage in organisational politics overtime, they do not account for the gendered nature of the political maturation process nor how individuals develop a sensitivity to the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour. Accounting for gender in the political maturation process is critical, given that women may be aware of gendered OPC and the political behaviours required to build and maintain power but are less willing to engage in these behaviours because they are gendered. Women's lack of engagement in gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power further perpetuates the gender power gap. Even if women engage in the same gendered political behaviours as men, it may result in differential outcomes related to building and maintaining power. This study will explore how men and women develop their political sensitivity and the differential outcomes this has.

4.2.4 Developing Political Sensitivity Through Shared Perceptions Of The Ideal Worker

Acker argues that the informal interactions people engage in while undertaking work are one of the key organizing processes that produces inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Research by Healy et al. (2011), Wright (2011) and King, Denyer and Parry (2022). supports this argument finding that informal interactions reproduce inequalities and undermine formal processes that exist to ensure greater equity. This study argues that the gender power gap is created and reproduced through the informal gendered political interactions individuals engage in to build and maintain organisational power (Landells and Albrecht 2013).

Following the research findings by King, Denyer and Parry (2022), this study argues that the norms governing informal political interactions are created and maintained through individuals' shared perceptions of the ideal worker. The ideal worker concept provides a framework for understanding why men maintain their dominant position in organisations and how they do this by engaging in gendered behaviours. Acker's theory of gendered organisations examines the rules and codes that prescribe workplace behaviour, which

is based on the shared perceptions people have of the abstract 'ideal' worker, and this includes someone who can work long hours and is free from dependent care responsibilities (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019). The gendered nature of organisations creates certain expectations for worker behaviour based on implicit beliefs about the essential differences between women and men (Acker, 2012). Women are nurturing, caring and gentle, while men are active, dominant, competitive and assertive (Acker 2012). Therefore, the 'ideal' worker is associated with stereotypically masculine characteristics; consequently, it is assumed that men are better suited to working life than women (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019).

Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013) research finds that there are many contextual factors that impact political skill development, and they expect there are a plethora of factors that impact political skill development. This study argues that the shared perceptions of the ideal worker are a contextual factor that shapes political sensitivity—awareness of gendered organisational politics and political behaviour. Employees form cognitive interpretations regarding the nature and meaning of organisational events, processes, and decision-making; these perceptions inform employees' behaviour (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Research by Ammeter et al. (2002). finds individual perceptions of the ideal worker inform the mental models they hold of their power and other individuals' power.

The shared perceptions employees have of the ideal worker play a part in the day-to-day social practices employees engage in (Acker 2006). King, Denyer and Parry's (2022) findings reveal organisational political climates are gendered through the shared perceptions men and women hold of the ideal worker, which is masculine and political. Their study finds that women's lack of fit with the ideal worker limits their ability to build connection, informational, personal, and positional power bases, reducing perceptions of their competency and leadership effectiveness. Being aware of gender expectations and engaging in political behaviour in a gender-sensitive way is key to ensuring women benefit from these behaviours the same way men do. This study argues that individuals build their awareness of gendered political norms through the shared perceptions they form of the ideal worker. Therefore, this study will explore the relationship between how men and

women develop political sensitivity and the shared perceptions they have of the ideal worker, which is both masculine and political.

This study argues that as shared perceptions of the ideal worker are gendered, so too are the practices individuals need to engage in to align themselves to this standard, which may result in differential outcomes for men and women. For example, more recent research by Engstrom and Emmers-Sommer (2007) finds that the ideal leader is also associated with masculine attributes, which poses a challenge for women who do not fit this masculine ideal (Gipson et al. 2017). Sex-role stereotyping is the belief that a set of traits are more likely to be associated with one sex than another, for example, the belief that men are more assertive, outspoken, and dominant and that women are more gentle, maternal, and reserved (Perrewé and Nelson 2004). Sex-role stereotyping ensures that women cannot engage in gendered political behaviours the same way men do and receive the same benefits (King, Denyer and Parry 2022). Sex-role stereotyping, therefore, creates a double bind for women, who need to display masculine attributes to align themselves with the ideal worker. Nevertheless, when women engage in these behaviours, they defy gender role stereotypes and may be perceived as less likeable (Gipson et al. 2017). The gendered nature of political behaviours ensures that women remain systemically and systematically excluded from full participation in organisational politics, limiting their ability to build and maintain power at work (Hall-Taylor 2002). Recent research by King, Denyer and Parry (2022) finds that the ideal worker is not only gendered but also political.

Furthermore, Stead's (2015) research argues that women learn to belong in gendered workplaces by modelling masculine behaviours, but doing so requires an understanding of the gendered power relations at play. Women are marginalised and excluded from building power at work when they reject the ideal worker behaviours, which are the norm. But when women model the norm, they are subject to gendered conditions that may be hard for them to accommodate and easily result in them being perceived as less likeable, resulting in their rejection from social groups. Therefore, even if women develop the ability to engage in political behaviour in a gender-sensitive way, they may not benefit from doing so in the same way men do. This study will explore if political sensitivity creates differential outcomes for men and women.

4.3 Research Philosophical Approach and Aims

The research philosophy underpinning the research design follows that of critical realism. Critical realism holds that the world exists independently of people's perceptions; however, subjective interpretations influence how it is perceived and experienced (Edwards et al. 2014). The central argument of critical realism is that meanings are a real force in social life that can operate beyond human awareness. Therefore, the aim is to understand the underlying mechanisms within the social world (Brinkmann 2017).

Leadership studies are dominated by positivist and interpretivist traditions (Bhaskar, 1978). The critical realism epistemological framework, developed by Roy Bhaskar (1978), is helpful for investigating how individuals become aware of gendered OPC and engage in gendered political behaviours. Therefore, the research philosophy underpinning the research design follows that of critical realism. Critical realism holds that the world exists independently of people's perceptions; however, subjective interpretations influence how it is perceived and experienced (Edwards et al. 2014). The central argument of critical realism is that meanings are a real force in social life that can operate beyond human awareness. Therefore, the aim is to understand the underlying mechanisms within the social world (Brinkmann 2017).

Critical realism explores the structures, generative mechanisms, and contextual conditions responsible for patterns of observed events. Based on observed contexts and events (empirical level), some researchers have investigated the deeper causal mechanisms and structures that generate these events (Brannan et al., 2017). This research will follow an abductive approach following Bhaskar's (1998) four steps for abduction. Specifically, the first step is to describe the events of the phenomenon of interest; then the second step is to reproductively explain the mechanisms, following which the third step is to eliminate false hypotheses, and finally, the fourth step is to correctly identify the mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1998). This study follows this approach as the research aims to explain how the gender power gap persists. Therefore, the causal explanation for the gender power gap will be derived from the discovery of how the mechanisms, practices and outcomes that give rise to the gender power gap interact to generate different paths to power for men and women.

Additionally, this research study will adopt a critical realist perspective because typical positivist and empiricist approaches to research often disregard the broader context and how this shapes the research phenomena. Consequently, research findings are limited to describing but not explaining empirical events. A critical realist perspective is particularly relevant to this research as it accounts for subjective meanings and contextual factors that shape those meanings (Collier 1997). This research aims to understand the relationship between individual awareness of gendered OPC and individual engagement in political behaviours. Adopting a critical realist perspective will help explain why and how individuals engage in organisational politics and political behaviour, considering the gendered nature of both constructs.

Additionally, in contrast to a positivist ontology, which equates reality to a set of recordable events, or a constructivist approach, which reduces ontology to discourse, critical realists adopt a stratified ontology that separates the empirical from the actual and the real (Edwards et al. 2014). Reality is then created across three domains, as outlined in Table 4-1. These include the empirical (including what we perceive to be real), actual (including the events that occur in space and time that might be different from what we perceive), and real (including mechanisms and structures that generate the world).

The real domain includes generative mechanisms and structures with causal powers, and these mechanisms behave in particular ways under certain conditions (Bhaskar, 1978). The activation and interaction of causal powers generate events that compose the actual domain conditions (Bhaskar, 1978). Mechanisms include social mechanisms, a sequence of social events and processes (Gross 2009). This study seeks to understand the mechanisms that generate political sensitivity to explain the relationship between gendered organisational politics and political behaviour (cause) and the gender power gap in organisations (effect).

Specifically, this study aims to explore how individual awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviour in organisations create differential outcomes for men and women in building and maintaining their power bases. Separating out mechanisms, practices, and outcomes is important for understanding the relationship between gendered political contexts, political behaviour and how individuals build and

maintain power at work. While mechanisms do exist independently of what is observed, certain circumstances and interactions can trigger activation of the causal power of mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1978). Consequently, the activation and effects of mechanisms vary depending on the context. Therefore, when applied to this research study, it is more likely, when exploring the nature of political sensitivity within male-dominated environments, that organisational politics will be gendered through the gendered political behaviours individuals engage in to build and maintain their power bases. In less male-dominated environments, these mechanisms still exist, but they may not contribute to the gender power gap in the same way—as the effects may differ.

The research aims then to explore if political sensitivity within male-dominated environments includes an awareness of gendered OPC and an engagement in gendered political behaviours. This research requires a critical realist perspective to account for this awareness. Following this approach, this research will examine how men and women become aware of the gendered political norms, how this awareness relates to their engagement in gendered OPC, and if this results in differential outcomes in building and maintaining power.

Table 4-1 The Three Domains of Critical Realism

Domain	Research Application
Empirical: including what we perceive to be real.	Outcomes: Examining gender differences in awareness of gendered OPC and awareness of gendered political norms shaped by perceptions of the ideal worker.
Actual: including the events that occur in space and time that might be different from what we perceive.	Practices: Exploring how individuals become aware of gendered OPC and gendered political behaviours.
Real: including mechanisms and structures that generate the world.	Mechanisms: Examining individual engagement in gendered political behaviours used to build and maintain the four power bases that make up organisational political climates, including positional power, connection power, informational power, and personal power.

Lastly, this study follows an abductive reasoning research process, which draws on existing knowledge, as the generative mechanisms that create gendered OPC are already identified in the literature, and the aim is to explain the activation modes (Bhaskar, 1978). Specifically, while a critical realist approach does not specify the type of data collection to be adopted, researchers using this philosophical approach are often guided by an underdeveloped domain-specific theoretical framework (Edwards et al. 2014). The OPC model proposed by Landells and Albrecht (2013) and further developed by King, Denyer and Parry (2022) is the domain-specific theoretical framework this study will use to explore the research questions. Raven (2008) states that power is the ability of an individual to bring about change using resources available to them, and these resources make up the different bases of power in organisations.

As outlined in Figure 4-2, the organisational political climate (OPC) power base model used in King, Denyer and Parry's (2022) research consists of the four power bases (connection, informational, personal, and positional power) that individuals use to navigate the four informal political processes that makeup OPC (informal networking, information sharing, development opportunities and promotion processes) (Landells and Albrecht 2013). King, Denyer and Parry's (2022) findings suggest that individuals build and maintain their power bases by engaging in political behaviours (mechanisms) to navigate informal political processes (interventions). While organisations have formal processes for promotions, development opportunities, networks, and information sharing, informal 'shadow' processes operate alongside these formal processes but are mainly independent of them. Their findings reveal that both men and women perceive these informal processes as political and gendered. Therefore, this research will adopt an abductive research approach. Drawing on the theoretically informed gendered OPC framework, this research aims to explain the mechanisms activation modes and why and how individuals become aware of this political behaviour and learn to engage in it.

Context	Gendered Organisational Political Climate			
Intervention (Actual)	Informal Networking	Informal Information Sharing	Informal Development Opportunities	Informal Promotion Processes
Mechanism (Real)	Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power
Perceived outcomes (Empirical)				

Figure 4-2 Gendered Organisational Political Climate: A Power base Model (King, Denyer and Parry 2022).

One of the reasons the OPC framework was used to examine how organisational politics is gendered is because the framework accounts for both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics. However, research by King, Denyer and Parry (2022) reveals that from a gender perspective political behaviour is inherently masculine and results in differential outcomes for men and women who engage in it to build and maintain power. Largely, this is because men engage in homosocial practices to build their power bases. Therefore, this study found political behaviour benefits men in a way that it does not women. However, developing political sensitivity maybe one way women can navigate the gendered nature of organisational politics and power.

This research aims to explore individual awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours to understand why men and women have different paths to power in organisations. This research aims to examine whether men and women are aware of the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour and if this awareness is critical to engaging in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power. Specifically, this research will seek to address the following questions:

- RQ1. Does political sensitivity include an awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours?
- RQ2. How do perceptions of the ideal worker influence the development of political sensitivity?
- RQ3. Are there gender differences in political sensitivity?

- RQ4. Does engaging in political sensitivity result in differential outcomes for men and women?

4.4 Method

While critical realism does not specify a particular methodological approach, given that this study aims to explore individual political sensitivity, an emerging field of interest with developing theoretical and empirical literature, an exploratory approach was deemed appropriate. Aligned with the research aim, this study's philosophical and methodological approach examined the context, practices, mechanisms, and outcomes associated with gendered OPC and gendered political behaviours.

Following Edmondson's (2014) approach to methodological fit, as this study is exploratory, the methodology relies on a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews to explore men's and women's political sensitivity, that is, their awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. Specifically, methodological fit refers to the research's internal consistency regarding the research question, aims, design, and theoretical contribution (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Broadly Edmondson and McManus (2007) outline three types of fit based on the state of prior research and theory. This includes nascent, intermediate and mature. Following this framework, this study's research fit is nascent for several reasons.

First, the research follows an open-ended enquiry into how individuals build their awareness of gendered OPC and learn to engage in gendered political behaviours. Second, the research will adopt a qualitative approach and examine the data for meaning. Mainstream approaches to studying organisational politics largely consider politics a gender-free phenomenon (Doldor et al. 2013). Buchanan (2008) states that the nature and significance of gender differences in organisational politics are not well understood, and the subtle and complex nature of these differences lends itself to qualitative research. Third, in terms of data collection, the research will rely on semi-structured interviews, as political sensitivity is a new construct, with no formal measures for gathering data (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Forth, the goal of the data analysis undertaken in this study is to identify patterns. Therefore, this study uses thematic content analysis to code the data for evidence of the constructs (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Finally, the

aim of this study is to contribute to existing theoretical perspectives on gender in organisational politics and political maturation by demonstrating that political sensitivity includes developing an awareness of gendered OPC and engaging in political behaviours in a gender-sensitive way. Through this initial contribution, future empirical research to explore these issues (Edmondson and McManus, 2007).

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from Cranfield University.

4.5 Sample

4.5.1 Choice of Organisations

This research explores men's and women's political sensitivity, which includes an awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours within a male-dominated environment. Examining political sensitivity within a male-dominated environment is important given that research by Broadridge and Simpson (2011) finds that both men and women can be slow to perceive gender-based disadvantage in the context of work, preferring to believe that the system is fair. Gender issues are also likely to be perceived as solved, despite evidence to the contrary. Sheerin and Linehan (2017) argue that by examining the lived experiences and everyday practices of employees in an overtly gendered culture, like a male-dominated organisation, researchers will gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between masculine cultures and gendered practices and inequality at work. Therefore, to explore the nature of political sensitivity, this research must examine these issues within a male-dominated context.

This is particularly important given that Broadridge and Simpson's (2011) review finds that masculinity in management exists in most organisations and may have even intensified, making it even more critical that men and women engage in organisational politics politically sensitively. Future research can examine how political sensitivity differs in less masculine environments.

Examining the nature of political sensitivity within a male-dominated environment is essential, as the gendered nature of these constructs is more likely to be heightened within a male-dominated environment. Research by Sheerin and Linehan (2017) argues that within male-dominated workplaces, the difference between men and women is

heightened, and masculinity is heightened by exclusionary behaviours that men engage in to build and maintain their power, position women as the other and sustain masculine cultures. Understanding how individuals engage in organisational politics in a gender-sensitive way might help to explain the differential outcomes individuals experience when engaging in seemingly similar political tactics.

This study selected two organisations to participate in the data collection, including one in Australia from the energy and resource sector and one in England from the financial services sector. These organisations were selected on the basis of three critical criteria: operating context, geography, and gender representation in senior leadership positions. These selection criteria are essential for two key reasons. First, examining gendered practices in different operating and geographical contexts is important, given that any number of causal processes may affect the mechanism observed. By reviewing two organisations in different operating and geographical contexts, this design will allow an understanding of the mechanisms observed and how they differ in other contexts (Edwards et al. 2014). Second, women working in male-dominated organisations are less likely to occupy powerful positions and more likely to identify the social and political behaviours that make it difficult for women to advance (Baskerville Watkins et al. 2014). Therefore, it is essential to examine individual political sensitivity to gendered OPC and gendered political behaviours in male-dominated organisations, where men make up most positions of power because organisational demography affects the culture and value system within those organisations (Baskerville Watkins et al. 2014). The two organisations, renamed EnergyCo and FinanceCo to ensure anonymity, are male-dominated, with women making up less than 10% of senior positions at the time of the interviews. However, both organisations claimed to have policies and processes to address the gender gap in leadership, including gender recruitment targets, leadership programs for women, and women-focused networking and mentoring programs.

4.5.2 Choice of Participants

Shared perceptions of gendered OPC may differ by organisational level. Doldor et al.'s (2013) findings reveal that an individual's willingness to engage in organisational politics is informed by their views and experiences. These attitudes will change over time.

Additionally, Mainiero (1994) argues that individuals develop an awareness of OPC through a political maturation process; as individuals are socialised into an organisation, they become aware of the political norms. This research uses a stratified purposive sampling strategy to account for individual differences in political socialisation and maturation (Ritchie and Lewis 2014). Specifically, a sample of 12 non-managerial, 12 managerial, and 12 senior leadership participants were identified from two organisations, as outlined in Table 3, resulting in 72 participants. Of the 72 participants, five were from racial minority backgrounds. Both organisations are overwhelmingly Caucasian, as racial minorities make up less than 20% of the employee population, and in managerial positions and above, this representation drops to less than 10%. Each of the groups summarised in Table 4-2 may display variation in their perceptions of gendered OPC based on their exposure to it but given participants within each of these groups will be at similar levels within the organisation, they can therefore be compared (Ritchie and Lewis 2014). As this study used a purposive sampling strategy, participants were selected by a gatekeeper from Human Resources who ensured an equal number of participants in each group.

Table 4-2 Purposive Sampling Strategy

Organisation	Gender	Organisational Level		
		Non-managerial participants: The position does not have any supervisory accountability.	Managerial participants: The position had direct supervisory accountability.	Senior leader participants: The position has leadership accountability within the organisation for teams or groups of individuals.
EnergyCo -Australian-based organisation in the Energy and Resource sector.	Female	6	6	6
	Male	6	6	6
FinanceCo - An English-based organisation in the Financial Services sector.	Female	6	6	6
	Male	6	6	6

4.6 Data Collection

A total of 72 semi-structured interviews were conducted across two organisations, including one in Australia from the energy and resource sector and one in England from the financial services sector. These interviews provided access to participants' lived experiences of gendered OPC and gendered political behaviour. While the sample size is large for a qualitative study, the aim is to enable theoretical generalizability rather than statistical generalizability by exploring theoretically and empirically underdeveloped constructs (Flick, 2009).

In terms of data collection and analysis, this study largely followed Kvale's (1996) seven stages of conducting in-depth interviews, including thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting (Kvale 1996). In terms of data collection, this research used semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore participants' meaning of their experiences related to political sensitivity, including an awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours (Merriam 2009). The purpose of using semi-structured in-depth interviews was to gain a rich account of individual experiences of political sensitivity (Merriam 2009).

The interviews lasted approximately one hour and explored individuals' experiences of political sensitivity using an interview guide developed from the domain-specific theoretical framework, the gendered OPC framework. These questions are outlined in Appendix M and serve to guide the interview process. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify meaning as participants shared their experiences.

The study's interview protocol was developed to align the research aims and interview questions. The interview questions served as a guide to the interviews but allowed for flexibility to probe essential issues with participants or ensure clarity. All 72 interviews were conducted virtually, using the virtual meeting platform WebEx, and each participant gave verbal permission for the interviews to be recorded and transcribed.

4.6.1 Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis process is outlined in Figure 3-2. Specifically, the first step was coding interviews using template analysis in NVivo software, version 12. In

terms of the coding process, 12 interviews were initially reviewed to ensure researcher familiarity with the content, following which a preliminary coding of the data was undertaken. A primary coding template was developed from the gendered OPC model and included the interventions, mechanisms and outcomes detailed in the model and illustrated in Figure 4-1.

Then the data was coded again to identify emergent themes and organised into meaningful clusters, with an initial interpretation of how they related to one another. These themes were added to the coding template based on this initial analysis. The template was then applied to the remaining interviews and modified in an iterative process as the nodes became more interpretive than descriptive (Miles and Huberman 2004). For example, the coding revealed four emergent subcategories for political awareness and political engagement, as outlined in Figure 4-2. These four subcategories are empirically derived as they emerged from the data. Additionally, three key themes emerged from the data relating to how individuals develop political sensitivity. These include 1) awareness of political norms and career tenure, 2) awareness of political practices in senior positions, and 3) awareness and engagement in ideal worker norms.

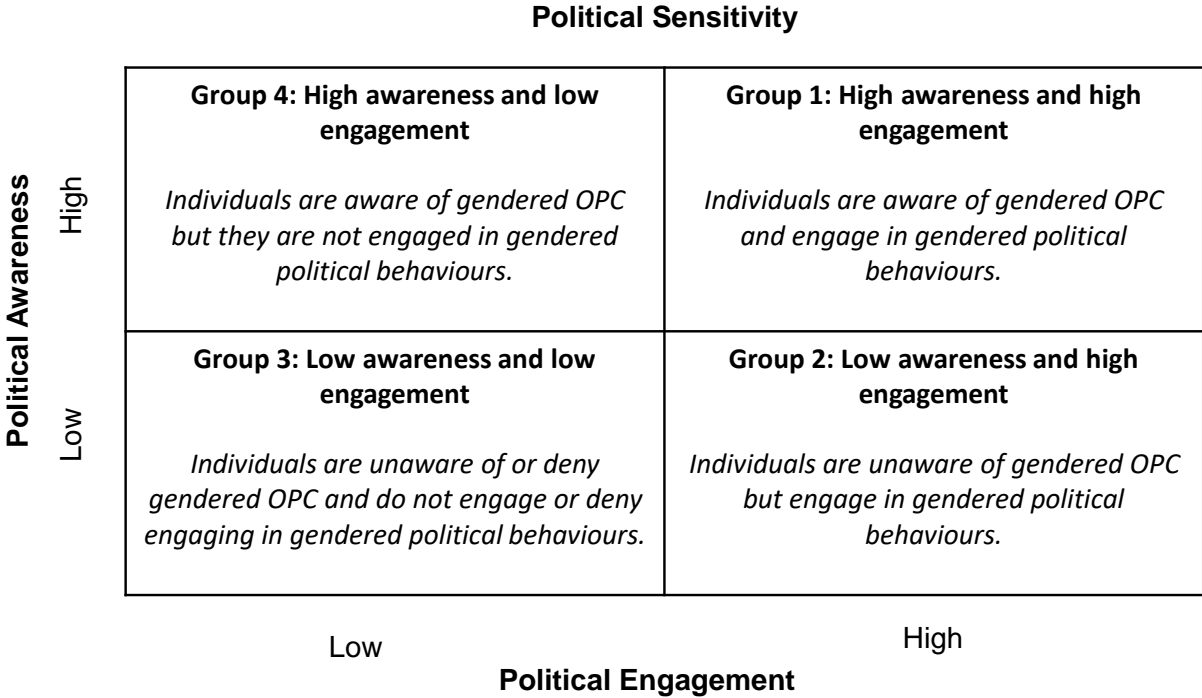


Figure 4-1 The Four Categories of Political Sensitivity

As part of the data analysis, this study conducted a process to check the coding of the data, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (2012). The process included assistance from a fellow doctoral researcher, who reviewed a selection of three transcripts and coded these independently using the coding template provided. The codes for the selection of three transcripts were then compared with the researcher's codes, and discrepancies were discussed. The initial inter-coder reliability was 75%. The discussions largely centred on clarifying the emergent themes identified and reiterating the coding where possible. The coding checking continued until all three transcripts showed inter-coder reliability of approximately 90%, which is the reliability level recommended by Miles and Huberman (2012).

In Figures 4-3, 4-4 and 4-5, a summary of the data analysis process is illustrated as it relates to the key themes identified.

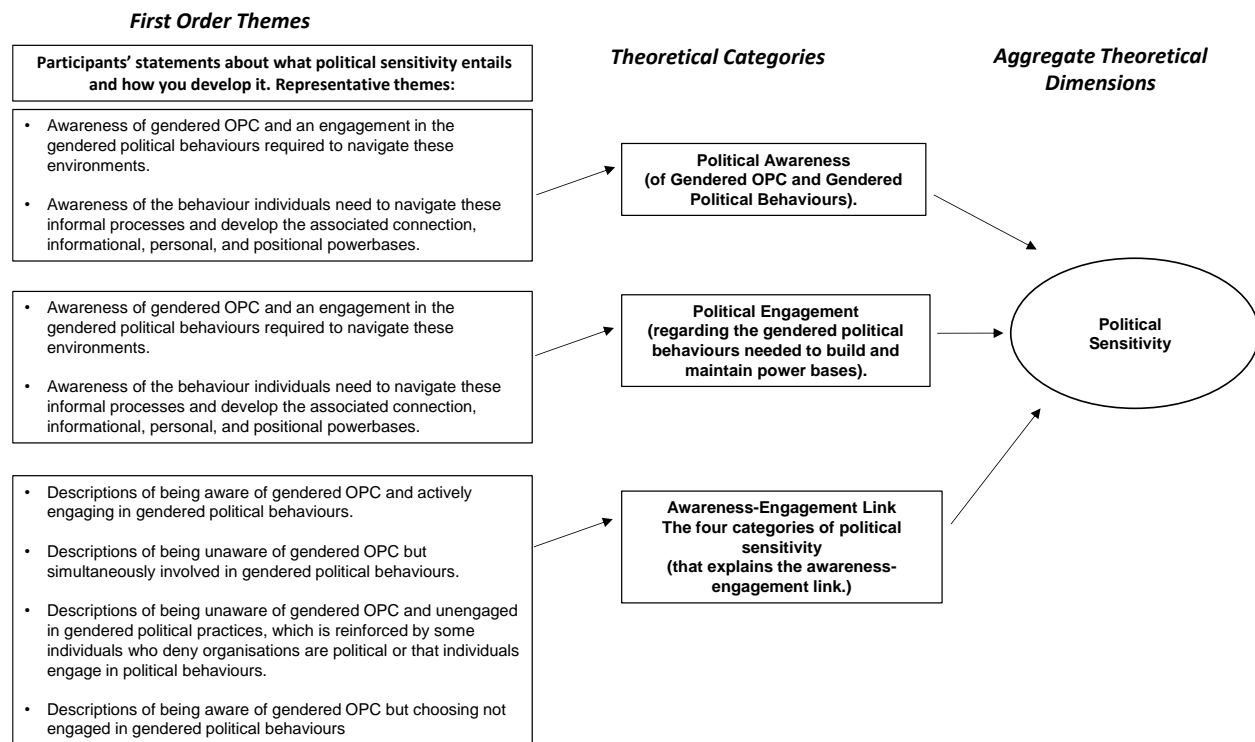


Figure 4-3 Summary of the data analysis process (political sensitivity)

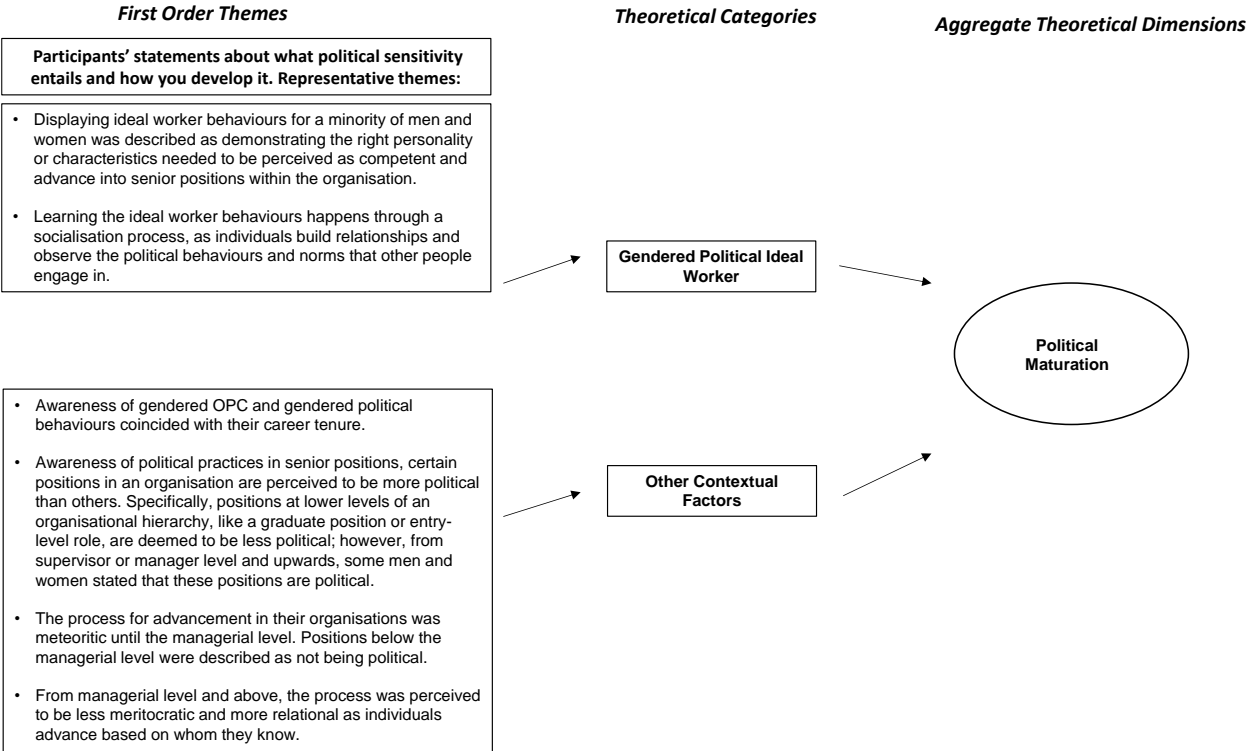


Figure 4-4 Summary of the data analysis process (political maturation)

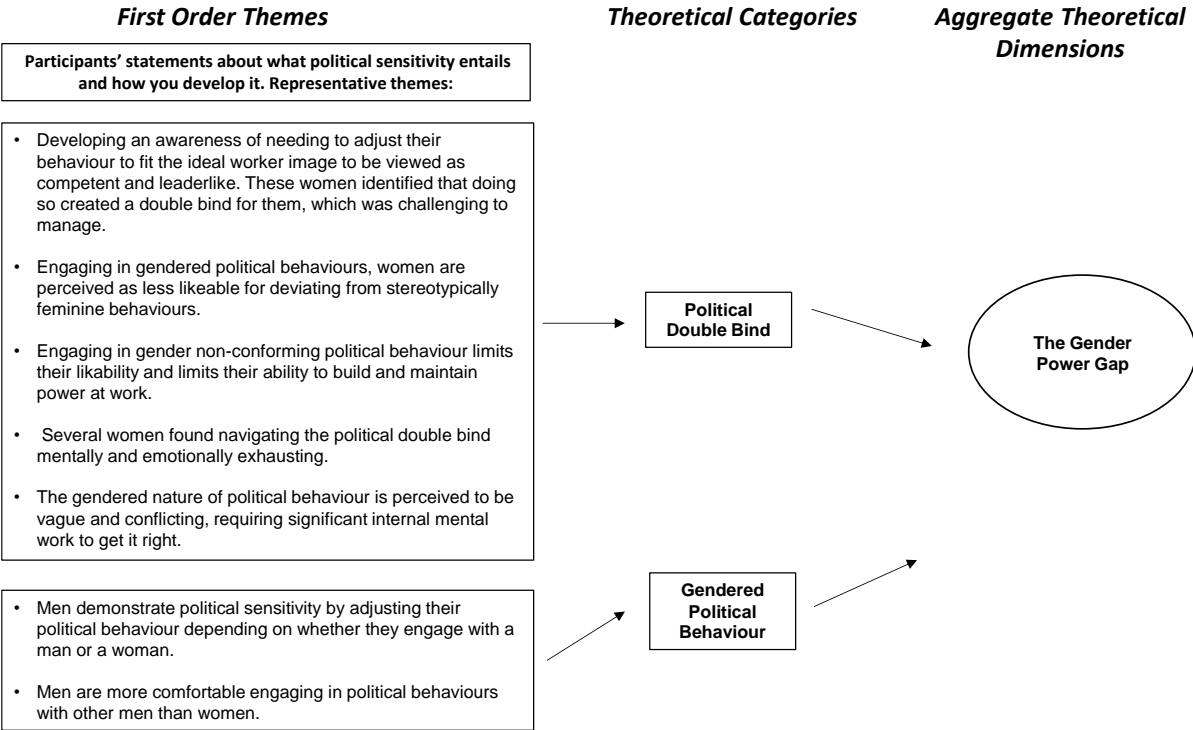


Figure 4-5 Summary of the data analysis process (the gender power gap)

Overall, in terms of verifying and reporting on the data, Patton (2002) argues that the validity of qualitative research requires credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This research study is credible given the scope of the study, which includes 72 participants and a comprehensive analysis of this data. The data was anonymised to ensure participants felt comfortable contributing, and assurances regarding confidentiality were provided. In addition, participants were asked follow-up questions or to provide examples to ensure clarity in the interview. In terms of transferability, one of the strengths of this study is that two independent organisations in different operating contexts and countries participated in the data collection process. As a result, the patterns and explanations outlined in the findings are entirely transferable to both contexts, increasing the validity and transferability of the findings. Finally, the specific steps undertaken in the data collection and analysis process have been detailed in this study to ensure the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

The following section will detail the findings of this study. The two organisations are referred to as EnergyCo and FinanceCo, and participant level and participant number are used when referencing specific quotes to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

4.7 Findings

4.7.1 Political Sensitivity: Awareness and Engagement

Based on the thematic analysis, the data was first coded for awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. The data revealed that political sensitivity comprises an awareness of gendered OPC for some men and women regarding the four informal political processes that make up OPC. This sensitivity also includes an awareness of the behaviour individuals need to navigate these informal processes and develop the associated connection, informational, personal, and positional powerbases. Given the data size, one quote from female employee 001 from FinanceCo has been presented here to illustrate the point.

I guess first you need to, especially when you're aware of what you're doing right, so if you're like, "Right I'm aware that what I'm doing is going to get access to these informal networks to further my career." I think for me the struggle is being aware of that. And that I will need to do that, and it conflicts with how I feel. But you know, let's say you get over it, for me as a woman what would I do? I would figure out who is some of the key players

in these informal networks, I would go and book them for a coffee or a 30-minute mentoring type catch up, discuss my skills and capabilities and that I'm, yes, I need to look for some other opportunities and is there anything I can help you with or do you have anything going. And probably the work that I do now, I'd be actively looking on how I can overlap that with some of these key individuals' initiatives or projects to get myself in there and get a foot in the door I suppose.

The data also revealed that political sensitivity includes an awareness of gendered OPC and an engagement in the gendered political behaviours required to navigate these environments for some men and women. Specifically, when it comes to engagement, most women shared how navigating gendered political behaviours creates challenges for them as these behaviours are stereotypically masculine and in conflict with female identity. These women described navigating this challenge in a politically sensitive way, as this quote from female employee 002 from EnergyCo illustrates:

I am aware of it. I do change my approach in certain meetings, and I guess I've found probably in situations where maybe I have been quite direct and that it's been required. Then I've had to go back later to situations, and I guess debrief about it. Where I find, men probably don't have to do that as much... we just feel like we're really being questioned and judged a lot.

The data revealed that political sensitivity for a minority of men includes adjusting their political behaviour depending on whether they are engaging with men or women. This quote from male employee 001 from EnergyCo highlights informal information sharing and informational power.

If there's a guy in my team that I know particularly well then, the way that I share information with him might be a little more casual than how I share with women, like even the language that I use is probably different with women. It's a little more structured and the language would be a little bit colder and it just happens naturally without realising. They're male to begin with and there is a kind of rapport that you can have with blokes that you can't have with women.

Following the thematic analysis undertaken, four subcategories of political sensitivity emerged, as outlined in Figure 4-2. These subcategories represent individual differences in political awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. The first subcategory, Group 1, includes male and female participants who described themselves as being both aware of gendered OPC and actively engaging in gendered political behaviours. The second subcategory, Group 2, includes participants

who describe themselves as being unaware of gendered OPC but simultaneously involved in gendered political behaviours. The third subcategory, Group 3, includes participants who describe themselves as being unaware of gendered OPC and unengaged in gendered political practices, which is reinforced by some individuals who deny organisations are political or that individuals engage in political behaviours. The fourth and final subcategory, Group 4, includes participants who describe themselves as aware of gendered OPC but not engaged in gendered political behaviours. The following section will discuss these categories in more detail and outline the key themes related to how individuals develop their political sensitivity through an awareness of the ideal worker norms.

4.7.2 Group 1: High Awareness and High Engagement

In Group 1, the data revealed that some men and women are both aware of gendered OPC and actively engaging in gendered political behaviours. Specifically, most men and women in this group describe being aware of the four informal political processes and an awareness of the gendered political behaviours needed to navigate these informal processes. Most men and women also describe engaging in masculine political behaviours associated with building and maintaining the four powerbases that make up gendered OPC. Given the data size, the following quote from a female manager, 001 from FinanceCo illustrates the point, but further examples are provided for this theme in Appendix AA and Appendix BB.

I think having quite a strong position in the team and having relationships with various people across the team helps me to be trusted and people will come to me with information if they think it's important. For example, recently we just had found out that somebody handed in the notice and he's quite a bit more senior than me, but he came to me to inform me of that information because I have a good relationship with them. So, I think the politics and making sure you are in with the right people, which tend to be men. And I like to think that having a broad set of relationships with men across the team from various levels, from partner right down to analyst, I think that helps me to feel like I have a position in the team where people would respect and trust me with information. It's about relationships, I think for me.

A minority of men and most women described an awareness of the challenges gendered OPC and political behaviours create for women. Specifically, some men explained how the gendered nature of OPC limits women's ability to build and maintain the four power

bases. The following quote from male employee 002 from EnergyCo has been used here to illustrate the point related to informal networking and informal information sharing.

I think with women, don't get the same opportunities as men, because as I said, there is definitely a boy's club, and I've seen that in all the organisations that I've worked in. When men feel that they can be more like men and behave more like some of the stereotypical behaviours you see in men, whereas if a woman is a part of that group, men feel more awkward to do it. So, as a result of that, then quite often, you [women] don't get to build the same relationships.

Around half of all women in this subcategory described encountering a double bind when engaging in political behaviour, as these behaviours are more aligned with stereotypically masculine behaviours. When women engage in gendered political behaviours, they share an awareness of behaving in a gender non-conforming way, which decreases their likability. The following quote from female employee 002 at EnergyCo illustrates women's challenges with the political double bind.

I've found in my position given that it's pretty well men only that I deal with is I know that I have had project managers approach me and say that they feel as though I attack them when I'm leading. And I have turned around and asked the question, I said, "Do you think it's one, because of how I asked the question? Or is it two, because I'm a female?" So exactly what I said came out of my colleague, would you feel that you're attacking them. They struggled to answer that question to me. So yeah, I guess we do have to change our approach a bit.

Consequently, these women participants shared how they engage in self-censoring behaviours whereby they actively reflect on their behaviour or solicit feedback to determine how they are being perceived. Based on this feedback, several women shared that they would adjust their behaviour to ensure they are not being penalised for engaging in gendered political behaviours, as the following quote from female senior manager 004 from EnergyCo illustrates.

I was like, "I think I need to give him some feedback because if I don't say something, no one's going to say anything." And I spent like an hour and a half crafting this email to send to him, and just thinking about the language of it, which is like this is coming from a good place and it's because I know you respect and value women and it had like smiley faces and I never would have spent so much time doing that except for I'm up for promotion to partner in like a year and a half and I didn't want to anger anyone, but I also wanted to get my point across. And I think if [it was] my [male] peer, [he] could have just said, "Hey the email you sent was really naff. You really can't send that stuff." Whereas I need to

justify that I'm not trying to be angry or upset and I'm just trying to be a good person. So, I think that's a good example of that double bind.

A minority of women found engaging in gendered political behaviours mentally and emotionally draining but necessary to navigate the four informal processes.

4.7.3 Group 2: Low Awareness and High Engagement

In terms of Group 2, most men and women within this subcategory describe being unaware of gendered OPC and gendered political behaviours. At the same time, they shared examples of engaging in gendered political behaviours to maintain their powerbases. One quote from male employee 005 from EnergyCo has been used to illustrate the point related to accessing informal information and building informational power. Full evidence of this theme is outlined in Appendix CC.

In terms of accessing information, like on a purely professional perspective, like in terms of what's in the pipeline, what are the projects that are coming up, what's happening with recruitment, that stuff happens really well, and it's equal across channels. Yeah, I think in our case, its not about gender, it's about how often are you in the pub with the guys, because then you probably have access to some of the informal information or that information a little faster than through the normal channels. In terms of the actual serious work-related information, no, gender doesn't make a difference at all.

Around half of the men and women within this subcategory shared examples of knowing what gendered political practices they need to engage in to build their power bases. Still, at the same time, they maintained they were unaware of the gendered political behaviours used to navigate the informal processes. Additionally, most men and a minority of women in this subcategory attributed any gender differences in building or maintaining power bases to individual differences in personality. The following quote from male manager 005 from EnergyCo illustrates this point.

I think it's not so much gender based. Its more personality based. What you will find is, I think, it's about where you put yourself into certain situations, right. I think that during a project, sometimes, you go out for a drink, and that will give you the opportunity to network with someone who is quite senior as well as get to speak to them in a more informal setting and get actual live feedback. I don't know where you end up net on that, but I do see that in certain pockets it can be different in terms of your access to senior people. From a gender perspective, again, I don't think it's a gender thing. It's a personality thing.

The data revealed that for some men and women, not acknowledging the gendered nature of OPC, as it relates to the informal processes, makes navigating the informal example processes challenging because the behaviours needed to engage in them are gendered. The following comment from female employee 003 at EnergyCo illustrates this.

I think sometimes people are just not aware. I've certainly had team members who have said, "Well, I don't know why I didn't even get considered. It's always Fred or Joe or Bill that gets considered and I never even get considered." And my question to them in that sort of space is, "Well, have you told anybody that you're interested in that?" "I shouldn't need to, they just went and tapped Bill." I'm like, "Yep, I know, but the thing is it may not happen like that so go and have a chat." And sometimes they found out that a similar bias was at play. So I think much of the time many women are not actually aware that they're getting passed over for something.

4.7.4 Group 3: Low Awareness and Low Engagement

In Group 4, most men and women in this category describe the gendered aspects of OPC or political behaviours but then deny engaging in these behaviours. Most men and women within this subcategory state they are unaware of the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours. Most men and a minority of women in this category described their organisation as a meritocracy. Therefore they maintained all individuals had the same opportunities to build and sustain their powerbases. Consequently, these participants denied that their organisations were political or gendered. The following quote from male employee 005 at FinanceCo illustrates this point, and complete evidence of this theme is outlined in Appendix DD.

I think in terms of evaluating people from a promotion criterion, it's quite fair and quite gender neutral. Everyone who is a top performer will get promoted regardless of gender. I think what I have noticed though is there are sometimes when you get these feedback forms, you can have... I think the language changes in some of these cases. Sometimes people might be noted as being either too docile or not assertive enough, especially if they're women. In terms of promotion, I don't think it really affects your chances if you're male or female.

Around half of the men and women in this category deny the masculine nature of political behaviours and state that these behaviours represent personality characteristics. Individuals who displayed characteristics were more likely to be successful. The following quote from female manager 006 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

EnergyCo has given me fantastic opportunities. That's been from hard work and being able to get things done. I think it's about the capability of the person you're influencing. I don't think it has anything to do with gender. I've never felt like the reason I didn't get anything across was gender based. I do think there's certain traits that probably present at a GM's forum where everyone is male. At times I felt quite intimidated, and it took a lot for me to get a message across in that sort of forum. I'm not sure if that was my lack of experience or the lack of diversity. It was probably me.

Additionally, several women felt that men deny that organisational politics is gendered or results in gender differences when building and maintaining power bases because men take it for granted that these behaviours are masculine. These women stated that it is easier for men to engage in organisational politics and build their powerbases as political behaviours are gendered. Consequently, they felt that men might find it difficult to empathise with or understand the challenges women face with navigating the political double bind, making it easy to deny these challenges – as the following comment from female manager 007 from EnergyCo highlights.

Quite often they haven't even thought about, or kind of even understand, or can comprehend, some of the challenges that some of the workforce actually face. I think if you explain all of that to a white man who has progressed in his career, I think it's going to be a concept that is extremely hard to understand... That denial, I think, is very, very true, and I don't think they refuse to see it. I think they just don't get it. I don't think they're exposed to it, so they don't understand it.

Around half of the men in this group denied the gendered nature of political behaviours and gender differences in opportunities to build powerbases. Instead, they attributed men engaging in homosocial practices to a personal preference. These men described men as engaging in exclusionary homosocial practices while denying that these behaviours limited women's access to informal networks, informal information or development and promotion opportunities. The following comment from male employee 001 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

I don't think men exclude women. I think just by the nature of men wanting to spend time with men, the boys club mentality again, I think they're always going to be able to get more access to information than women are. Not all men, but men usually want to be very professional with women, so as not to get themselves in trouble for other things and then maybe sometimes, and then we'll just not share what could be categorised as sensitive information with them.

Consequently, some men attributed women's lack of engagement in organisational politics to a lack of political competence. The following comment from male manager 003 at FinanceCo illustrates.

I would say the male population is more proactive around informal networks. I could be wrong on this but I just think that opportunities around... the traditional stuff, right. Sports events or social events. I think those have more participation and drive by our male population and our female population; it's my instinct. So, maybe, the male population is a bit more effective at using informal networks. It's more natural behaviour.

4.7.5 Group 4: High Awareness and Low Engagement

In Group 4, most men and women describe themselves as being aware of gendered OPC but choose not to engage in the gendered political behaviours required to advance their power-bases. The data revealed that most women and men choose not to engage in gendered political behaviours because they perceive them to be manipulative or unethical, as the following quote from female employee 001 at FinanceCo demonstrates. (Further evidence of this theme is provided in Appendix DD.)

I've seen people get promoted who are, I don't know how best to say it, but who may be hobnobbing in the right circles, shaking the right hand, taking the right people out for coffees. And then you have another group of individuals who are equally, if better, qualified, capable and experienced. But because they're not building or leveraging those internal networks, they seem to get overlooked for promotions or not seen as [being as] capable as some of the others, that would be my opinion. So I haven't, no. Just for me I haven't engaged in hobnobbing. The reason being is I just don't feel it's right, for me it wouldn't make me feel comfortable, I'd probably feel a little bit sleazy and not genuine in doing that.

While most men and women in this group describe being aware of gendered OPC, they share different reasons for not wanting to engage in gendered political behaviours. For example, at least half of the men in this group describe their organisation as a meritocracy. They state that they do not need to engage in political behaviours to build networks, access information, or access informal promotions or development opportunities because they will be rewarded for their hard work. The following quote from male manager 005 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

If I do a good job, put my head down, pretty soon people will notice me. I watch people spending a lot of time managing politics, but I just don't believe you need to. I've got more

experience and good technical and leadership skills and so on than this person who is engaging in it. So I will get there.

However, most women in this group choose not to engage in gendered political behaviours because the four informal processes where these behaviours are used tend to be dominated by men, as the following quote from female employee 002 at FinanceCo highlights.

I think the main challenge in our department is whether a woman feels comfortable being in an environment where it's mostly men basically, because if they're not, and they start to avoid these social drinks because of it, then I guess that would be a challenge. Personally, I don't go because I feel uncomfortable.

Additionally, a minority of women stated they do not engage in gendered political behaviours as these behaviours are gendered and in conflict with stereotypical feminine behaviours. Consequently, these women do not feel uncomfortable participating in organisational politics, so they choose not to. Finally, a minority of women stated that engaging in gendered political behaviours potentially threatens their physical safety. These women shared the challenges they experienced engaging in gendered political behaviours while also needing to ensure that men do not perceive these behaviours as being overly familiar, which might invite a sexual advance. Therefore, these women stated that to avoid advances from male colleagues, they often choose not to engage in gendered political behaviours needed to develop their powerbases. The following quote from female senior manager 001 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

But it becomes very isolating because you always have to... Well I've always had to have this conscious barrier up of don't touch anyone, don't be too caring, don't be too empathetic, don't be too inquisitive, don't ask too many questions. Which is hard, because I'm a naturally sort of empathetic, caring sort of a person. But it's been perceived the wrong way too many times for me to be like that at work, if that sort of makes sense. So yeah, it's a hard one.

4.8 Political Maturation

Based on the thematic analysis, three key themes related to how individuals become aware of political norms needed to develop their power-bases. These themes include: 1) awareness of political norms and career tenure, 2) awareness of political practices in senior positions, and 3) awareness and engagement in ideal worker norms. Each of these

themes is outlined in more detail in the following section, and further evidence of this theme is presented in Appendix GG.

4.8.1 Awareness of Political Norms and Career Tenure

The data revealed that for around half of the men and women in this study, awareness of gendered OPC and gendered political behaviours coincided with their career tenure. Specifically, these men and women stated that when they began their careers, they were unaware of organisational politics related to the informal processes. However, they became aware of the four informal political processes over time as they were able to observe individuals engaging in political behaviours associated with these processes. They were also provided with support from their managers, who informed them what political behaviours were needed and how to navigate the four informal processes. Additionally, several men and women shared that the longer individuals remain with an organisation, the more people they get to know, and therefore, the more these individuals come to understand how the four informal processes work. The following comment from female manager 002 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

Well-known, well-recognised, is probably the key thing. I would say that, the longer you have been in EnergyCo, the more chance you probably have, because you know more people. That would be the key thing I have seen so far. I'm not 100% sure about performance or anything like that. I really feel like it's the networking that really helped the most. I think it's a bit of a mix. I think, as you move in your career, you realise what has helped you to move up and what hasn't and what recognition you have had and/or that you might have missed out on. So I think there's a part of it that comes from experience. I don't think it's something that gets explained to you very much, at all, how to navigate this world and what is good or bad to do and how to network properly or to sell yourself, et cetera.

4.8.2 Awareness of Political Practices in Senior Positions

The data revealed that for a minority of men and women, certain positions in an organisation are perceived to be more political than others. Specifically, positions at lower levels of an organisational hierarchy like a graduate position or entry-level role, are deemed to be less political; however, from supervisor or manager level and upwards, some men and women stated that these positions are political. The following quote from female employee 006 at FinanceCo illustrates this point.

I mean to be honest, in your first couple of years when you were quite junior in the team, usually it's not such a big factor, I think, because you just tend to go with the flow, things happen, and you get promoted with the time type things that you don't really need to fight it. It's only when I'm realising when you get to manager and above is when you need to start doing a lot more, it's a managing role and a sales development, business development type role, which is when [these] kind of relationships and knowing who's who in the team sort of pays off.

Additionally, a few men and women describe engaging in political behaviours as a requirement of certain positions, as this comment from male manager 004 from EnergyCo illustrates.

Ability to influence and be political: I think that would have more of an influence depending on the type of role that that person is going forward. Yeah, the higher up the organisations, yeah, I think that's going to have more of a part to play in that in the hiring process. I think the, you know, a role that's lower in the org chart, the need to influence in that role isn't going to be significant. They're going to have smaller departments and scope to work within so it's potentially going to be less of a concern as to how that person can, you know, display themselves to the hiring manager. And it's not going to be as substantial in terms of impact to the organisation as to who was in that role, depending on where it fits in in the org chart.

Several men and women described positions requiring a high level of technical expertise as not being political in nature. Therefore, engaging in political behaviours is not deemed critical to succeeding in the role. Also, a minority of men and women stated that the process for advancement in their organisations was meteoritic until the managerial level. Positions below the managerial level were described as not being political. Therefore, individuals are assessed on merit. However, from the managerial level and above, the process was perceived to be less meritocratic and more relational as individuals advance based on who they know. These participants stated that this could create challenges for women working in organisations where men dominate the leadership teams. The following comment by male manager 003 from FinanceCo illustrates.

I mean, I'd say it's probably the single most important thing that you can do to get into the higher levels. I mean, most of where I am up to my career now, it's all been about execution and can you deliver on reports and can you run engagements and can you do everything you need to in terms of execution? But where that flips is going to the next level, where it actually starts to be about can you bring in work and can you work with all the other teams collaboratively and lead the whole engagement rather than just your team? And I think that's where the networks become pivotal, and as you progress, you

don't really need to execute, you need to just be bringing in work. And it is that flip; it's the level above where I am now. And I think that's where you get some of the biggest gender splits in terms of you don't get as many women coming through, mainly because I think finance is still just so male dominated. And I think the ability to build rapport is still mainly around male gender topics, sports and those kind of... football, rugby, going for the odd beer or breakfast and things like that that. Whilst [it] is improving, I think [it] is quite slow to improve.

4.8.3 Awareness and Engagement in Ideal Worker Norms

The data revealed that more than half of all men and women build their awareness of political behaviours based on understanding the ideal worker norms. Specifically, these men and women described the ideal worker as engaging in political behaviours in a masculine way by displaying dominant, assertive, outspoken, and exclusionary behaviours. The following quote from male manager 005 from EnergyCo illustrates this point, but full evidence of this theme is outlined in Appendix FF.

I had noticed that given that we were in a mining company, the females that we hire tend to show higher traits of men. Being slightly dominant. Slightly outspoken to work their way through in a men dominated industry. I found that quite interesting. Because the people that we were hiring and developing were either single, without family or just given birth to a child, so that we know that we'll get someone for the next 12 months kind of thing. There's a lot of deliberate hires I find. As I observe in finance anyway. Even the male, even the female managers that I work with, they tend to have higher dominant masculine traits... I think we sometimes tend to bias towards female that show that dominant trait.

Displaying ideal worker behaviours for a minority of men and women was described as demonstrating the right personality or characteristics needed to be perceived as competent and advance into senior positions within the organisation. A minority of men and women also shared that learning the ideal worker behaviours happens through a socialisation process, as individuals build relationships and observe the political behaviours and norms that other people engage in. For example, the following comment from female manager 006 at EnergyCo illustrates.

I spent a lot of time observing different people and how they act, and how that works for them. You eventually develop different tactics and techniques based on what I've seen of my male colleagues, not what I've personally developed or skillset or an attribute that I brought to this industry. And if I think about whenever I've onboarded a new person into the organisation, it typically takes about six months I find for them to finally get their head around everything that's going on. But particularly, in terms of them building their network

of contact... Some people are much faster at that than others, but generally I would say kind of about six months is the timeframe that it takes.

Displaying ideal worker behaviours for most men and women is associated with showing leadership characteristics. Therefore, the more individuals progress up the organisational hierarchy, the more they are expected to engage in political behaviours associated with the ideal worker. The following comment from female senior manager 002 at FinanceCo illustrates the point.

I think it's much more, I would call like set in stone for the first, let's say six to seven years of your career because once you hit the associate senior, associate consultant, assistant director, director partner, I think up until the assistant director level, the timeframes are pretty clear cut. Because once you hit the assistant director level and above, a lot of the promotion is really much more based around you demonstrating partner like qualities.

Around half of the women within this subcategory described developing an awareness of needing to adjust their behaviour to fit the ideal worker image to be viewed as competent and leaderlike. These women identified that doing so created a double bind for them, which was challenging to manage. Engaging in gendered political behaviours resulted in backlash from both men and women who viewed women engaging in these behaviours as less likeable for deviating from stereotypically feminine behaviours. The following comment from female senior manager 003 at EnergyCo illustrates the point.

Trying to adapt to this male culture, they try to behave a little bit like [a] bloke by trying to fit into that culture. Trying to fit like male will do probably and that doesn't go very well with the people that they are reporting to them. So they actually didn't fit the organisational culture, so they have to go, and fair enough they have to go. But what you think is why they probably felt under pressure to behave like that to the point that the company had to say goodbye. So that is the thing. A lot to reflect for those leaders and a lot to reflect for a specific company, because you want to promote people and get people in positions that inspire others, not that are going to behave badly.

A few women perceived the challenges that women experience with navigating the political double bind as evidence that men are more politically aware and engaged, as the following comment by female manager 001 from FinanceCo illustrates.

I don't know why necessarily guys are wiser to that, but they tend, from what I've seen, they tend to be on the same channel with the senior partner. And that's all guys. And they're junior guys working on that with that senior partner, who is giving them access to a lot of external networks, and support and visibility. But for whatever reason the guys are quicker to kind of be aware of it. I certainly wasn't aware of it in my first three to four

years of working. I did not realise the importance of that visibility and that connecting outside of the workplace with partners and things like that.

4.9 Discussion and Contributions

4.9.1 Developing Political Sensitivity: Gendered Maturation

Given that organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered, this study explored how individuals build their political sensitivity, defined as an awareness of gendered organisational political climates and engagement in gendered political behaviour. Using the Gendered OPC framework developed by King, Denyer and Parry (2022), this study finds that political sensitivity does include both the awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. Specifically, several men and women revealed that the awareness of gendered OPC includes an awareness of the four informal gendered political processes that make up OPC. These include informal networks, informal information sharing, informal development processes and informal promotion opportunities. Individuals also shared their awareness of the need to engage in gendered political behaviour related to these four informal processes to build and maintain their power bases at work.

Existing research, including Mainiero (1994), Blass (2007), Doldor (2017), Oerder, Blicke and Summers (2013) and Yates and Hartley (2021) examining how individuals develop political skill, assumes the political maturation processes is essentially gender-free. However, this research found that the political maturation process, as it relates to political sensitivity, is gendered through the shared perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker, which is gendered and political. Men and women learn how to engage in ideal worker behaviours, which are masculine and political, through a socialisation process as they build relationships and observe the political behaviours and norms that other people engage in.

This research found for the first time that the shared perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker is one contextual factor influencing the political maturation process. This finding importantly demonstrates how political maturation is gendered. Specifically, this study supports Acker's (1992) theory of the ideal worker, as the findings reveal that political sensitivity develops through the shared perceptions men and women hold of the

ideal worker, which some men and women in this study describe as being both gendered and political. Some men and women shared how they became aware of and learnt to engage in gendered political behaviours by becoming aware of the behaviour and expectations associated with the ideal worker. Specifically, participants shared how they learnt these behaviours through observation, socialisation, and the relationships they formed with senior leaders.

This finding supports Doldor's (2017) and Mainiero's (1994) research, which found that mentoring and other types of relational learning are important in developing political skills. Hartley (2011) found that individuals learn political skills through emergent rather than planned activity, with observing others behaviour being one way individuals understand what political behaviour is acceptable. Ferris et al. (2002) explain that mentors help individuals develop political skills as they model effective political behaviours. Proteges observe, reflect and discuss various social interactions with their mentors to understand power structures in organisations. Doldor's (2017) research finds that political maturation is facilitated by relational learning more broadly than just mentoring.

This study supports these findings as several men and women shared how they came to understand what gendered political behaviours are required to build and maintain their power bases through the relationships they form and by observing the political norms in the organisation. Hartley (2007) finds that managers mainly develop political skills by observing role models. In gendered workplaces, the ideal worker is still a white male and given that white men dominate most leadership positions, it is likely that these leaders are role models in organisations. This study found that aligning with the political gendered ideal worker is a perceptual proxy for power. Individuals build and maintain power by learning how to engage in ideal worker behaviours (political and masculine) through an informal socialization process, including observing the political behaviours individuals engage in and developing relationships with leaders who can provide informal mentoring, advice and support.

Examining how political maturation is gendered is essential, given that women encounter different challenges engaging in gendered political behaviours. For example, engaging in gendered political behaviours for both men and women was associated with the ideal

worker. However, for several women, engaging in these behaviours resulted in backlash due to the political double bind. The ideal worker is one contextual factor that genders the political maturation process; however, following Ackers's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, there may be other practices, processes, actions and meanings that gender organisational politics and in turn, how individuals come to develop their political skills.

Additionally, this research also found several other contextual factors that influence an individual's ability to develop political sensitivity. These include experience, progression and the nature of the role requirements. Feldman (1981) argues that there is an organisational learning process whereby an individual comes to understand the organisational goals and becomes aware of the unwritten, informal tactic goals and values of powerful organisational members. This includes understanding the unspoken rules, norms, and how informal networks work. This is further supported by Mainiero (1994), who found that as women advance in organisations, they experience a political seasoning process whereby they become familiar with organisational politics over time.

Additionally, Hartley et al. (2007) and Doldor (2017) found that the more job experience managers have, the more opportunities they have to develop political skills. This study supports and extends these findings, as the data revealed that awareness of gendered OPC and political behaviours coincided with their career tenure for several men and women. Therefore, their years of experience in organisations increased their awareness of gendered political practices. Two potential reasons for this emerged through the thematic analysis undertaken. First, several men and women shared that political sensitivity is developed through observing individuals engaging in these behaviours.

Additionally, some men and women shared how they learnt these behaviours through the guidance they received from line managers or other individuals within the organisation regarding how the informal political processes function and what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain their power bases. Research by Chao et al. (1994) examining organisational socialisation argues that finding the right person to learn how organisations function is critical to the socialisation process. They say that effectively onboarding a person into a new job or organisation requires providing these individuals with increased awareness of which existing employees are more knowledgeable and

powerful than others. The findings in this study support this current research, as the data revealed that finding individuals to learn political sensitivity from is critical to developing it.

The second explanation that emerged from the data is that certain roles from the manager level and above are perceived to be more political than others. While Mainiero (1994), Hartley et al. (2007) and Doldor (2017) have identified the importance of managerial experience in the political maturation process, this study extended these findings by identifying that certain roles are more inherently political and therefore gendered than others. Therefore, the more experience an individual has, the more likely they are to advance into positions that require a high degree of political sensitivity. These findings are supported by existing research, as Drory (1993b) finds that an individual's status, that is, their level within an organisational hierarchy, is critical to building power. Specifically, this study finds that lower-status employees may lack the power bases and means of influence needed to engage in organisational politics effectively.

Conversely, high-status employees are better positioned to engage in organisational politics and benefit from it. While gendered political behaviours have typically been attributed to individual behaviour, a vital contribution of this study is finding that several men and women perceive management and senior leadership positions to require a high degree of political sensitivity. As men maintain the dominant position in leadership positions, it could be argued that they have more power and opportunity to engage in political behaviour. They are also more likely to hold political positions that have a greater level of political influence, making it easier for them to engage in the political behaviours required to build and maintain power.

This finding is important given that perceptions of women's power may be distorted through a gender-biased stereotype, so a powerful position may lose its power when a woman assumes it. Specifically, Ledet and Henley's (2000) research finds that power in organisations appears to be more aligned with male than female stereotypes; therefore, stereotypical masculinity seems to be a perceptual proxy for power in the workplace. Given that perceived power predicts career success, future research needs to examine if

positions are perceived as less political when women assume the role, limiting women's political influence.

Additionally, several men and women also perceive the hiring and promotion process to be meritocratic until the managerial level. The process was described as being more informal and relational. Individuals at the managerial level and above were perceived to advance by engaging in gendered political behaviour to build relationships with other individuals in positions of power. As men dominate most leadership positions in both organisations, the informal relational process makes it challenging for women to access career opportunities and build the support needed to advance. These findings support existing research by Lyness and Thompson (2000), which finds that women in positions higher up the organisational hierarchy report more obstacles to their advancement than women at lower levels of the organisation. Additionally, these findings support Acker's (2012) argument that gendered substructures are produced and reproduced in the interactions on the job, between colleagues and between those at different levels of power, which may include one-on-one or group-level interactions as well as formal and informal interactions. When outlining the concept of inequality regimes, Acker (2006) shares why gender and sometimes race (regarding limited opportunities and expectations for behaviour) are reproduced in everyday informal interactions individuals engage in while undertaking work. This study highlights how inequality is reproduced through the informal gendered political interactions men and women engage in to build relationships with powerful individuals.

4.9.2 Political Sensitivity: The Four Subcategories

This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational politics and gender by using a power base model to examine political sensitivity. One of the significant contributions of this study is the detailed exploration of the four subcategories that make up political sensitivity, which details the awareness-engagement relationship. Specifically, the findings reveal individual differences in several men's and women's accounts of political sensitivity. The thematic analysis identified four subcategories of political sensitivity, which account for individual differences in awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. These include high awareness/high

engagement, high awareness/low engagement, low awareness/high engagement, and low awareness/low engagement.

While some of these categories confirm prior findings by Mainiero (1994), and Doldor (2017), which identified a seasoning process, as individuals learn political skills, they become less naïve to the reality of organisational politics and learn to navigate this by developing political skills. For example, Doldor's (2017) study identified a three-stage model of political maturation that leaders encounter. Both these studies examined leaders' perceptions of the political maturation process, assuming this process was gender-free. This study extends existing research by detailing how these four categories are gendered. Additionally, this study examined men's and women's gendered perceptions of the political maturation process across three different levels of the organisation to better account for how these perceptions may vary for non-managerial positions.

In terms of the first subcategory, high awareness/high engagement, the findings reveal that some men and women across different levels of the organisation are both aware of the gendered nature of OPC and engage in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain their powerbases. Additionally, some men and women in this category described an awareness of the challenges gendered OPC and political behaviours create for women. This finding is surprising given that men do not have to navigate the political double bind that women do. Therefore, it could be assumed that they are largely unaware of the challenges women encounter with it. Specifically, Blass et al. (2007) argue that, as Caucasian men maintain the majority of dominant leadership positions in organisations, they set the political norms within those organisations, and whether consciously or not, men set the rules, boundaries, and intricacies of organisational politics, which they selectively share with insiders, which are predominantly other white men. This study's findings support this argument and extend it by revealing that while men may set the political norms in an organisation, they are also aware of the challenges these norms create for women, limiting women's ability to build and maintain power.

In terms of the second subcategory, low awareness/high engagement, the findings reveal that some men and women may be unaware of the gendered nature of OPC or political

behaviours, whilst at the same time, they also shared accounts of how they engage in gendered political behaviours. One of the reasons for this is that some men and women in this category attribute engaging in these gendered political behaviours to personality differences rather than gender differences. This study argues that these references to personality highlight shared perceptions individuals have of the ideal worker, both gendered and political. Research by Ammeter et al. (2002) finds that the perceptions individuals have of the ideal worker inform the mental models they hold of their power and other individuals (Ammeter et al. 2002b). This study found that perceptions of the ideal worker standard for some men and women inform their awareness of the gendered political behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain their power-bases. Shared perceptions of the ideal worker set the political norms that leaders and employees need to engage in to build their powerbases. Engaging in ideal worker behaviours was linked with increasing individual powerbases. Political sensitivity is also an awareness of and engagement in ideal worker behaviours.

Regarding the third subcategory, high awareness/low engagement, some men and women stated that they were aware of gendered OPC and the political behaviours needed to build and maintain their power bases but nevertheless chose not to engage in these behaviours. Several men and women shared their naivete regarding the impact of not engaging in gendered political behaviours on maintaining their powerbases. However, other men and women within this subcategory were aware of the impact for several reasons but still chose not to engage in gendered political behaviours. For example, the findings reveal that some men choose not to engage because they believe that their workplace functions like a meritocracy and therefore working hard will be met with career advancement opportunities. This finding is surprising given that previous research by Mainiero (1994) examining the political seasoning process argues that most women, not men, are unaware of politics, labelling this behaviour as political naiveté and suggesting that it limits women's ability to be promoted. This research assumes that men do not experience these same challenges; however, this study finds that political naivete is challenging for both men and women.

Several women within this category shared different reasons for not engaging in gendered political behaviours. For example, women felt that men dominated the informal political

processes, which women would need to engage in to build and maintain their power. These women felt uncomfortable engaging in homosocial networking events such as playing cricket or watching football; however, they felt pressure to attend these events to build their connection power. Additionally, some women felt uncomfortable engaging in masculine political behaviours, as these behaviours directly conflict with stereotypically feminine behaviours. These findings support existing research by Davey (2008), which finds that women have trouble engaging in masculine political behaviours, which are perceived to be aggressive, competitive, overconfident, and anti-social traits that are stereotypically more acceptable for men to engage in. These accounts suggest that engaging in gendered political behaviours is incompatible with femininity. In Davey's (2008) study, women claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to advance into positions of power. Women viewed organisational politics as gendered, which impacted their sense of fit with the organisation.

Additionally, Fritz and van Knippenberg's (2017) research investigated the relationship between cooperative climates and women's motivation to aspire to leadership positions. Their findings indicate that women have stronger communal tendencies and are sensitive to climates that foster cooperation, teamwork, and support. Lastly, for some women, engaging in masculine political behaviour was perceived to be potentially threatening to their safety. Men may perceive this behaviour as overly familiar and mistake it for sexual advances.

In terms of the fourth subcategory, low awareness/low engagement, this study finds that some men and women shared accounts of gendered OPC or political behaviours but denied these were gendered. These findings support existing research by Benschop and Doorewaard (1998), which argues that many women and men claim there is no gender inequality within their organisation, despite numerous examples of discrimination. This research argues that discourses of gender equality dominate organisations, ensuring that practices of gender inequality cannot be interpreted as such. When organisations claim to be meritocracies or gender-equal, these claims relate to organisational values or aspirations rather than everyday practices. Additionally, Broadbridge and Simpson's

(2011) research argues that men and women can be slow to perceive gender-based disadvantages at work because they prefer to believe that workplaces are fair.

This study extends these findings as some men and women in this subcategory identified different reasons why men and women deny the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours. Some women denied that political behaviours are gendered and attributed these behaviours to individual differences in personality characteristics. This study argues that these references to personality highlight the shared perceptions of the ideal worker, which are gendered and political. Additionally, some women felt that men, not women, deny OPC and political behaviours are gendered because these behaviours are masculine and serve to maintain men's power bases; therefore, men take them for granted.

These findings support existing research by Acker (2006) that states that awareness of inequality may vary for individuals because individuals in positions of privilege and power are less exposed to inequality and are less likely to be aware of it. As men take gender inequality for granted, this creates an empathy gap. Engaging in masculine political behaviours enhances some men's power bases, making it difficult for these men to understand why women who engage in these behaviours do not receive the same outcomes. Some men in this subcategory denied the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviours, arguing that homosocial practices are an individual preference. Men want to engage and include other men in informal networking and information sharing. Several men denied any direct forms of discrimination against women or associated negative outcomes for women because of homosocial practices. Therefore, some men within this subcategory attributed women's lack of engagement in gendered OPC to a lack of political competence, arguing that men are more skilled in navigating the four informal political processes.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences in organisational level (i.e. non-managerial versus managerial positions), as it relates to these four categories.

4.9.3 Political Sensitivity And Differential Outcomes For Men And Women

While existing research, including Mainiero (1994), Doldor (2017) Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013), and Yates and Hartley (2021), reveals how individuals develop political

skill, these studies do not account for the gendered nature of political behaviour and the differential outcomes engaging in gendered organisational politics has for men and women, when it comes to building and maintaining power at work. This study revealed that the gendered nature of political behaviours creates different challenges for some men and women who engage in these behaviours. This study supports Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations. The findings reveal that individuals participate in gendered power relations at work by engaging in gendered political behaviours used to build and maintain power bases. These findings support Acker's (1999) argument that through the internal mental work of individuals, they come to understand gendered expectations for behaviour at work. This study found that men and women need first to recognise what gendered political behaviour is appropriate and then try to control and shape their actions to meet that standard (Acker 1999). As these behaviours are gendered, they are aligned with stereotypically masculine behaviours. For several women in this study, the gendered nature of political behaviour is perceived to be vague and conflicting, requiring significant internal mental work to get it right (Acker 1999). Research by Coleman (2020) finds that gender colours perceptions of all women leaders at work. Specifically, women leaders are subject to a double bind whereby they are expected to lead by displaying typically masculine leadership behaviours like being aggressive and dominant, but when they do this, they are perceived as less likeable, as they are defying gender norms. When women engage in gender-conforming leadership behaviours by displaying stereotypical feminine behaviours, they are perceived as weak and ineffective. This creates a double bind for women in leadership positions.

One of the key contributions of this study is the finding that women not only face a double bind, which may limit perceptions of their likability or competence because workplaces are gendered, but women also encounter a political double bind, whereby engaging in gendered political behaviours may limit their ability to build their power bases in the same way as some men. While some women may be aware of the gendered behaviours they need to engage in to navigate gendered OPC, the findings reveal that sex-role stereotyping creates a political double bind for women. To navigate gendered OPC to build and maintain their power bases at work, some women shared how they needed to engage in masculine political behaviours, but doing so was perceived to conflict with

feminine gender stereotypes directly. Consequently, some women shared how engaging in gender non-conforming political behaviour limits their likability and limits their ability to build and maintain power at work. Several women found navigating the political double bind mentally and emotionally exhausting. Even when women shared how they engaged in masculine political behaviours in the same way as men, sex-role stereotyping created a political double bind for these women. Engaging in gendered political behaviours reduced their likability and limited their ability to develop their power bases. Therefore, the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviours reinforces and maintains the gender power gap that exists in organisations.

In addition, the gender political bind women not only limits their ability to build and maintain power but may also limit women's motivation to engage in organisational politics, to their detriment. For example, Doldor et al.'s (2013) research found gender differences in expressed political will, as political practices are perceived to be inherently masculine, reducing women's willingness to engage in these practices. Women cope with various responses, from resistance to reluctance and acceptance (Doldor et al., 2013). Arkin (2004) states that some women may reject management roles because of their distaste for political behaviour.

Interestingly, some men in the study demonstrated political sensitivity by adjusting their political behaviour depending on whether they engaged with a man or a woman. One of the reasons for this is that men are perhaps more comfortable engaging in political behaviours with other men than women. These findings support Acker's (1990) gendered theory of organisations, which maintains that masculinity is created and defended in organisations by men engaging in homosociality, whereby men help other men but not women. This study extends Acker's (1990) theory by identifying that gendered political behaviours are one of the key homosocial practices men engage in, limiting women's ability to build and maintain their power bases.

Kumra and Vinnicombe's (2008) research argues that masculine structures generally dominate organisations, making it difficult for women to succeed. This study supports these findings; gendered OPC is a masculine structure that men and women use to build and maintain their power bases. However, the gendered nature of political behaviours

makes it difficult for women to access the same benefits as men. Specifically, some men in this study revealed that they support other men politically in a way they do not support women. This may be an outcome of the social closure theory, outlined by Tomaskovic-Devey (1993), who argues that men may be unwilling to interact and assist women as they want to preserve their position and advantage (Watkins and Smith 2014). This study revealed that some women find homosocial political practices difficult to overcome, limiting their engagement in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power bases at work. Therefore, while women may be aware of gendered OPC and the political behaviours required to build and maintain power bases, they may be less willing to engage in these behaviours because they are gendered.

4.10 Practical Applications, Limitations, and Future Research

This study offers several practical applications that organisations can use to address the persistent gender power gap. Specifically, this research reveals how the gendered nature of political behaviours creates different challenges for several men and women. For example, the data showed that engaging in gendered political behaviours is difficult for some women because of the political double bind. While other women may be aware of the need to engage in these behaviours to build and maintain their power bases, they choose not to because these behaviours are ambiguous and contradictory, making engaging in them mentally and emotionally exhausting. Therefore, organisations can educate employees to enhance their political sensitivity and make individuals aware of the political double bind women encounter to mitigate the associated challenges this creates for women.

Additionally, companies can educate leaders about the challenges women face engaging in gendered political practices to build and maintain the four powerbases essential for advancement. For example, in understanding how gendered practices limit women's ability to increase positional power, organisations can ensure leaders are more aware and intentional about how they use their positional power to advocate for women's career advancement.

Organisations can also use the findings from this study to educate men about the negative impact that exclusionary homosocial political practices have on women. For example,

when men engage in homosocial practices, like informal networking, and exclude women, this limits women's ability to engage in the behaviours needed to build their connection and informational power. Therefore, making men aware of the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviours could increase men's political sensitivity and help them identify the behaviours they engage in that limit women's access to power at work. Additionally, given that some participants shared how political sensitivity develops over time, it may be beneficial for organisations to support employees with understanding the informal political processes and informal political norms during the onboarding process.

While this study offers several significant theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions, there are several limitations that future research should address. First, given that some men and women stated that political sensitivity is developed over time, future research should examine longitudinal data to better account for how individuals build their awareness of gendered OPC and learn to engage in gendered political behaviours. Second, future research should examine if women's awareness of gendered OPC and political behaviours limit their motivation to engage in gendered political practices. A meta-analysis by Parker et al. (2003) finds that individuals' perceptions of their work environment impact their motivation at work. In terms of their awareness of gendered OPC, women's political sensitivity may limit their willingness to engage in the behaviours needed to build and maintain power. Davey (2008) found that women's descriptions of barriers to their advancement were descriptions of political barriers. Women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours, as these were described as masculine. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to engage in them. Future research needs to examine the link between political awareness of gendered OPC and political motivation to engage in gendered political behaviours.

Third, future research needs to examine if individuals engage in political sensitivity similarly in less male-dominated environments. The political maturation process may be less gendered in more gender-equal environments. Additionally, researchers can examine if the gendered nature of OPC functions similarly in less male-dominated environments. This future research will help understand how less gendered contexts potentially shape more positive political behaviours or outcomes for women.

While the sample had balanced gender representation across the three levels of the organisations, the sample was limited in representing racial and ethnic minority groups. Both organisations are overwhelmingly Caucasian, as racial minorities make up less than 20% of the employee population, and in managerial positions and above, this representation drops to less than 10%. This may be why the research findings didn't identify racial differences in political sensitivity. Future research needs to explore the role of race in political sensitivity, given that the racial category individuals identify with shapes their social interactions and opportunities to benefit from engaging in political behaviour (Charles and Nkomo, 2012). Like gender, race is a salient, visible, stigma-associated demographic variable that could racialize employees' experiences of OPC and require a sensitivity to this when engaging in political behaviours.

Overall, this study lacked an examination of the intersectional experiences of gendered OPC. Following Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, future research needs to account for how gender, class and race intersect, resulting in different perceptions and experiences of OPC and political behaviour. As Caucasian men maintain the most dominant leadership positions in organisations, they will set the political norms. Members who can understand and adhere to those norms are likely to benefit. Blass, Brouer, Perrewé and Ferris (2007) argue that politics is a 'white man's game'. Whether consciously or not, they discuss the rules, boundaries and intricacies of organisational politics that are selectively shared with insiders, which are predominantly white men. Additionally, Alegria (2019) finds that white femininity propels white women on a management track but does not extend the same benefits to women of colour. This study provides a power base model for future research to examine how race and gender intersect to create challenges for racial and ethnic minorities when it comes to navigating OPC. Future research should expand the gendered OPC framework to include racializing and class-creating processes that combine to create and maintain a gender, race and class power gap in organisations.

Finally, one of the limitations of this study is the lack of intersectional examination of women's and men's accounts of political sensitivity. Given that Caucasian men continue to hold most leadership positions in organisations, they set the political norms within those organisations. Members who can understand and adhere to those norms will likely benefit

(Blass, Brouer, Perrewé and Ferris 2007). Whether consciously or not, the rules, boundaries and intricacies of organisational politics are selectively shared with insiders, predominantly white men.

Acker (2012) argues that research examining gender inequality needs to account for racial and class processes, which are essential in the ongoing reproduction of inequality regimes that create systematic disparities in employees' power and control over resources, decision-making processes, promotion and development opportunities, remuneration and rewards, and workplace relations. While this study explored political sensitivity to better account for how individuals build awareness of gendered OPC and learn to engage in gendered political practices, this concept could be expanded further to examine racializing and class-creating processes to account for the gender, class and race power gap. Future research must examine race, class and gender to better account for the lack of racial, class and gender diversity in leadership positions.

4.11 Conclusions

This study examined gender differences in the awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours used to build and maintain power-bases at work to explain why the gender power gap persists in most organisations today. This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational politics and gender by using a power base model to examine political sensitivity for the first time. The findings reveal that political sensitivity does include both the awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. However, the gendered nature of political behaviours creates different challenges for some men and women who choose to engage in these behaviours. For example, the findings reveal that women encounter a political double bind, whereby engaging in gendered political behaviours may reduce their likability and limit women's ability to build their powerbases in the way some men can. While women may be aware of gendered OPC and the political behaviours required to build and maintain power-bases, they may be less willing to engage precisely because these behaviours are gendered.

Additionally, one of the significant contributions of this study is identifying the four subcategories of political sensitivity, which account for individual differences in awareness

of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviour, including politically active, political by default, politically naïve, and political denial. This research also explored the political seasoning process related to political sensitivity and found that developing political sensitivity may be a function of experience, progression, the nature of the role requirements, and the shared perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker. Finally, through an exploration of political sensitivity, this study reveals how gendered OPC and political behaviours reinforce and maintain the gender power gap in organisations today.

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5 OVERALL DISCUSSION

5.1 The Overall Flow of the Three Thesis Papers

The following section summarises the overall thesis and the significant contributions of each of the three papers. This summary provides an overview of how the research progressed from the findings in the systematic review to the two empirical research studies, which provide insight into the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours and the associated outcomes for men and women.

5.1.1 Paper 1: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

The SLR research aims were identified based on the initial scoping study undertaken. These aims and the key findings from the SLR are illustrated in Figure 5-1 below.

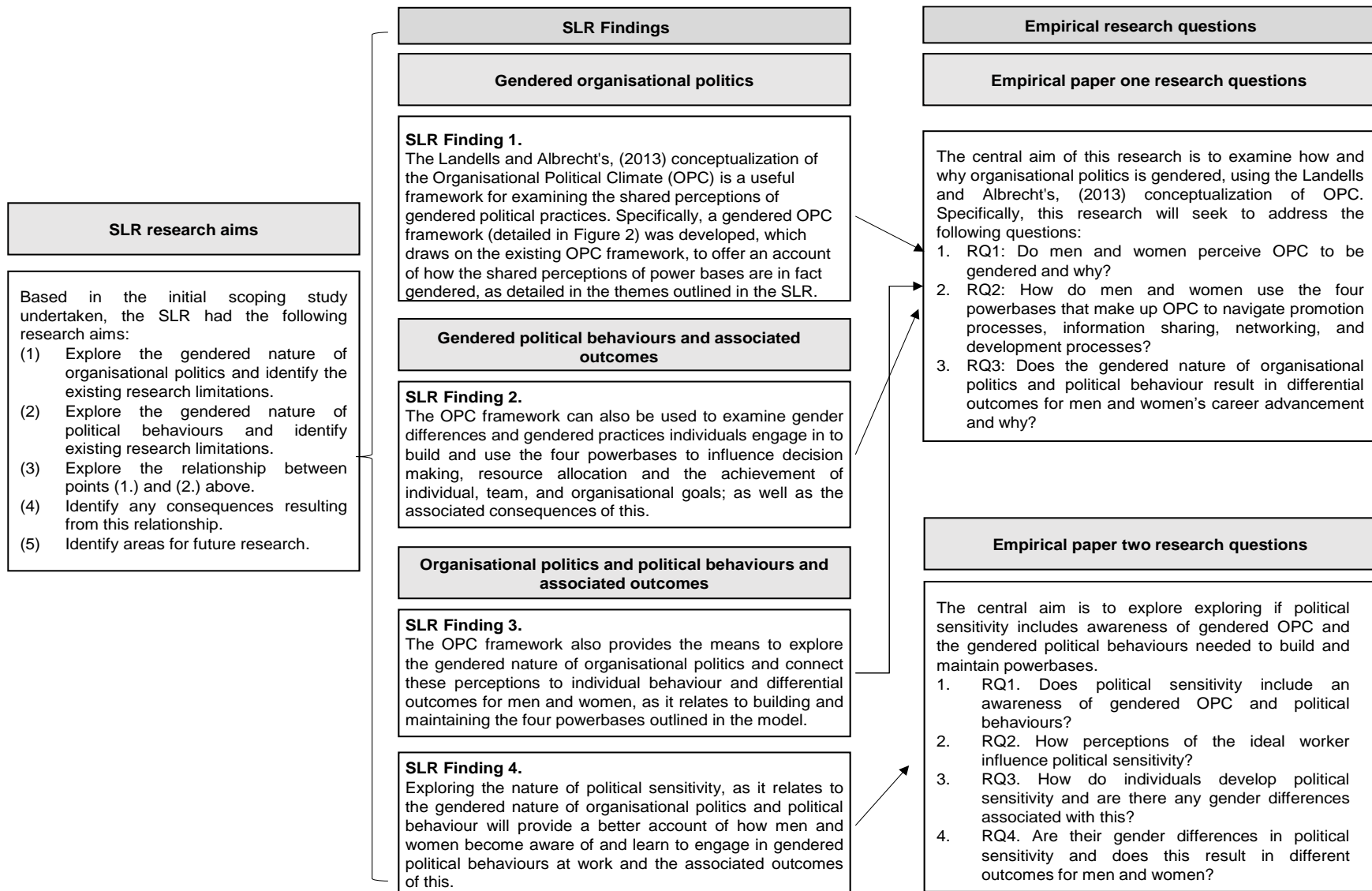


Figure 5-1 Systematic Literature Review Findings and Empirical Research Questions

Drawing on the OPC framework outlined by Landells and Albrecht (2013), the SLR examined the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour.

Organisational Political Climate			
Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power

Figure 5-2 Organisational Political Climate: A Power base Model (Landells and Albrecht 2013)

The review identified four major themes: (a) gender differences in political will and differential access to positional power; (b) gendered political skill and differential outcomes in personal power; (c) gendered barriers to network access and differential outcomes in connection power; and (d) political sensitivity and gender differences in informational power. The findings are presented in Table 5-2. This table summarises the gendered nature of OPC based on the existing Landells and Albrecht (2013) OPC model.

Table 5-1 Research Summary Gendered OPC

Gendered organisational political climates: The shared perceptions individuals have of the gendered nature of power bases and gendered political practices needed to build and maintain those power bases to influence informal promotion, development, networking, and promotion processes.				
Shared perceptions	Gendered positional power	Gendered personal power	Gendered connection power	Gendered informational power
Environment	<p>Positional power is the power derived from a position as well as the real or perceived ability to access resources and administer rewards and/or punishment.</p> <p>Masculinity is a perceptual proxy for positional power. Powerful positions may lose power when a woman assumes the position.</p>	<p>Personal power represents power associated with interpersonal influence or charm.</p> <p>Sex-role stereotyping limits women's opportunities to build personal power in the same way as men.</p>	<p>Connection power is derived from relationship building, internal networks, external networks, and network centrality.</p> <p>Men engage in homosocial practices when it comes to networking, which limits women's ability to build connection power.</p>	<p>Building informational power includes investing time in understanding the political environment and who has information and then seeking those individuals out to access that information.</p> <p>Political norms are selectively shared with insiders, which are predominantly white men. This, in turn, can create challenges for women or minorities who may not select appropriate political tactics for each situation or execute them effectively, as they lack this information.</p>
Person	<p>Women have less positional power than men. As such, they have less real or perceived ability to access resources and administer rewards and/or punishment compared to men.</p>	<p>Women cannot engage in the political behaviour required to build personal power in the same way as men. As political behaviours are gendered, sex-role stereotyping limits women's ability to derive the same benefits from engaging in them as men do.</p>	<p>Women do not have the same access to informal networks that men do because of homosocial practices in organisations.</p>	<p>Women are unlikely to be socialised into organisational politics in the same way as men and, therefore, may not understand the gendered nature of political behaviours, which may limit their ability to engage in them.</p>
Outcome	<p>The gendered nature of positional power reduces women's willingness to engage in the political behaviours needed to build and maintain this power-base.</p>	<p>While women may engage in political behaviours to the same extent as men, sex-role stereotyping ensures they may not receive the same benefits as men.</p>	<p>The gendered nature of networking behaviours limits women's ability to build and maintain informal networks, reducing their connection power.</p>	<p>When it comes to socialisation, gendered practices ensure that women do not have access to the same informational power as men do when it comes to an understanding of how to navigate gendered organisational political climates.</p>

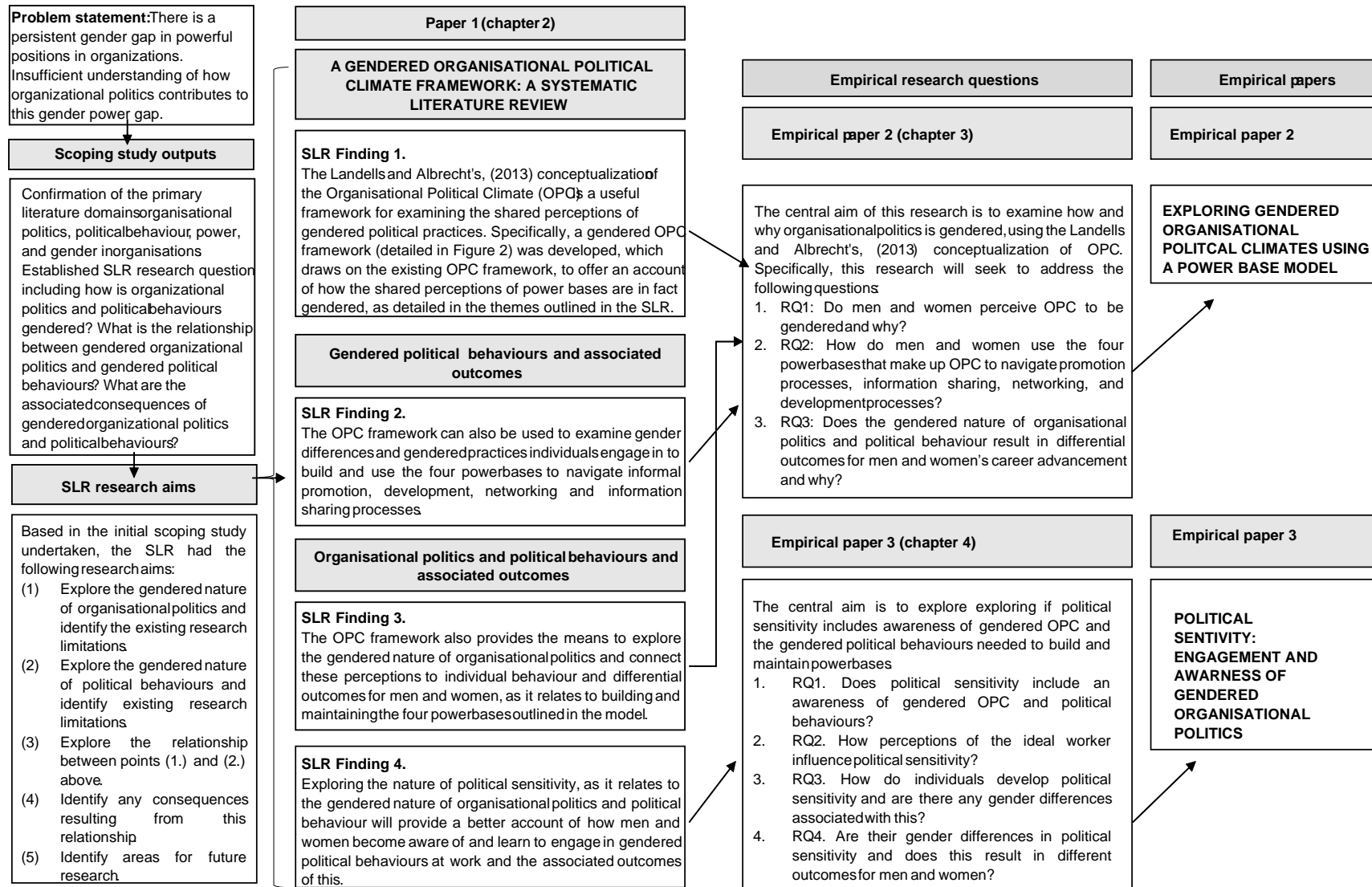
The empirical research that was undertaken advanced the gendered OPC framework identified in the literature review. The SLR examined gender differences in the four power bases (mechanisms), including positional, personal, information and connection power, and linked each of these power bases to certain organisational practices, including informal promotion, development, information sharing and networking processes. This connection is significant as it provides, for the first time, the basis for examining the relationship between context, mechanisms, practices, and perceived outcomes, as illustrated in the gendered OPC framework presented in Figure 5-3. Study 1 was designed to examine the gendered OPC framework in terms of the relationship between context, mechanisms, practices and associated outcomes. The central aim of this research was to examine how and why organisational politics is gendered.

Context	Gendered Organisational Political Climate			
Practices (Actual)	Networking	Information Sharing	Development Opportunities	Promotion Processes
Mechanism (Real)	Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power
Perceived outcomes (Empirical)				

Figure 5-3 Gendered OPC Framework

Study 2 was designed to investigate individual accounts of political sensitivity to the gendered OPC, using the gendered OPC framework presented in Figure 5-3. Based on the findings from the SLR, the aim of Study 2 was to investigate the nature of political sensitivity and its relationship with gendered OPC and political behaviours in organisations. The overall structure of the research is presented in Figure 5-4.

Figure 5-4 Overall Structure of Research Study



5.2 Paper 2: Empirical Study 1

This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational politics and gender by identifying for the first time the three ways in which OPC are gendered using a powerbase model, including gendered perceptions of OPC, gendered political practices and gender differences in the outcomes associated with those political practices. Gendered perceptions include the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of informal processes (practices) in organisations. Gendered political practices include the gendered political behaviours that individuals engage in to build and maintain their power bases (mechanisms). Gender differences in outcomes include the differential outcomes of gendered political practices and informal processes men and women engage in to build and maintain their power bases. Table 5-2 summarises the key findings from study one regarding gendered perceptions, practices, and differences in outcomes related to the practices, mechanisms, and outcomes that make up OPC.

Study 1 found that OPC is gendered through the shared perceptions men and women form of how informal processes work, including informal networks, informal information sharing, informal development opportunities, and informal promotion processes. An essential contribution this study makes is finding that gendered perceptions of the four informal processes are underpinned by the shared perceptions individuals have of the ideal worker, which is not only gendered but political.

Study 1 concluded that engaging in gendered political practices within gendered OPC results in differential outcomes for men and women when building and maintaining power, which is a critical factor in the persistent gender gap in leadership positions.

Context	Ideal Worker: Described as masculine and political, engaging in ideal worker behaviours serves as a perceptual proxy for power.			
	Gendered Organisational Political Climates			
<p style="text-align: center;">Gendered Perceptions</p> <p>This includes the shared perceptions of the gendered nature of informal processes (practices) in organisations. OPC's are gendered through the shared perceptions men and women form of how informal processes work, including informal networks, informal information sharing, informal development opportunities and informal promotion processes</p>	Informal Networks	Informal Information Sharing	Informal Development Opportunities	Informal Promotion Processes
<p style="text-align: center;">Gendered Practices</p> <p>This includes gendered political practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases (mechanisms) to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals.</p>	Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power
<p style="text-align: center;">Gender Differences in Outcomes</p> <p>This includes the differential outcomes of gendered political practices and informal processes men and women engage in to build and maintain their power bases.</p>	Trust	Organisational Insight	Exposure and Visibility	Career Advocacy

Figure 5-4 Gendered Organisational Political Climates

5.3 Paper 3: Empirical Study 2

Study 2 examined gender differences in the awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours used to build and maintain power bases. This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational politics and gender by using a power base model to examine political sensitivity for the first time. The findings reveal that political sensitivity includes awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. The gendered nature of political behaviours creates different challenges for men and women who engage in these behaviours. Specifically, the study identified four subcategories of political sensitivity, which highlight the awareness–engagement link, as outlined in Figure 5-5. These subcategories account for individual differences in awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours.

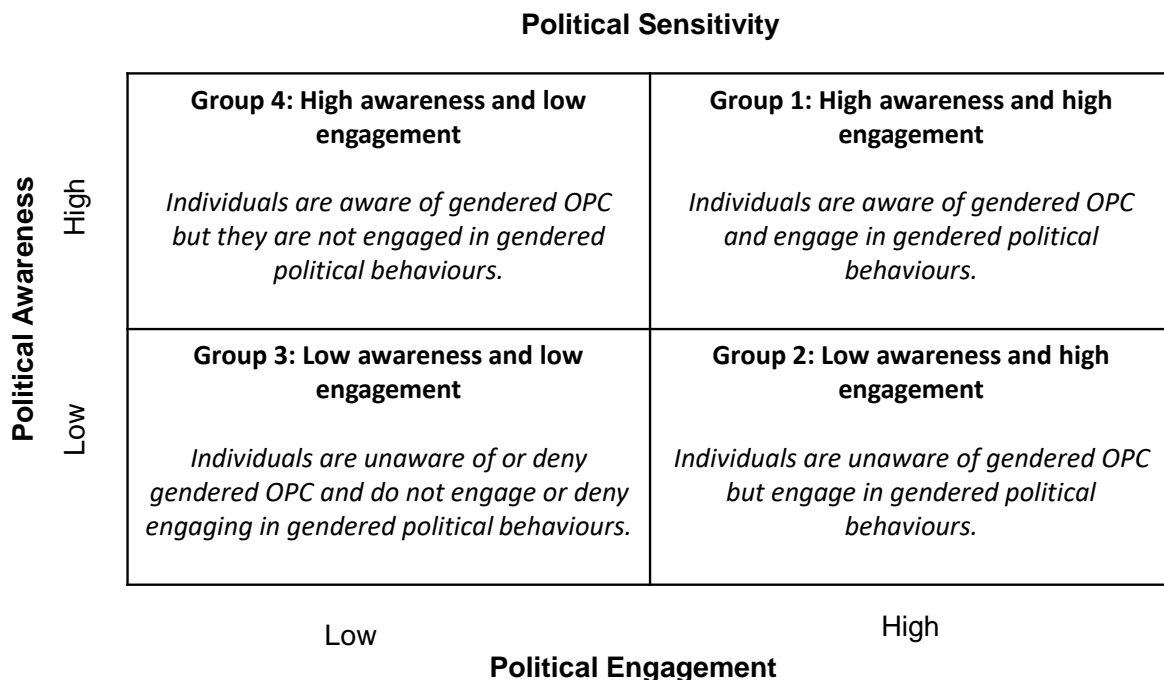


Figure 5-5 The Four Subcategories of Political Sensitivity

The study also identified three key themes concerning how individuals develop political sensitivity: 1) awareness of political norms and career tenure, 2) awareness of political practices in senior positions, and 3) awareness and engagement in ideal worker norms. Specifically, this study found that awareness of gendered political practices increased

with an individual's years of experience in organisations. Individuals observe others engaging in political behaviours over time and understand what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain power. Some individuals also receive advice from line managers or other individuals within the organisation regarding how the informal political processes function and what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain their powerbases. While the political seasoning process may be a function of experience, progression, and the nature of the role requirements, this study also found that some men and women develop their political sensitivity through the shared perceptions they form of the ideal worker. Specifically, this study supports Acker's (1992) theory of the ideal worker, as the findings reveal that political sensitivity develops through the shared perceptions men and women hold of the ideal worker, which some men and women in this study describe as being both gendered and political. This study found that some men and women become aware of and learn how to engage in gendered political behaviours through a political socialisation process, which includes becoming aware of expectations regarding the ideal worker.

The study concluded that the challenges women encounter engaging in the required political behaviours to build and maintain power might further answer the practical question of why there are so few women in powerful positions in organisations.

The following section will outline how the findings from each empirical study combine to address the primary research question.

5.3.1 The Overall Synthesis of Findings and Contribution of the Three Thesis Papers

Overall, this thesis contributes to the existing literature by examining for the first time how organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered using a powerbase model. The findings expand our current understanding of why and how organisational politics is gendered and account for gender differences in outcomes related to the gendered political practices that both men and women engage in to build and maintain their power bases. The literature review and the two empirical studies address the overarching research question for this thesis: "How are organisational politics and political behaviour gendered, and how does this contribute to the gender power gap?" Specifically, there are

five main contributions that this thesis makes, which each contribute to addressing the research question. Each of these contributions will be outlined in the following sections.

5.3.1.1 Gendered OPC: A Powerbase Model

This thesis presented a powerbase model for examining gendered OPC, as illustrated in Figure 5-6. This framework was based on Landells and Albrecht's (2013) OPC powerbase model outlined in the SLR, which considers organisational politics a gender-free phenomenon. Based on a comprehensive review of the existing literature, Study 1 sought to explore the gendered nature of organisational politics using the OPC model outlined in Figure 5-6. Based on the findings, Study 1 identified three ways in which OPCs are gendered, including gendered perceptions of informal processes, gendered political behaviours related to the building and maintaining of four power bases, and the associated gender differences in career outcomes.

Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations include the concept of gendered substructures. The gendered substructure in organisations includes invisible processes in organisations in which gendered assumptions about women and men, as well as femininity and masculinity, are embedded and reproduced, perpetuating gender inequality. Gendered substructures include organising processes, organisational culture, interactions on the job and gendered identities, which continually recreate gender inequalities (Acker, 2012). Study 1 also found that while organisations have formal processes for promotions, development opportunities, networks, and information sharing, informal 'shadow' political processes operate alongside formal processes but are mainly independent of them. Both men and women described these informal political processes in Study 1 as both political and gendered. The findings reveal that these informal political processes rely on relationships with superiors or co-workers. They are ill-defined and associated with ambiguous success criteria and decision-making, so they are open to political practices and gendered power plays. Therefore, an essential contribution of Study 1 is identifying that the informal processes are political and, given that organisational politics is gendered, these informal processes are also gendered.

Therefore, Study 1 extends Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations by revealing how OPC are gendered through the four informal political processes. Gandz and Murray

(1980) state that specific organisational processes lend themselves to being perceived as more political than others and recommend future research examine the specific characteristics of informal processes that influence perceptions of organisational politics. This study builds on this recommendation, as the findings reveal four informal gendered political processes associated with OPC, including informal promotion, development, information sharing and networking practices. This research supported Gandz and Murray's (1980) claim that political processes exist in organisations, including processes with high managerial discretion related to success or failure at work. Specifically, this study revealed that the four informal processes are perceived as political and gendered. The findings indicate that these processes rely on relationships with superiors or co-workers. They are ill-defined and associated with ambiguous success criteria and decision-making, so they are open to political practices and gendered power plays.

Additionally, Study 1 draws on Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes related to gender in informal interactions. This study found that inequality is created and reproduced through informal gendered political behaviours that individuals engage in which create and re-create inequality despite the formal processes that might exist to prevent this. Both men and women engage in gendered political behaviours to navigate these four informal processes to build and maintain their power bases. Power bases are gendered, and the political practices used to build and maintain them are also gendered. For example, in navigating informal networks, men engage in homosocial practices that exclude women from engaging in informal networking. Men engage in these gendered political practices to build and maintain their connection power, limiting women's ability to do the same.

The findings from Study 1 reveal that politics in organisations is not gender neutral, but rather individuals engage in gendered power relations when navigating informal processes at work by engaging in political behaviour (Acker 1990). This thesis not only supports the argument presented by Kanter (1987), Acker (2012), Davey (2008a) and Nicolson (2015a), who argue that organisations are gendered but also identifies how they are gendered. Specifically, perceptions of power are gendered as the political behaviours used to build power bases are gendered. This research extends Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations. Study 1 finds that individuals participate in gendered power

relations by engaging in the gendered political behaviours required to navigate the informal political processes to build and maintain their power bases (Acker 1990).

Study 1 further extends Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organisations by accounting for how men and women perceive organisational politics to be gendered. As well as the differential outcomes for men and women associated with engaging in gendered political behaviours. For example, concerning informal networks, Study 1 found that most men stated they could develop connection power by engaging in homosocial practices, such as exclusively male golfing or cycling groups, which provide men with greater exposure to senior leaders than women, which increases their visibility with powerful individuals within the organisation. Most men stated that when senior leaders within the network know and trust them, they are more likely to receive the support needed to access career opportunities from these men. Most men and women stated that accessing informal network support is critical to career advancement, especially for senior positions within an organisation. These roles require consensus or approval from leadership teams. Therefore, the gendered OPC framework outlined in Study 1 connects gendered informal political processes with gendered political practices and gender differences in outcomes related to building and maintaining power bases.

One of the reasons the OPC framework was used to examine how organisational politics is gendered is because the framework accounts for both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics. Zani and O'Neill (2001) state that organisations are becoming increasingly political entities, and it will become increasingly important for individuals to engage in political behaviour. Additionally, Ammeter et al. (2002) state that political behaviour isn't inherently negative; rather, it is essential to reducing the vast ambiguity that exists in organisations. Political behaviour is neutral and an inherently necessary part of organisational functioning. While this perspective helps consider the positive aspects of political behaviour, it assumes this behaviour is gender-free. This study found that political behaviour is inherently masculine and results in differential outcomes for men and women who engage in it to build and maintain power, which may explain why women in Study 1 and Study 2 describe political behaviour in pejorative terms even though they may engage in it and view it as a necessary part of organisational life. Overall, men engage in homosocial practices to build their

Gendered Organisational Political Climates				
Context	Ideal worker: Shared perceptions of the gendered political ideal worker			
Gendered perceptions: Shared perceptions of the four gendered informal processes that individuals engage in to build and maintain the four powerbases.	Informal Networks	Informal Information Sharing	Informal Development Opportunities	Informal Promotion Processes
Gendered practices: Includes gendered political behaviour associated with building and maintaining the four powerbases.	Connection Power	Informational Power	Personal Power	Positional Power
Gendered outcomes: Gender differences in outcomes associated with gendered political behaviour used to build and maintain the four powerbases.	Trust	Organisational Insight	Exposure and Visibility	Career Advocacy

Political Sensitivity

Political awareness of gendered OPC including the four informal processes and gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain the four powerbases.

Engagement in gendered political behaviours used to build and maintain the four powerbases

Figure 5-6 Gendered OPC and Political Sensitivity

power bases and these practices exclude women from doing the same. Therefore, this study found political behaviour benefit men in a way that it does not women. However, future research should examine if these outcomes are negative in less gendered environments and if men could use political behaviour to advocate and support women's advancement at work.

While Study 1 found that OPCs are gendered through shared perceptions individuals form of the gendered political processes, practices, and outcomes, the research paper concludes that future research should examine if individual awareness of the gendered nature of organisational politics is critical to effectively engaging in the gendered political behaviours required to build and maintain power bases. Study 2 addresses this research gap by exploring political sensitivity using a power base model. Study 2 finds that political sensitivity includes an awareness of gendered organisational political climates and gendered political behaviour and engagement in gendered political behaviours. When it comes to awareness and engagement in gendered organisational Study 2 found that there are four subcategories of political sensitivity, which account for individual differences in awareness of gendered organisational politics and engagement in gendered political behaviours.

The four subcategories of political sensitivity include:

- *Group 1: High awareness and high engagement*
- *Group 2: Low awareness and high engagement*
- *Group 3: Low awareness and low engagement*
- *Group 4: High awareness and low engagement*

These four categories explain individual differences in the awareness–engagement link as it relates to gender in organisational politics, which has been unexamined to date. For example, Mainiero (1994), and Doldor (2017) identified a seasoning process, as individuals learn to become less naïve to the reality of organisational politics and learn to navigate this by developing political skills. For example, Doldor's (2017) study identified a three-stage model of political maturation that leaders encounter. Both these studies examined leaders' perceptions of the political maturation process, assuming this process was gender-free and specifically examining leaders' experiences. This study addressed

these limitations by detailing the four subcategories of political sensitivity. Additionally, this study examined men's and women's gendered perceptions of political sensitivity across three different levels of the organisation to better account for how these perceptions may vary for managerial versus non-managerial positions.

Study 2, for the first time, provides an account of both men's and women's experiences of gendered OPC by identifying individual differences in political sensitivity as it relates to the four subcategories, which had no significant differences by organisational level. Understanding these different subcategories helps explain why the gender power gap exists and persists in most organisations today. Specifically, individual differences in political sensitivity make it difficult to address the challenges gendered OPC, and political behaviours create for women because individuals have different degrees of awareness and engagement in gendered organisational politics. Some individuals deny or disengage from political processes, choosing to believe that organisations are meritocratic despite considerable evidence to suggest otherwise, which is why the gender power gap remains firmly entrenched in organisations today despite women's increased labour force participation, considerable qualifications, and experience (Rink et al. 2019).

Acker (2006) maintains that all organizations have inequality regimes, which include the interrelated practices and processes that maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities at work. One of the essential components of inequality regimes is the invisibility of inequality. Acker (2006) argues that the visibility of inequality (which she defines as the level of awareness of inequalities) may vary from one organisation to another. While some individuals may ignore inequality, Acker (2006) states that men believe inequality occurs in some parts of the organisation, not theirs.

Consequently, gender inequality often becomes invisible in organisations. Sheerin and Linehan (2018) state that men, more than women, suffer from a lack of awareness of gendered organisational norms and behaviours. The normalization of patriarchy in organizations prevents men from reflecting and understanding the gendered nature of their workplace. Consequently, while men may be aware that a gender power gap exists (due to the lack of women in leadership positions), men may simultaneously deny the gendered practices—like gendered organisational political practices—that create and

maintain this gap. Study 2 extends Acker's (2006) argument that inequality is invisible as the findings reveal that gendered political practices and processes are denied by some participants or taken for granted, which perpetuates inequality.

Specifically, Study 2 revealed that while some men in Group 1 may set the political norms in an organisation, they are also aware of the challenges these norms create for women. These findings extend Blass et al.'s (2007) research, which argues that as Caucasian men occupy the majority of dominant leadership positions in organisations, they set the political norms. Whether consciously or not, men set the rules, boundaries, and intricacies of organisational politics, which they selectively share with insiders, predominantly other white men (Blass et al. 2007). However, most men in Group 2 and some women were unaware of the challenges gendered OPC and political behaviours create for women. Specifically, the findings reveal that these participants struggle to perceive gender-based disadvantages at work because they are simply unaware of the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviour and how this limits women's ability to build and maintain power bases.

Additionally, the findings revealed that men in Group 3 simply take gender inequality for granted regarding organisational politics and power. When men engage in masculine political behaviours, it enhances their power bases, making it difficult for men to understand why women who engage in these same behaviours do not receive the same outcomes. Men even deny the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviours, arguing that homosocial practices are an individual preference. Men like to engage other men who are like them when it comes to informal networking and information sharing to build and maintain the associated power bases. These findings support Acker (2006), who argues that awareness of inequality may vary for men and women because men who dominate positions of privilege and power are less exposed to inequality and are less likely to be aware of it.

Finally, for Group 4, some men and women may be aware of gendered OPC but choose not to engage in it because they may not fully appreciate how a lack of engagement limits their ability to build and maintain power. For example, some men and women choose not to engage because they believe their workplace functions like a meritocracy. Therefore,

they argue that working hard will be met with career advancement opportunities. These beliefs did not differ by each organisation or position level, which is surprising given that previous research by Marino (1994) examining the political seasoning process argues that most women, not men, are unaware of politics. This research assumes that men do not experience these same challenges; however, this Study 2 finds that political naivete is challenging for both men and women.

These findings reveal different levels of awareness and engagement in gendered OPC and political behaviours for both men and women. While it is clear that women encounter significant challenges engaging in gendered political behaviours to build and maintain power, these challenges are not widely understood or acknowledged by all men and women in organisations. This lack of awareness contributes to the denial and dismissal of gender inequality in organisations related to the gender power gap, further perpetuating the challenges women encounter when building and maintaining power at work.

5.3.1.2 Building and Maintaining Power: Gendered Political Behaviours

In outlining the concept of inequality regimes, Acker (2006) argues that the informal interactions that people engage in while undertaking work are one of the key organising processes that produce inequality at work (Healy et al., 2017). Acker (2006) argues that informal interactions and practices in which class, race and gender inequalities are created in mutually reinforcing processes are often overlooked in research. Day-to-day interactions re-create gender and racial inequalities in subtle and unspoken ways, and the informal nature of these interactions makes them difficult to research.

Healy et al. (2011) and Wright (2011) found that informal interactions reproduce inequalities and undermine formal processes (like formal promotion and development policies) that exist to ensure more significant equity. For example, white men may exclude women from informal development discussions or networking events, which limits their access to development opportunities. One of the key findings of the SLR and both empirical studies, which supports findings by Davey (2008), Shaughnessy et al. (2011), Kacmar et al. (2011), and Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), is that women may not engage in political tactics to the same extent as men because these tactics are gendered. Specifically, one of the main conclusions of Study 1 is that political behaviours

are informal and associated with stereotypically masculine behaviours. Informal gendered political interactions are then one of the key organising processes that produce inequality at work.

While some research studies such as Mainiero (1994), Hartley et al. (2007) and Doldor (2017) advocate that engaging in political behaviour is necessary and results in positive outcomes for individuals, this research ignores the gendered nature of these behaviours, which creates complex challenges for women, who choose to engage in it. The social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983) holds that gender differences emerge because of social learning and societal power relations. Gender-appropriate behaviours are socially modelled and learnt; over time, they are reinforced through social norms, power relations and status structures (Kacmar et al. 2011). Therefore, women and men tend to exhibit behaviours that correspond with gender-stereotypical behaviours, so engaging in political behaviours is more stereotypical for men than women. Study 1 found that when women choose to engage in gendered political behaviour, the gendered nature of this behaviour ensures that they will not receive the same benefits as men. Shaughnessy et al. (2011) argue that influence tactics are gendered; and that political behaviour interacts with gender tactics affecting supervisor liking and promotability ratings. They conclude that influence behaviours are bounded by the gender of the actor and support the gender tactic dilemma outlined by Rudman and Glick (2001). Furthermore, Schein's (1978) research investigating sex-role stereotypes argues that female leaders exhibiting political behaviours congruent with sex-role stereotypes (i.e. consideration, teamwork and communality) will be evaluated more favourably than women who violate these stereotypes by displaying stereotypically masculine behaviours (i.e. assertiveness, decisiveness and aggressiveness). Supporting these arguments, Study 1 found that women do not receive the same benefits as men for engaging in the same political behaviours at work, when it comes to building connection, positional, personal, and informational power.

A key conclusion from Study 1 is that the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviours significantly contributes to the gender power gap in most organisations. While this finding is limited to gender, drawing on Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, future research could expand the OPC framework to include

racializing and class-creating processes that combine to create and maintain a gender, race, and class power gap in organisations.

Additionally, Study 2 provided insights into why gendered political behaviours contribute to the persistent gender power gap in organisations. Specifically, Study 2 found that women face a political double bind when engaging in political behaviours. Women need to engage in gendered political behaviours to build and maintain the four power bases. Nevertheless, the gendered nature of these behaviours ensures that by engaging in these behaviours, women are engaging in gender-atypical behaviour, which reduces their likability and, ultimately, their ability to build and maintain the four power bases. Put simply; women cannot engage in organisational politics to build and maintain powerbases in the same way men do.

Additionally, Study 2 found that some women are not comfortable engaging in political behaviours precisely because they are gendered. For example, in Study 2, a minority of women felt uncomfortable engaging in masculine political behaviours, as these behaviours directly conflict with stereotypically feminine behaviours. The gendered nature of organisational politics may limit women's motivation to engage in it. Arkin (2004) states that some women may reject management roles because of their distaste for political behaviour (Buchanan 2008). Davey's (2008) research found that women's descriptions of barriers to their advancement described political obstacles. Women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours as these were described as aggressive, competitive, overconfident, and anti-social traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity. These accounts suggest that a gendered OPC is incompatible with femininity. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to advance into positions of power. Women viewed organisational politics as gendered, which impacted their sense of fit with the organisation.

While engaging in gendered political behaviours may create challenges for women, these behaviours are required to build the informational, positional, personal and connection power bases needed to progress up the organisational hierarchy (Buchanan and Badham 2008). For example, political skill has been found to enhance the impressions and

evaluations others form, which leads to better ratings of performance, reputation, success, and career progress for individuals (Ferris et al. 2012). Engaging in gendered political behaviours may conflict with stereotypically feminine behaviour and result in less beneficial outcomes for women than men, but not engaging in these behaviours limits women's career advancement.

While it is clear from Study 1 that masculine political behaviours are more strongly associated with developing the four power bases, findings from study 2 demonstrate that engaging in organisational politics does not guarantee success for women because political behaviours are gendered. If women choose not to engage in gendered political behaviours, it limits their ability to advance at work, but engaging in these behaviours can result in reduced likability. Hall-Taylor (2002) argues that gendered political behaviours are used to maintain gender power structures in organisations. This research supports and extends this argument by identifying how gendered political behaviours create and re-create gender differences in building and maintaining power bases, limiting women's advancement and furthering the gender power gap.

5.3.1.3 Ideal Worker Perceptions: The Relationship Between Gendered OPC and Political Behaviour

Acker (2012) argues that gendered substructures are produced and reproduced in the interactions on the job, between colleagues and between those at different levels of power, which may include one on one interactions or group-level interactions as well as formal and informal interactions. When outlining the concept of inequality regimes, Acker (2006) shares why gender and sometimes race (when it comes to limited opportunities and expectations for behaviour) are reproduced in everyday informal interactions individuals engage in while undertaking work. An essential contribution Study 1 and Study 2 make are finding that the informal gendered political interactions men and women engage in are informed through the shared understanding of the political norms, values and behaviour through the shared perceptions they build and maintain of the ideal worker, which Acker (1990b) argues is associated with stereotypically masculine characteristics. Specifically, Study 1 found employee norms and shared understanding of behaviours they need to engage in to navigate informal gendered political interactions are informed by

shared perceptions of Acker's (1990) ideal worker. Acker's theory of gendered organisations examines the rules and codes that prescribe workplace behaviour based on people's shared perceptions of the abstract 'ideal' worker, which includes someone who can work long hours and is free from dependent care responsibilities (Nkomo and Rodriguez 2019). Shared perceptions of the ideal worker play a part in the day-to-day social practices in organisations (Acker 2006). While research has drawn on Acker's (2006) ideal worker to understand gender at work, there is limited research examining how shared perceptions of the ideal worker shape individual behaviour (Poorhosseinzadeh and Strachan 2020b). Additionally, research examining the specific characteristics of the ideal worker is scarce (Poorhosseinzadeh and Strachan 2020b).

Interestingly, Study 2 identified that men and women develop political sensitivity in terms of their awareness of gendered OPC and gendered political behaviours through the shared perceptions they form of the ideal worker, which some men and women in this study describe as being both gendered and political. This study found that some men and women become aware of and learn how to engage in gendered political behaviours through a political socialisation process, which includes becoming aware of expectations regarding the ideal worker. This finding supports Ammeter et al.'s (2002) research that Men and women come to know what political behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain their power bases through an awareness of the ideal worker. Shared perceptions of the ideal worker set the political norms that leaders and employees need to engage in to build their power bases. Study 1 found that most participants engaging in ideal worker behaviours were linked with increasing individual power bases. Political sensitivity then includes an awareness of and engagement in ideal worker behaviours, both political and gendered. Individuals come to know these behaviours through the shared perceptions they form of the ideal worker. Men and women experience differential outcomes for engaging in these behaviours.

While the gendered nature of power bases may explain how OPC is gendered, why OPC is gendered is less clear. Ellen III, et al. (2013) argue that politics in organisations has been investigated for decades, but despite this research, there is a limited examination of the link between organisational political and political behaviour, which is often taken for granted. Research has found that many factors can share individual perceptions of the

political environment, and these perceptions form the basis for individual responses (Ellen III et al. 2013). Therefore, research examining organisational politics has largely failed to account for the link between organisational politics and political behaviour (Miller, Rutherford and Kolodinsky 2008). For example, while the POP model has been widely examined and empirically tested, it has failed to account for perceived politics in the overall conceptualisation of the model (Valle and Perrewé 2000). One of the fundamental assumptions of this model is that POP is directly related to political behaviours. However, there is no research investigating whether this relationship exists or what the exact nature of this relationship is (Valle and Perrewé 2000).

One of the critical contributions of this thesis is the findings related to why OPC are gendered. Both Study 1 and Study 2 provide evidence of how individuals' shared perceptions of the ideal worker influence both perceptions of gendered organisational politics and gendered political norms. Specifically, Study 1 found that gendered perceptions of the political behaviours used to build and maintain the four power bases that make up OPC underpinned by individuals' shared perceptions of the ideal worker, which is gendered and political. The ideal worker is not only the shared perception for competence and leadership but also sets the norms individuals need to engage in to build and maintain power. Aligning to the ideal worker by engaging in the behaviours associated with it is how individuals increase perceptions of their power and align themselves with powerful others within the organisation.

Both Study 1 and Study 2 found that engaging in ideal worker behaviours is a proxy for power. The shared perceptions individuals have of the ideal worker set the standard for the political practices individuals need to engage in to build and maintain power bases. The more individuals engage in behaviours associated with the ideal worker, the more competent, leader-like and powerful they will be perceived to be. Therefore, doing gender includes engaging in the political practices associated with the ideal worker.

These findings support Davey's (2008) research, which finds that the political behaviours individuals engage in are stereotypically masculine. This research contributes to the existing understanding of the ideal worker, as findings reveal that shared perceptions of the ideal worker set the political norms that leaders and employees need to engage in to

build their powerbases. This study also found that engaging in the political norms associated with the ideal worker to build and maintain powerbases results in different outcomes for men and women. For example, Study 1 found that building and maintaining power bases requires engaging in ideal worker behaviours; however, when women are evaluated according to the ideal worker norm, the double bind ensures that women are penalised when it comes to evaluations of their performance and leadership suitability (Neely 2020). This study found that while evaluations of women against the ideal worker standard negatively impact perceptions of performance, they also limit women's ability to build and maintain power. This finding supports the lack of fit theory outlined by Harris et al. (2007) (which suggests that women do not advance in organisations because gender stereotypes are misaligned with stereotypes of successful managers) and extends it by outlining how stereotypes of successful managers have shared perceptions of the gendered political ideal worker. Therefore, alignment with the ideal worker is a power base in its own right. Shared perceptions of the ideal worker inform gendered perceptions of OPC, gendered political practices and gender differences in outcomes associated with those practices.

5.3.1.4 The Gender Power Gap: Gender Differences in Outcomes Associated With Political Behaviour

Both Study 1 and study 2 found that men and women engage in political behaviours to build and maintain the four power bases that make up gendered OPC, which are critical to advancement. However, Study 1 finds that the gendered nature of these behaviours ensures women remain systemically and systematically excluded from full participation in organisational politics, which contributes to the gender power gap (Hall-Taylor 2002). A key conclusion from Study 1 is that power is embedded within the gendered political interactions individuals engage in to build and maintain their power bases, which are needed to navigate the four informal processes. Politics can be thought of as power in action and the grounds for gender-based power struggles (Nicolson 2015b).

Specifically, regarding the connection power base that individuals need to navigate informal networking, Study 1 finds that men are more likely to build informal networks with other men based on their shared similarities. The connections individuals form through informal networking create the social capital individuals need to ascend into positions of

power within the hierarchies (Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont 2012). While existing research has identified the gendered nature of informal networking, Study 1 extended these findings by identifying the limitations women encounter in building connection power. Informal networks provide men with access to resources such as informal information, support, career advice and opportunities for advancement. However, homosocial practices limit women's lack of access to informal networks, limiting their exposure to senior leaders and visibility within the organisations and reducing their access to the informal advice and support needed to advance within organisations. Forret and Dougherty (2004) and Kankkunen (2014) support these findings, finding that women do not receive the same career benefits as men for engaging in similar networking behaviours. This study also extends existing research by finding that as men tend to occupy positions of power in organisations, they can control access to informal networks. The homosocial political practices they engage in ensuring that the information, resources, and opportunities to influence others largely remain with men. Informal networks are dominated by men, and the gendered political practices men use to build connection power maintain this dominant position.

Individuals in Study 1 revealed that they use their personal power base to navigate informal development opportunities within organisations. Study 1 found that men are more likely to support other men regarding informal development opportunities. For example, most men shared how they are more likely to provide men like themselves with access to information about what opportunities exist and how to position themselves to access those opportunities. This finding supports existing research, which finds that supervisors are gender-biased in task allocation, resulting in fewer developmental opportunities for women (De Pater et al. 2010). Study 1 concluded that even if women and men engage in the same political behaviours to build connection power, women will still be perceived as less competent and leaderlike because the ideal worker standard is gendered. This lack of fit with the ideal worker reduces women's access to development opportunities. At the same time, research by Perrewé and Nelson (2004) acknowledges the barriers women face, such as the glass ceiling, maternal wall, tokenism, exclusion from informal networks and a lack of development opportunities. Study 1 extends these findings by detailing how shared perceptions of the ideal worker create a barrier to

women's development at work, even if women engage in the political practices required to build the connection power needed to navigate informal development processes.

Regarding informational power, which individuals need to navigate informal information sharing within organisations, Study 1 found that men are likely to withhold informal information from women or selectively share informal information with other men and not with women. Homosocial practices limit or control the information women receive by limiting the connections and networks they form. The quality of an individual's social network determines the value of the information they receive, which affects the success of their subsequent influence attempts and career success (Kimura 2015). This study extends existing research by finding that women do not have access to the same informal networks as men, limiting their access to informal information. A lack of access to informal networks limits women's ability to build and maintain informational power and reduces women's perceived value as network members, as they have less valuable information to share. This creates a reinforcing cycle of inequality when it comes to informational power, as women lack access to informational power and the means to solve that. Men engage in this exclusionary behaviour to maintain their informational power, limiting women's access to the organisational insight needed to influence others effectively.

In terms of positional power, which individuals use to navigate informal promotion processes, Study 1 finds that women are less likely to have access to powerful individuals who can advocate for their promotability. Women are also less likely to have the masculine ideal worker attributes needed to be considered candidates for promotion. Specifically, Study 1 found that most men and women describe having to sell or market themselves to senior leaders to make themselves known. Some women describe marketing themselves as being able to 'act like men to get ahead, which includes engaging in ideal worker behaviours to increase visibility like being outspoken, self-promotional and assertive'. However, some men describe the process as being 'political' and knowing how to present yourself to the right people to be perceived as a candidate for a promotion. Most participants agreed that if an individual struggled to engage in masculine political behaviours, it would prevent them from obtaining a promotion because senior leaders are more likely to advocate for promotion candidates who align with the ideal worker attributes. Furthermore, Study 1 found that even if companies promote

women, they may be perceived as token promotions based on gender representational targets, and therefore, women are unlikely to have the support from powerful individuals needed to succeed in the role.

Taken together, findings from Study 1, as it relates to each of the four power bases that make up gendered OPC, reveal that both informal political processes and political behaviours are gendered, which creates barriers to women's ability to build and maintain the power bases needed to advance at work. Interestingly, research by Cros (2010) examining the obstacles executive women leaders encounter presents the challenges women face in accessing promotions and networks and integrating work and home life as independent from each other. However, this Study 1 found that the four informal processes influence one another to compound the challenges women experience trying to advance at work. For example, a lack of access to informal networks limits women's ability to access informal information regarding opportunities for development and promotions, limiting women's advancement and ability to build positional power. The gender power gap is made up of the collective gender gaps that exist within each of the four informal power bases. Study 2 finds that some women find homosocial political practices difficult to overcome, limiting their engagement in the gendered political behaviours needed to build and maintain power bases at work. This finding supports Davey's (2008) study, which finds that women are aware of power dynamics in organisations but are often unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to advance into positions of power.

Additionally, Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe's (2013) research finds gender differences in political will. Women are less willing to engage in political practices because these behaviours are perceived as inherently masculine. Therefore, while women may be aware of gendered OPC and the political behaviours required to build and maintain power bases, they may be less willing to engage precisely because these behaviours are gendered, further perpetuating the gender power gap.

5.3.1.5 Political Maturation: Awareness and Engagement in Gendered Political Behaviours

One of the arguments in Study 1 is that the political maturation process, as described by Maneiro (1994), exists in organisations. As individuals become socialised into their organisations, they build mental models of the ideal worker, which informs the political practices they engage in. Examining this argument in more detail, Study 2 sought to examine how individuals become aware of gendered OPC and political behaviours.

Existing research, including Maneiro (1994), Blass (2007), Doldor (2017), Oerder, Blickle and Summers (2013) and Yates and Hartley (2021) examining how individuals develop political skill, assumes the political maturation processes is largely gender-free. However, this research found that the political maturation process, as it relates to political sensitivity, is gendered through the shared perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker, which is gendered and political. Men and women learn how to engage in ideal worker behaviours, which are masculine and political, through a socialisation process as they build relationships and observe the political behaviours and norms that other people engage in.

Study 1 and Study 2 findings revealed that the shared perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker shapes their political behaviour. Study 2 found that shared perceptions of the ideal worker are one contextual factor that influences the political maturation process. This finding importantly demonstrates how political maturation is gendered. Specifically, this study supports Acker's (1992) theory of the ideal worker, as the findings reveal that political sensitivity develops through the shared perceptions men and women hold of the ideal worker, which some men and women in this study describe as being both gendered and political. Some men and women shared how they became aware of and learnt to engage in gendered political behaviours by becoming aware of the behaviour and expectations associated with the ideal worker. In Study 2, participants shared how they learnt these behaviours through observation, socialisation, and the relationships they formed with senior leaders.

This finding supports Doldor's (2017) and Mainiero's (1994) research, which found that mentoring and other types of relational learning are important in developing political skills.

Hartley (2011) found that individuals learn political skills through emergent rather than planned activity, with observing others' behaviour is one of the ways individuals come to understand what political behaviour is acceptable. Ferris et al. (2002) explain that mentors help individuals develop political skills as they model effective political behaviours. Proteges observe, reflect, and discuss various social interactions with their mentors to understand power structures in organisations. Doldor's (2017) research finds that political maturation is facilitated by relational learning more broadly than just mentoring. Study 2 supports these findings as several men and women shared how they came to understand what gendered political behaviours are required to build and maintain their power bases through the relationships they form and by observing the political norms in the organisation. Hartley (2007) finds that managers mainly develop political skills by observing role models.

In gendered workplaces, the ideal worker is still a white male, and given that most leadership positions are dominated by white men, it is likely that these leaders are role models in organisations. This study found that aligning with the political gendered ideal worker, is a perceptual proxy for power. Individuals build and maintain power by learning how to engage in ideal worker behaviours (which are political and masculine) through an informal socialization process that includes observing the political behaviours individuals engage in and developing relationships with leaders who can provide informal mentoring, advice and support.

Examining how political maturation is gendered is important, given that women encounter different challenges engaging in gendered political behaviours. For example, engaging in gendered political behaviours for both men and women was associated with the ideal worker, but for several women, engaging in these behaviours resulted in backlash due to the political double bind. The ideal worker is one contextual factor that genders the political maturation process, however, following Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, there may be other practices, processes, actions, and meanings that gender organisational politics and in turn, how individuals come to develop their political skills.

While Mainiero (1994), Hartley et al. (2007) and Doldor (2017) have identified the importance of managerial experience in the political maturation process, this study

extended these findings by identifying that certain roles are more inherently political and therefore gendered than others. Therefore, the more experience an individual has, the more likely they are to advance into positions that require a high degree of political sensitivity. These findings are supported by existing research, as Drory (1993b) finds that an individual's status, that is, their level within an organisational hierarchy, is critical to building power. Specifically, this study finds that lower-status employees may lack the power bases and means of influence needed to engage in organisational politics effectively.

Conversely, high-status employees are better positioned to engage in organisational politics and benefit from it. While gendered political behaviours have typically been attributed to individual behaviour, a vital contribution of this study is finding that several men and women perceive management and senior leadership positions to require a high degree of political sensitivity. As men maintain the dominant position in leadership positions, it could be argued that have more power and opportunity to engage in political behaviour. They are also more likely to hold political positions that is positions with a greater level of political influence, making it easier for them to engage in the political behaviours required to build and maintain power.

This finding is important given that perceptions of women's power may be distorted through a gender-biased stereotype so a powerful position may lose its power when a woman assumes the position. Specifically, Ledet and Henley's (2000) research finds that power in organisations appears to be more aligned with male than with female stereotypes; therefore, stereotypical masculinity seems to be a perceptual proxy for power in the workplace. Given that perceived power predicts career success, future research needs to examine if positions are perceived as less political when women assume the role, limiting women's political influence.

Additionally, Study 2 revealed several other contextual factors that shape awareness of gendered political practices, including years of experience, positional level in the organisation and the nature of the role requirements. Specifically, Study 2 found that political sensitivity increases with years of experience in organisations. Participants shared how the longer they have worked in an organisation, the better they come to know

what gendered political practices to engage in. Individuals observe others engaging in political behaviours over time and understand what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain power. Some individuals also receive advice from line managers or other individuals within the organisation regarding how the informal political processes function and what behaviours they need to engage in to build and maintain their powerbases. Awareness of gendered OPC and political behaviours coincided with their career tenure for several men and women. Therefore, their years of experience in organisations increased awareness of gendered political practices. This finding supports Chao et al.'s (1994) research examining organisational socialisation, which argues that finding the right person to learn how organisations function is critical to the socialisation process. For a minority of men and women, roles from the manager level and above are perceived to be more political. Therefore, the more experience an individual has, the more likely they are to advance into positions that require a high degree of political sensitivity. Political maturation thus coincides with tenure.

These findings also support Drory's (1993b) research, which argues that an individual's status, that is, their level within an organisational hierarchy, is critical to building power. Lower-status employees may lack the powerbases and means of influence needed to effectively engage in organisational politics. Additionally, several men and women also perceive the hiring and promotion process to be meritocratic until the managerial level, at which level it is perceived to become more informal and relational. Individuals at the managerial level and above were perceived to advance through the relationships they formed with other individuals in positions of power. As men dominate most leadership positions in both organisations, this relational process makes it challenging for women to advance. These findings support and extend existing research by Lyness and Thompson (2000), which found that women in positions higher up the organisational hierarchy report more obstacles to their advancement than women at lower levels of the organisation.

Taken together the five contributions of this thesis each serve to address the overarching research question: "How are organisational politics and political behaviour gendered, and how does this contribute to the gender power gap?" Figure 5-7 illustrates the connection between each of the contributions. Specifically, this study found that gendered OPC is made up of the gendered perceptions individuals form of the four informal political

processes, which individuals navigate through engaging in political behaviours related to each of the four power bases. Both perceptions of OPC and political behaviours are gendered through the perceptions individuals form of the ideal worker, both gendered and political. The gendered nature of both OPC and political behaviours results in differential outcomes for men and women related to each of the four power-bases, reinforcing the gender power gap.

Aligning to individuals' shared perceptions of the political, gendered ideal worker reinforces the gendered perceptions of power and the gender power gap. These findings demonstrate how the gender power gap functions in organisations. But the gender power gap persists in organisations because of individual differences in political sensitivity. Therefore, some individuals deny or disengage from political processes, choosing to believe that organisations are meritocratic despite all the evidence outlined in both Study 1 and Study 2 to demonstrate that they are not. This section has considered the combination of findings from studies 1 and 2, which address the overall research question. The results significantly enhance our understanding of why and how organisational politics is gendered.

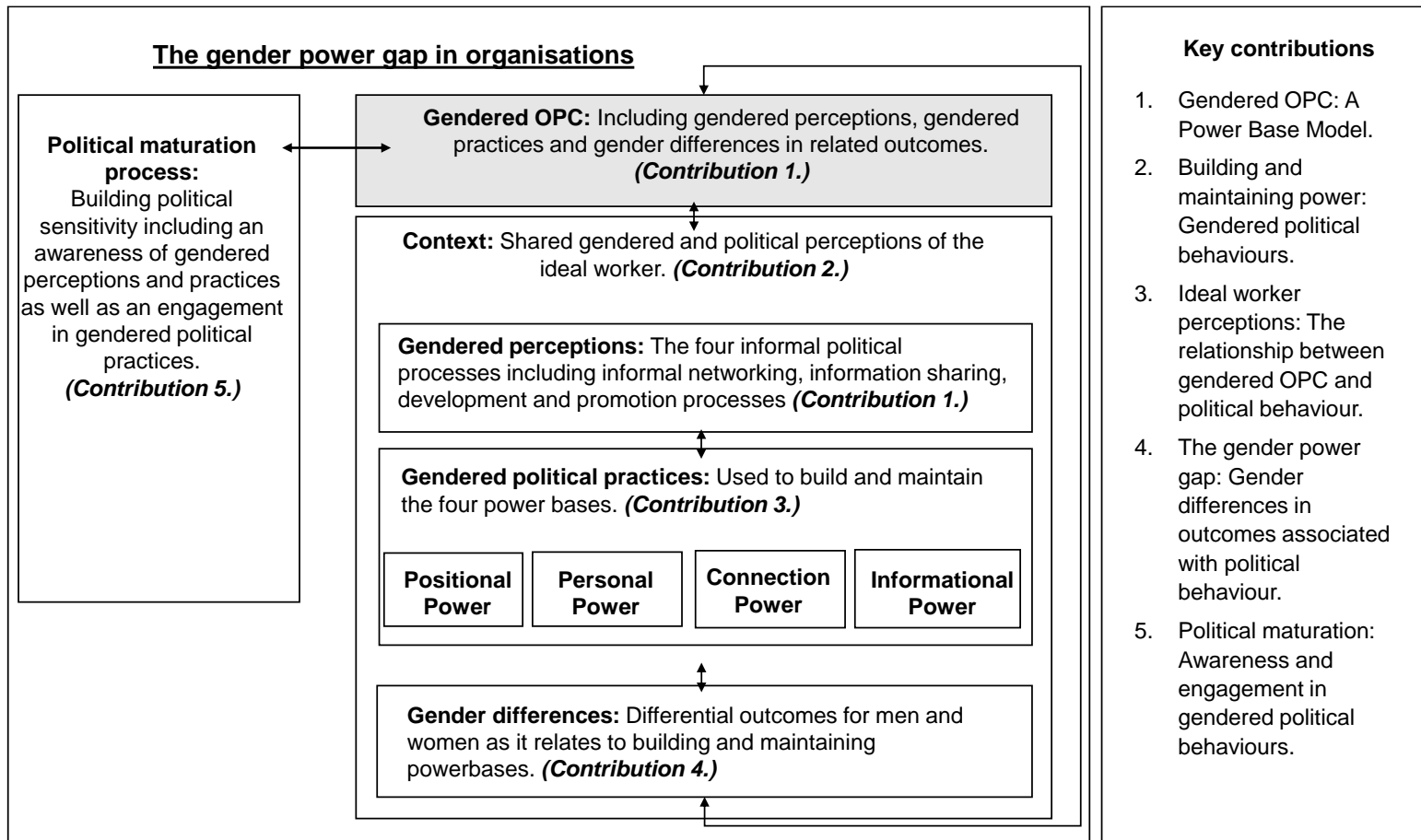


Figure 5-7 The Gender Power Gap in Organisations

5.3.2 Theoretical Contributions

In terms of theoretical contributions, one of the key conclusions of this thesis is that while organisational politics has received increased research attention over the last three decades, it remains a relatively under-theorised field. The literature on organisational politics is somewhat fragmented across several domains, including power, social networks, coalitions, decision-making, top-management teams and social influence tactics (Ferris and Treadway 2012). These disparate perspectives of organisational politics do not combine to form a comprehensive '*theory of organisational politics*' (Buchanan 2008). Each of these domains offers a different and often independent perspective of organisational politics, but taken together; they assume that organisational politics is a gender-free phenomenon (Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe 2013). Existing research broadly considers *what politics do* rather than *what politics is*; however, the gendered OPC framework utilised in Study 1 and Study 2 provides a comprehensive account of what politics do (Ferris and Treadway 2012). In detailing how organisational politics is gendered, this thesis provides the basis for future theoretical research to explore a gendered theory of organisations, further detailed in section 6.3 of this thesis, which details implications for future research.

Overall, this research makes several theoretical contributions linked to each of the key contributions of this thesis detailed in the previous section and summarised in Table 5-2 SLR Theoretical Contributions.

Table 5-2 SLR Theoretical Contributions

Thesis contribution	Referenced theories	Observation/finding	Theoretical contribution	Supporting literature
<p>(1.) Gendered OPC: A Power base Model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political theory of organisations March and Simon (1958) • Gendered theory of organisations Kanter (1977) and Acker (1999) • Inequality regimes (Acker, 2006) • Gendered substructures (Acker, 2012) 	<p>Gap in the literature:</p> <p>The SLR identified that existing theoretical models of organisational politics, including POP and OPC, assume that organisational politics is a gender-free phenomenon; however, research indicates that organisational politics is, in fact, gendered (Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe 2013).</p> <p>The SLR links the concept of informal interactions and gendered substructures to organisational politics.</p>	<p>Suggested amendment:</p> <p>Existing theoretical models based on the political theory of organisations need to account for gender in organisational politics. Specifically, they would benefit from accounting for the three ways that organisational politics is gendered in terms of gendered perceptions, gendered practices, and gender differences in outcomes outlined in Study 1. In addition, the gendered theory of organisations would benefit from accounting for how the gendered nature of organisational politics reinforces the gender gap in leadership.</p> <p>Future research on organisational politics can adopt Acker’s (2006) concept of inequality regimes to account for how gender, race and class intersect to create a power gap in organisations.</p>	<p>Landells and Albrecht (2013), Treadway, Adams and Goodman (2005), Drory (1993), Maslyn and Fedor (1998), Christiansen et al. (1997), Kanter (1977), Harlan and Weiss (1982), Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), Schein (1978) , Mann (1995), Vigoda (2000), Davey (2008), Brass and Burkhardt (1993)</p>

Thesis contribution	Referenced theories	Observation/finding	Theoretical contribution	Supporting literature
<p>(2.) Building and maintaining power: Gendered political behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983) • Sex-role stereotypes Schein (1978) 	<p>Gap in the literature:</p> <p>If political behaviours are thought to be <i>power in action</i>, the gendered nature of organisational politics may reduce women's motivation to engage in political behaviours, which in turn limits their ability to build and maintain power bases. Understanding the relationship between organisational politics and gender is key to unpacking differences in men's and women's access to power.</p>	<p>Suggested amendment:</p> <p>Study 2 provided support for the political double bind, whereby engaging in gender non-conforming political behaviour creates a double bind for women. On the one hand, this behaviour is required to build power bases, but as this behaviour is gendered, engaging in it conflicts with feminine stereotypes and limits women's likability and ability to build and maintain their power bases. It is suggested that social role theory and sex-role stereotypes account for how individuals come to learn gendered political behaviours and the challenges this creates for women who encounter a double bind engaging in them.</p>	<p>Treadway et al. (2013a), Ferris and Treadway (2012), Ferris et al. (2007), Treadway et al. (2013), Higgins, Judge and Ferris (2003), Ferris et al. (2005), Kimura (2013), Brass (1985), Drory and Beaty (1991), Gandz and Murray (1980), Kirchmeyer (1990), Mainiero (1994) and Mann (1995), Krackhardt (1990), DuBrin (1989) Perrewé and Nelson (2004), Buchanan (2008), Kimura's (2015). Mainiero (1994), Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), Hall-Taylor (2002), Kottis (1993), Watkins and Smith (2014) Davey (2008)</p>

Thesis contribution	Referenced theories	Observation/finding	Theoretical contribution	Supporting literature
(3.) Ideal worker perceptions: The relationship between gendered OPC and political behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideal worker theory Acker (1990b) Lack of fit theory Harris et al. (2007) 	<p>Gap in the literature:</p> <p>Existing conceptualisations of the ideal worker described it as masculine but not political.</p>	<p>Suggested amendment:</p> <p>Study 1 and Study 2 not only support Ackers' (1990b) original description of the masculine ideal worker, but they extend it as these studies find that the ideal worker is not only gendered but political. It is recommended that future conceptualisations of the ideal worker account for how it is both gendered and political.</p> <p>Additionally, findings from Study 1 and Study 2 relating to the ideal worker could extend the lack of fit theory outlined by Harris et al. (2007), as the findings reveal that women do not advance because gender stereotypes are not only misaligned with stereotypes regarding the successful manager, but these stereotypes are informed through the shared perceptions individuals have of the ideal worker.</p>	<p>Acker (1999), Perrewé and Nelson (2004), Chao et al. (1994), Blass et al. (2007), Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989), Ferris, Frink, Galang et al (1996) and Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk et al. (1996)</p>
(4.) The gender power gap: Gender differences in outcomes associated with political behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex-role congruency theory Schein (1978) Lack of fit theory Harris et al. (2007) 	<p>Gap in the literature:</p> <p>Sex-role congruency theory provides the foundation for understanding why women may be less motivated to engage in political behaviour, and the lack of fit theory provides the understanding of why this may result in differential outcomes for men and women. Neither of these theories accounts for the gendered nature of organisational politics and political behaviour in shaping the effectiveness of influence tactics at work.</p>	<p>Suggested amendment:</p> <p>Choosing not to engage in demonstrating political skills may be detrimental for women because political behaviours are so strongly associated with career advancement. However, engaging in political behaviour may have negative consequences for women because they may be perceived to be violating established gender stereotypes. Both these theories could better account for how gendered political practices result in differential engagement in organisational politics and outcomes for men and women.</p>	<p>Davey (2008), Kacmar et al. (2011), Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), Eagly (1983), Kacmar et al. 2011), Westbrook, Veale and Karnes (2013), Phipps and Prieto (2015), Shaughnessy et al. (2011), Rudman and Glick (2001), Harris et al. (2007).</p> <p>Mainiero (1994), Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), Hall-Taylor's (2002), Kottis (1993), Watkins and Smith (2014).</p>

Thesis contribution	Referenced theories	Observation/finding	Theoretical contribution	Supporting literature
<p>(5.) Political seasoning: Awareness and engagement in gendered political behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational socialisation theory Chao et al. (1994) • Social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983) • Political maturation Mainiero (1994) 	<p>Gap in the literature:</p> <p>While Mainier (1994) describes a political maturation process, there is no detail outlining how individuals come to know what the political behaviours are, and this conceptualisation considers political behaviour as gender-free. The social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983) holds that gender differences emerge because of social learning and societal power relations but does NOT include the ideal worker's role in shaping gender differences in organisations. Chao et al.'S (1994) theory of organisational socialisation does NOT account for the ideal worker.</p>	<p>Suggested amendment:</p> <p>Mainiero's (1994) conceptualisation of the political maturation process should be updated to include findings from Study 2 that detail how individuals become socialised into their organisations: they build mental models of the ideal worker, which informs the political practices they engage in.</p> <p>Social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983) holds that gender differences emerge because of social learning and societal power relations. This theory could be updated to account for how gendered perceptions of the ideal worker in organisations reinforce gendered perceptions of power in society.</p> <p>Chao et al. (1994), examining organisational socialisation, argue that finding the right person to learn how organisations function is critical to the socialisation process. This conceptualisation could include how individuals come to know gendered political practices through their understanding of the ideal worker, which is informed through observation and finding the right person to learn from.</p>	<p>Vredenburg and Maurer (1984) (Kacmar & Baron, R. A. 1999), Watkins and Smith (2014), Ferris et al. (2005), Bell and Nkomo (2003) (Blass et al. 2007). Ferris et al (1994) and Gilmore et. al. (1996), Kacmar & Baron, R. A. (1999), Tetrick and LaRocco (1987), Blass et al. (2007).</p>

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6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 Overall conclusions

Overall, this thesis explored how organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered and how this contributes to the persistent gender power gap in organisations. By adopting a gender perspective on organisational power and politics, this thesis contributes to the existing literature by detailing how organisational politics and political behaviours are gendered and contribute to the gender power gap.

This thesis extends Ackers' (2012) concept of gendered substructures by examining four informal gendered political processes that make up gendered OPC. Acker (2012) argues that gendered substructures are produced and reproduced in the interactions on the job, between colleagues and between those at different levels of power, which may include one on one or group-level interactions and formal and informal interactions. This thesis expanded this concept by identifying the four informal gendered political processes that makeup OPC and the associated gendered political behaviour individuals engage in to build and maintain power at work. In doing so, this thesis details, for the first time, how OPC are gendered through the political behaviours individuals engage in and why this contributes to the persistent gender gap in leadership positions.

Given the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviour, it is clear that men and women encounter different barriers to advancement in organisations. However, while existing research has identified that power and politics are gendered phenomena, the literature does not examine how these phenomena are gendered. The four informal political processes individuals engage in to build and maintain their power bases are gendered. Individuals engage in gendered political behaviours to build and maintain their connection, informational, personal and positional power bases to access networks, informal information, development opportunities and promotions. As political practices are gendered, women do not have the same opportunity to build and maintain power bases as men. Consequently, women do not have the same access to informal networks, information, development opportunities and promotions as men, contributing to the gender power gap in organisations.

One of the reasons the OPC framework was used to examine how organisational politics is gendered is because the framework accounts for both positive and negative perceptions of organisational politics. This study found that political behaviour is inherently masculine and results in differential outcomes for men and women who engage in it to build and maintain power. Largely, this is because men engage in homosocial practices to build their power bases. Therefore, this study found political behaviour benefits men in a way that it does not women. However, future research should examine if political behaviours are perceived to be more positive in less gendered environments and if this results in more beneficial outcomes for women. Additionally, research should investigate how men may use political behaviour to advocate and support women's advancement at work.

An overarching problem statement guided this thesis: "How are organisational politics and political behaviour gendered, and how does this contribute to the gender power gap?" An SLR was undertaken to review existing literature related to the problem statement.

The SLR found strong support that organisational politics and political behaviour are gendered. Specifically, the SLR outlined a gendered OPC framework, which provided the means to explore the gendered nature of organisational politics and examine how perceptions of gendered organisational politics shape individual behaviour and gender differences in building and maintaining power bases in organisations. The gendered OPC framework includes the shared perceptions of the gendered practices individuals engage in to build and use power bases to influence decision-making, resource allocation and the achievement of the individual, team, and organisational goals. This framework is based on the person–environment literature, which maintains that the organisation is a salient environmental stimulus and an important determinant of individual motivation and behaviour (Drory 1993). Separating these levels of analysis is critical for understanding how shared perceptions of the gendered nature of organisational politics relate to individual gendered political behaviours and how this results in differential outcomes for men and women.

Study 1 adopted a critical realist perspective to investigate the shared perceptions of organisational politics, how gendered political behaviours are used to build powerbases

in organisations, and the differential outcomes for men and women using the OPC framework outlined by Landells and Albrecht (2013). The central aim of this research was to examine how and why organisational politics is gendered. The study utilised semi-structured interviews, with a sample comprising 12 non-managerial, 12 managerial, and 12 senior leadership participants identified from two organisations, resulting in 72 participants. As outlined in a gendered OPC framework, this study identified three ways OPC is gendered, including gendered perceptions of informal processes, gendered political behaviours related to the building and maintaining of four power bases, and the associated gender differences in career outcomes. The gendered OPC framework outlined in Study 1 provides the means to explore the gendered nature of organisational politics. It connects these perceptions to individual behaviour and differential outcomes related to building and maintaining power in organisations.

Specifically, Study 1 found that the shared perceptions of the ideal worker are contextual and influence shared perceptions of gendered OPC and the gendered political norms in organisations. This study contributes to the current literature examining the gender gap in leadership by detailing how OPC are gendered and why the image of the ideal worker serves to keep OPC gendered, limiting women's advancement at work. Men and women engage in gendered political behaviours to build and maintain the power bases needed to navigate the four informal processes critical to advancement. However, as these behaviours and informal processes are gendered, women remain systemically and systematically excluded from full participation in organisations (Hall-Taylor 2002). Both informal political processes and political behaviours are gendered, creating barriers to women's advancement that remain entrenched in organisations because of shared perceptions of the ideal worker. Women's lack of fit with the ideal worker limits their ability to build connection, informational, personal, and positional power, and it also reduces perceptions of their competency and leadership effectiveness. Men can build and maintain power by engaging in the behaviours associated with the ideal worker; however, the gendered nature of these behaviours ensures that even if women engage in these same behaviours, it does not result in the same outcomes. Engaging in gendered political practices within gendered OPC results in differential outcomes for men and women when

it comes to building and maintaining power, which is a key factor in the persistent gender gap in leadership positions.

While Study 1 identified how organisational politics is gendered, this study assumes that participants had a certain level of awareness of the gendered nature of OPC, which may not be the case. Study 2 examined this assumption and argued that individual sensitivity to the gendered nature of OPC is a precursor to effectively navigating these environments. Specifically, Study 2 was designed to address how individuals build and maintain their sensitivity to gendered organisational politics and political behaviour. Adopting a critical realist perspective, Study 2 utilised semi-structured interviews. A sample comprising 12 non-managerial, 12 managerial, and 12 senior leadership participants was identified from two organisations resulting in 72 participants. Study two identified that political sensitivity includes both awareness of gendered OPC and political behaviours and engagement in gendered political behaviours. Specifically, this research identified four subcategories of political sensitivity that account for individual differences in awareness of gendered OPC and engagement in gendered political behaviours. This study supports Acker's (1992) theory of the ideal worker, as the findings reveal that political sensitivity develops through the shared perceptions men and women hold of the ideal worker, which some men and women in this study describe as being both gendered and political. This study found that some men and women become aware of and learn how to engage in gendered political behaviours through a political socialisation process, which includes becoming aware of expectations regarding the ideal worker. However, one of the key contributions of this study is the finding that women encounter a political double bind, whereby engaging in gendered political behaviours may reduce their likability and limit opportunities to acquire power in the same way as men can. Finally, this study found that awareness of gendered political practices increased with position and years of experience in organisations. These findings indicate the challenges women encounter engaging in the required political behaviours to build and maintain power, which may further answer the practical question of why there are so few women in powerful positions in organisations.

The following sections will outline the limitations and implications for future research.

6.2 Limitations

Several limitations emerged from the research study. First, as organisational politics is an emerging field of study, there is limited empirical literature on OPC, political behaviour and gender in organisations. Existing literature is also reasonably dated, with a small number of recent studies examining gender in organisational politics. The existing literature on organisational politics is also somewhat fragmented across several domains, including power, social networks, coalitions, decision-making, top-management teams and social influence tactics (Ferris and Treadway 2012). Each of these domains offers a different and often independent perspective of organisational politics, but taken together; they assume that organisational politics is not gendered (Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe 2013). Consequently, the SLR tried to bridge these gaps by examining organisational politics, political behaviour and gender in organisations, but regardless, gender in organisational politics is an emerging literature domain.

In terms of the empirical studies, the data collection included semi-structured interviews, which have limitations that need to be acknowledged. While the development of the coding template was derived from the gendered OPC framework outlined in the SLR, the additional codes that emerged from the data may have been influenced to some extent by the researcher's subjective interpretations, biases, and beliefs. These judgements were mitigated through the extensive examples provided in the appendices and by adopting a code-checking process; however, it is still likely that bias may have played a role in the thematic analysis.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually through WebEx, a video conferencing tool so that participants could see and interact with the researcher through video conferencing. It is likely that, while unintended, the researcher provided non-verbal cues or reinforcement when participants were responding to specific questions, which may have influenced the responses given. While the independent code checking of the data tried to mitigate these challenges, it is still likely that the researcher may have influenced the participant's response.

Additionally, the research was undertaken within male-dominated environments; however, future research should examine if gendered OPC and political sensitivity function in the same way in less gendered contexts.

Additionally, while in both empirical papers, the sample had balanced gender representation across the three levels of the organisations, the sample was limited in the representation of racial and ethnic minority groups. Both organisations sampled are overwhelmingly Caucasian, as racial minorities make up less than 20% of the employee population, and in managerial positions and above, this representation drops to less than 10%. This may be why the research findings didn't identify racial differences in gendered political practices. Future research needs to explore the role of race in shaping perceptions of OPC and political sensitivity, given that the racial category individuals identify with shapes their social interactions and opportunities to benefit from engaging in political behaviour (Charles and Nkomo, 2012). Like gender, race is a salient, visible, stigma-associated demographic variable that could racialize employees' experiences of OPC and therefore provide an account of the racial power gap in the organisation (Charles and Nkomo, 2012).

Overall, one of the limitations of the thesis is the lack of an intersectional examination of gendered OPC. This study also lacked an examination of the intersectional experiences of gendered OPC. Following Acker's (2006) concept of inequality regimes, future research needs to account for how gender, class and race intersect, resulting in different perceptions and experiences of OPC and political behaviour. As Caucasian men maintain the most dominant leadership positions in organisations, they will set the political norms. Members who can understand and adhere to those norms are likely to benefit. Blass, Brouer, Perrewé and Ferris (2007) argue that politics is a 'white man's game'. Whether consciously or not, they discuss the rules, boundaries and intricacies of organisational politics that are selectively shared with insiders, which are predominantly white men. Additionally, Alegria (2019) finds that white femininity propels white women on a management track but does not extend the same benefits to women of colour. This study provides a power base model for future research to examine how race and gender intersect to create challenges for racial and ethnic minorities when it comes to navigating OPC. Future research should expand the gendered OPC framework to include racializing

and class-creating processes that combine to create and maintain a gender, race and class power gap in organisations.

Finally, one of the limitations of the existing research is that it does not account for how women's sensitivity to gendered OPC limits their motivation to engage in gendered political practices. Davey's (2008) research found that women's descriptions of barriers to their advancement were political obstacles, and women had difficulty engaging in political behaviours as they were described as masculine. Women in this study claimed to be aware of power dynamics in organisations but were unwilling to engage in the behaviours needed to achieve it. This research is limited in not examining the link between gendered OPC and political will or political sensitivity and political will. Therefore, it may be limited in the conclusions related to why women may or may not engage in political behaviour.

6.3 Implications for future research

6.3.1 Theoretical Implications

Future research would benefit from exploring a gendered theory of organisations. Existing research essentially considers *what politics do* rather than *what politics is*; however, the gendered OPC framework utilised in Study 1 and Study 2 provides a comprehensive account of what politics is (Ferris and Treadway 2012). In detailing how organisational politics is gendered, this thesis provides the basis for future theoretical research to explore a gendered theory of organisational politics, integrating the various perspectives of organisational politics to account for the relationship between context and individual behaviour.

Existing theoretical approaches to organisational politics tend to lack an integrated perspective, which would account for Bradshaw-Camball and Murray's (1991) three theoretical perspectives of organisational politics: interpretivist, functionalist, and radical perspectives. Specifically, the interpretivist perspective focuses on the deeper structures of power. Elements of politics become highlighted through language, information and symbols. A functionalist perspective highlights the possible reasons for the use of political behaviours. This is achieved by identifying who the key players are and what their bases of power are. A radical perspective proposes that individuals create their social world

within broader social structures. Power is not the property of an individual or group but part of a larger social system. Future research would benefit from integrating these perspectives to provide an account of the gendered nature of organisational politics.

Regarding the structural perspectives of organisational politics, women lack access to structural power-bases in organisations, as Mann (1995) outlines several sources of power in organisations and how they are biased towards men, such as formal authority and control over scarce resources such as money. As men occupy most of the leadership positions in today's organisations, they have greater control over information. Also, men engage in homosocial practices by forming informal networks and coalitions that often exclude women. Men also have greater access to informal networks, whereby the old boys network provides men with access to contacts, career opportunities and information. Furthermore, Kanter (1987) proposes that organisational structures are designed to enhance and exploit gender differences. As organisations are predominantly designed by men and led by men, the dominant culture is masculine and, therefore, inherently serves to exclude women. These examples demonstrate how power structures and organisations themselves are gendered and serve to limit women's advancement through organisational politics and political behaviour.

Drawing on the functionalist perspective, it can be argued that power in organisations is used in the pursuit of individual or group interests. In this way, individual and group political behaviours form part of an informal system in organisations. Nicolson (2015) argues that to be successful, women and men respond to or negotiate the political rules set by leadership through the practice of political behaviours. As leadership positions are primarily occupied by men, it can be argued that norms regarding political behaviours are in fact, masculine. This is supported by Davey (2008), whose research finds that political behaviours required to access power in organisations can be thought of as stereotypically male. Therefore, political behaviours and organisational politics are gendered. Research to date supports the argument that men are more involved in the use of informal influence tactics than women (Drory and Beaty 1991). Men are more likely to accept and engage in organisational politics to their benefit (Drory and Beaty 1991). Davey (2008) maintains that organisational political processes are fundamental to gender in organisations because political behaviour is gendered, masculine and in conflict with female identity.

Accounting for a functionalist perspective of organisational politics is critical given that political behaviour is linked to the performance, achievement and maintenance of power in organisations. A functional perspective would account for the gendered nature of political behaviours and the resulting differential outcomes for men and women.

In addition, the radical perspective considers the social structures of power, which are particularly relevant when considering gender differences in access to power. Understanding who has power and who does not is critical to developing power. However, Ledet and Henley (2000) argue that perceptions of power are gendered. Their research finds that power appears to be more aligned with male than with female stereotypes in organisations. Stereotypical masculinity appears to be a perceptual proxy for power in the workplace. Therefore, perceptions of women's power may be distorted through a gender-based stereotype. This is so prevalent that powerful positions may lose their perceived power when a woman assumes it. Therefore, perceptions of masculinity can be thought of as a proxy for perceptions of power. Consideration of the gendered social structures of power is critical, given that perceived power predicts career success. Therefore, a radical perspective of organisational politics would consider gender within the social structures of power.

To advance the theoretical understanding of organisational politics, Bradshaw-Camball and Murray (1991) argue for integrating these three perspectives to fully account for the gendered nature of power, political behaviours, and organisational politics. An integrated perspective of gendered organisational politics would account for all three perspectives by considering both the macro-structures and the micro-processes that contribute to the gender power gap at work.

6.3.2 Empirical Implications

The gendered OPC framework outlined in Study 1 is useful for understanding how gendered political environments shape an individual's motivation to engage in gendered political behaviours. Future research is needed to enhance the current understanding of why and how gendered political behaviour occurs in organisations and whether this results in different outcomes for men and women (Kimura 2015). Given the career advancement outcomes associated with political behaviour, it is important to consider

how political will is gendered and functions as an antecedent to gendered political behaviour. The gendered OPC framework outlined in Study 1 provides the theoretical basis to examine what political climates enhance an individual's motivation to engage in political behaviours, which may also help to explain why some individuals develop political sensitivity and others do not.

Given the gendered nature of political behaviour, Study 2 supports and extends sex-role congruency theory by identifying the political double bind women face at work, whereby choosing not to demonstrate gendered political behaviour may be detrimental for women because political behaviours are so strongly associated with career advancement. However, engaging in gendered political behaviour may have negative consequences for women because they may be perceived to be violating established gender stereotypes. Future research needs to examine if political sensitivity is critical to engaging in political behaviours and how individuals can become aware of and effectively engage in gendered OPC. Understanding how women are socialised to engage in gendered political behaviour may help to explain how women develop political sensitivity and the relationship this has on their engagement in gendered OPC.

The data for Study 1 and Study 2 were collected before the global pandemic. Given the increase in virtual and hybrid working, future research should examine if gendered perceptions of organisational politics differ in these contexts.

Furthermore, studies 1 and 2 are limited in that they are limited to a gender perspective of organisational politics. Future research could account for gender and race to better understand how individuals develop political sensitivity and why there are so few racial and ethnic minority women in leadership positions. Whether consciously or not, the rules, boundaries and intricacies of organisational politics are selectively shared with insiders, predominantly white men (Blass, Brouer, Perrewé and Ferris 2007). Therefore, future research needs to examine race and gender to better account for the lack of racial and gender diversity in leadership positions.

Additionally, future research could examine if societal attitudes towards traditional sex roles change perceptions of the masculine political ideal worker norms in organisations.

6.3.3 Practical Implications

Overall this thesis offers several practical applications that organisations can use to address the gender power gap. Specifically, Study 1 reveals how informal promotion, development, information sharing, and networking processes are gendered. For example, organisations can examine the informal networks in workplaces and educate employees about the homosocial practices men engage in and how this excludes and limits women's advancement at work. By raising awareness of the four informal processes and how they are gendered, companies can work with employees to develop solutions for increasing gender equity.

Additionally, companies can educate leaders about the challenges women face in engaging in gendered political practices to build and maintain the four power-bases necessary for advancement. For example, in understanding how gendered practices limit women's ability to build and maintain positional power, organisations can ensure leaders are more aware and intentional about how they use their positional power to advocate for women's career advancement.

Organisations can also use Study 1 to educate leaders about how gendered OPC results in differential outcomes for men and women and diagnose which informal processes might limit women's advancement. For example, suppose fewer women are being promoted than men. In that case, companies can review their informal promotion practices to identify if women receive the same access as men when it comes to career advocates and informal mentors, which are critical for accessing opportunities and ensuring individuals are 'set up for success'.

Study 2 revealed how the gendered nature of political behaviours creates different challenges for men and women. For example, the data showed that for some women, engaging in gendered political behaviours is difficult because of the political double bind. While some women may be aware of the need to engage in these behaviours to build and maintain their power-bases, they choose not to. The political double bind ensures that political behaviours are ambiguous and contradictory for women, making engaging in them mentally and emotionally exhausting. Organisations can therefore develop both

men's and women's political sensitivity to build awareness of the gendered nature of organisational politics and the challenges this creates for women.

Additionally, companies can educate leaders about the challenges women face engaging in gendered political practices to build and maintain the four powerbases necessary for advancement, for example, educating men about the negative impact of exclusionary homosocial political practices on women. Making men aware of the gendered nature of OPC and political behaviours could increase men's political sensitivity. Additionally, it could help men identify behaviours limiting women's access to power at work. Also, given that some participants shared how political sensitivity develops over time, it may be beneficial for organisations to support employees with understanding the informal political processes and informal political norms during the onboarding process.

The findings from this study are likely to be of interest to the public sector environment; the researcher will share critical insights by speaking at business conferences and publishing articles in business publications.

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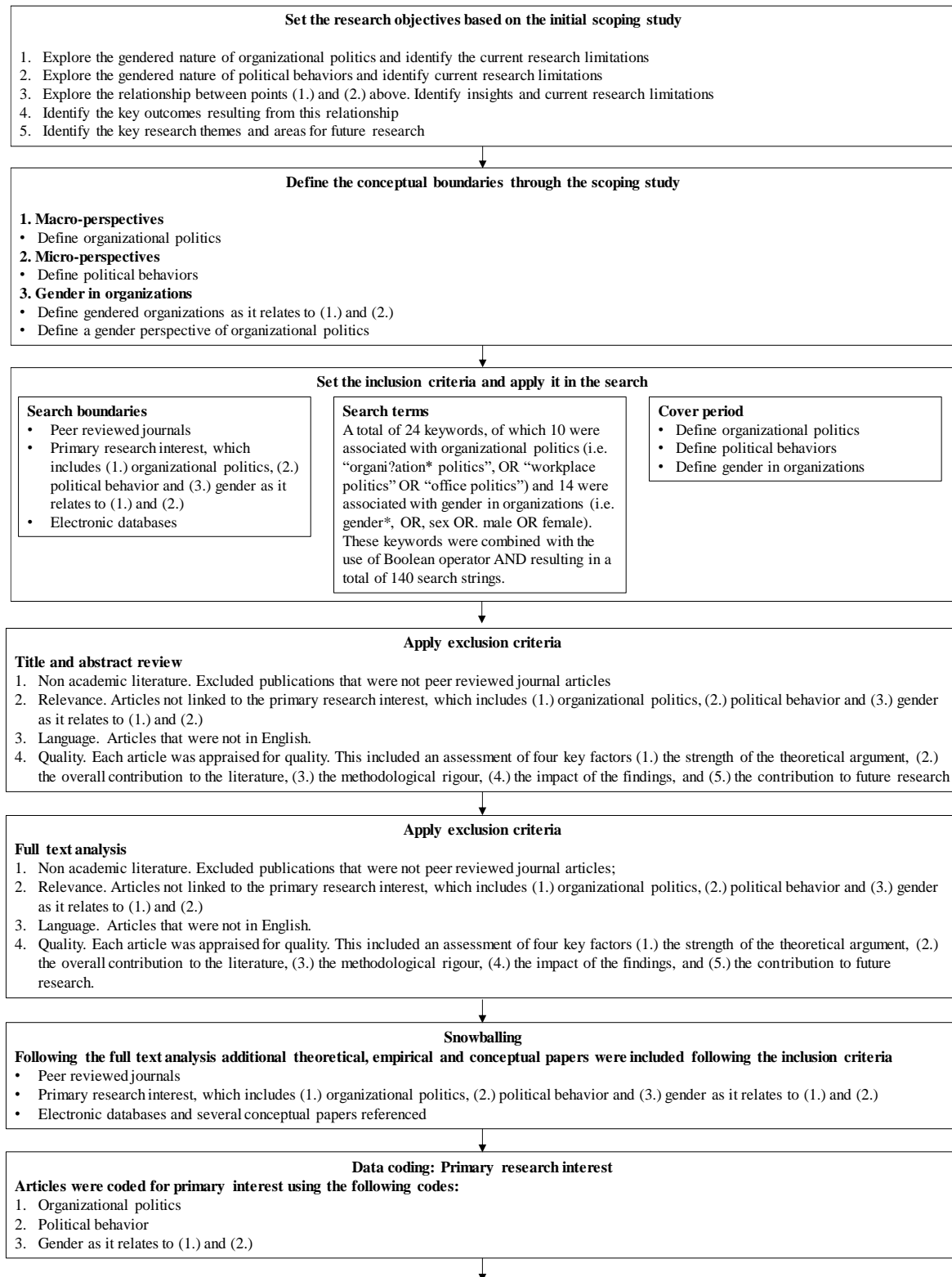
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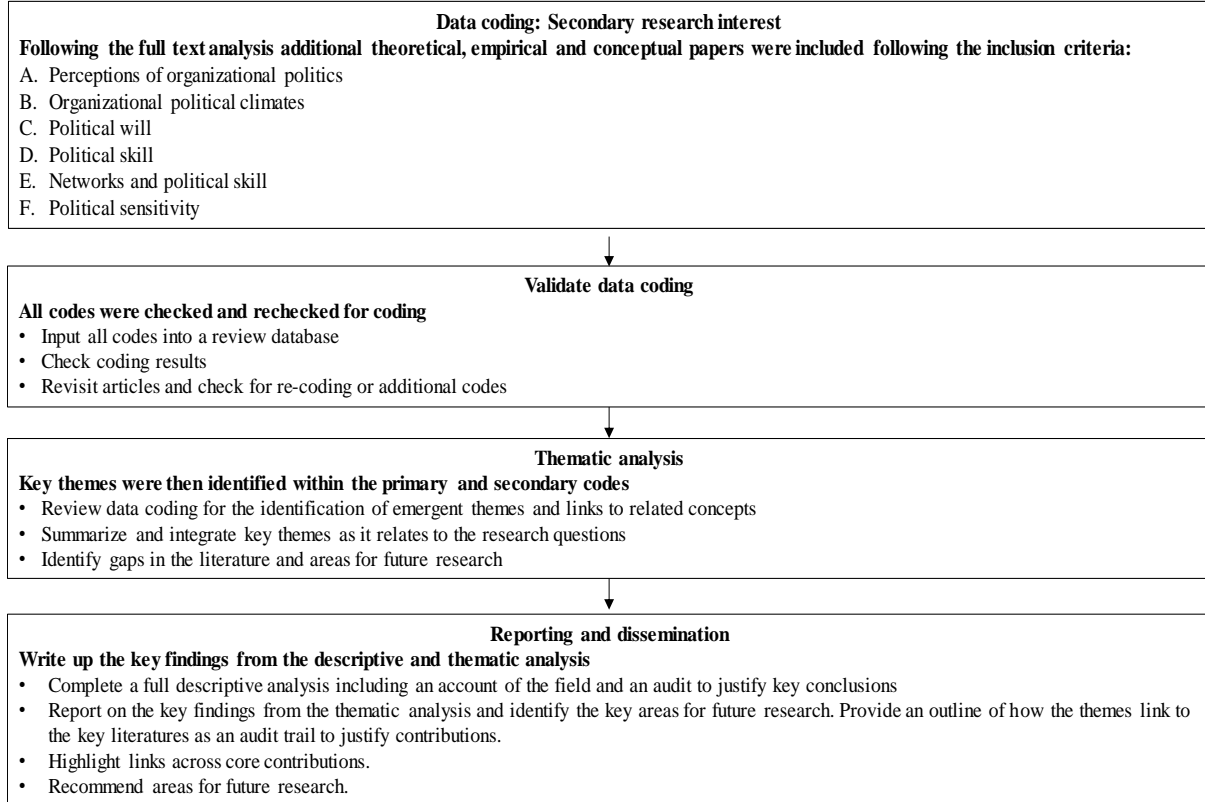
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7 . APPENDICES

Appendix A Summary of the SLR Process



A.1 Appendix A Summary of the SLR Process Continued



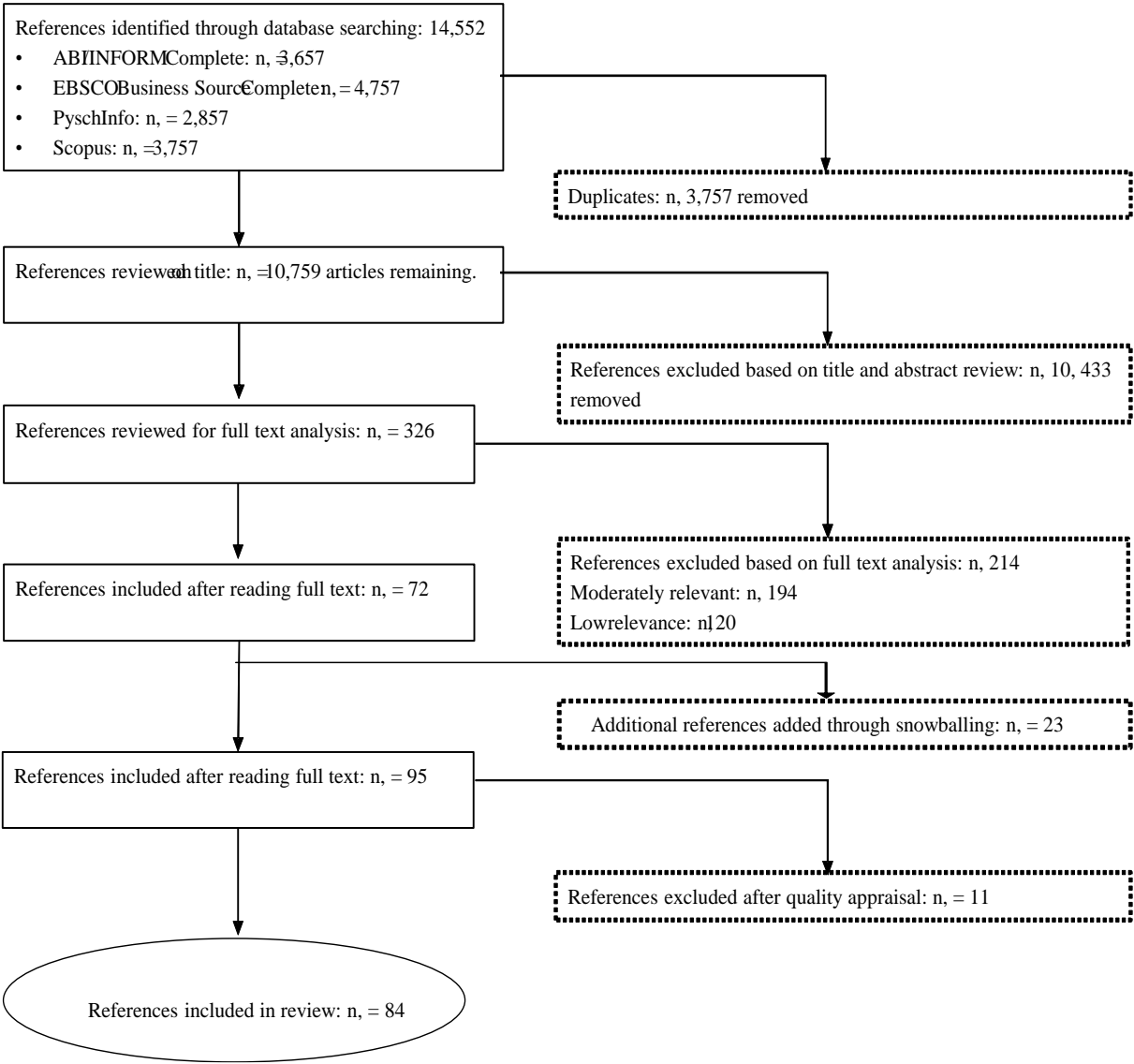
Appendix B Quality Assessment Criteria

Quality category	Detail	Empirical, theoretical, or conceptual papers
Research aims	Clearly defined research problems, questions, and objectives.	Applies to both
Theoretical contribution	Detailed theories and models linked to the literature. Critical theories included.	Applies to both
Quality of the argument	Assumptions of the theory or model being outlined are clearly articulated. This includes how the theory or model contributes to existing research as well as what the limitations are and opportunities for future research.	Applies to both
Comprehensive literature review	The review clearly outlines relevant theories, and links key arguments as supporting evidence, as well as addressing counter arguments or opposing theoretical perspectives.	Applies to both
Methodological rigour	Research design is clearly stated, and appropriate for the research problems at hand. Sampling approach and size appropriate for the research question.	Applies to empirical studies
Data analysis and findings	Data analysis is clearly outlined and suitable for addressing the research question. Findings are clearly presented and describe the analysis in meaningful way.	Applies to empirical studies
Contribution to the literature	Outcomes are clearly presented with sufficient supporting evidence. Key outcomes build on previous academic research and outlines recommendations for future research.	Applies to both

Appendix C Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Category	Rational
Inclusion criteria	
Peer-reviewed journal articles that meet the quality criteria	Academic, peer-reviewed journal articles are likely to have more academic rigour than practitioner papers and books. As outlined by Podsakoff et al. (2005) academic journals have the highest impact in the field because they contain validated knowledge. As such, this research included journals that met the quality criteria.
Publication date	Given that organisational politics is an emerging field this research did not include a limit on research publication dates.
Theoretical, conceptual or empirical papers	Given the field of organisational politics is emerging this review included both empirical and theoretical, conceptual papers.
International research	All geographic locations were included in the search, as organisational politics is a research interest that covers a range of international academic institutions.
Substantive focus	This review included all theoretical, empirical and conceptual journal articles with a focus on organisational politics, political behaviour and gender in organisations.
Exclusion criteria	
Peer-reviewed journal articles that meet the quality criteria	Each article was appraised for quality. This included an assessment of five key factors: (1) the strength of the theoretical argument, (2) the overall contribution to the literature, (3) the methodological rigour, (4) the impact of the findings, (5) the contribution to future research.
Non-academic publications	Book reviews, newspaper or magazine articles and practitioner papers or books were not included in the review as they lack the required academic rigour.
Relevance	Articles that lack a focus specifically related to organisational politics and gender in organisations were excluded. For example, papers that have a focus on other social effectiveness constructs, such as emotional intelligence, were outside of the scope of inquiry. Additionally, papers with a focus on government politics were excluded.
Language	Articles that are not in English were not included.

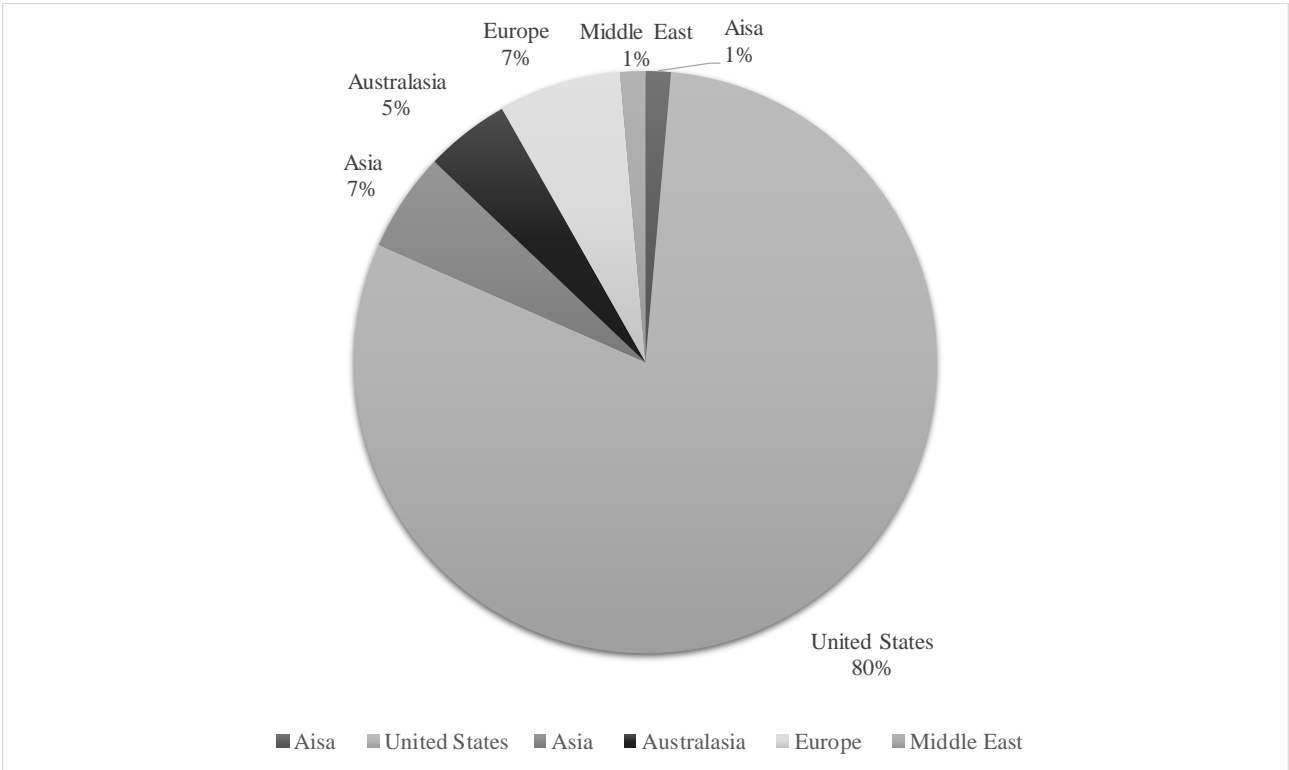
Appendix D Summary Diagram of the Data Collection Process



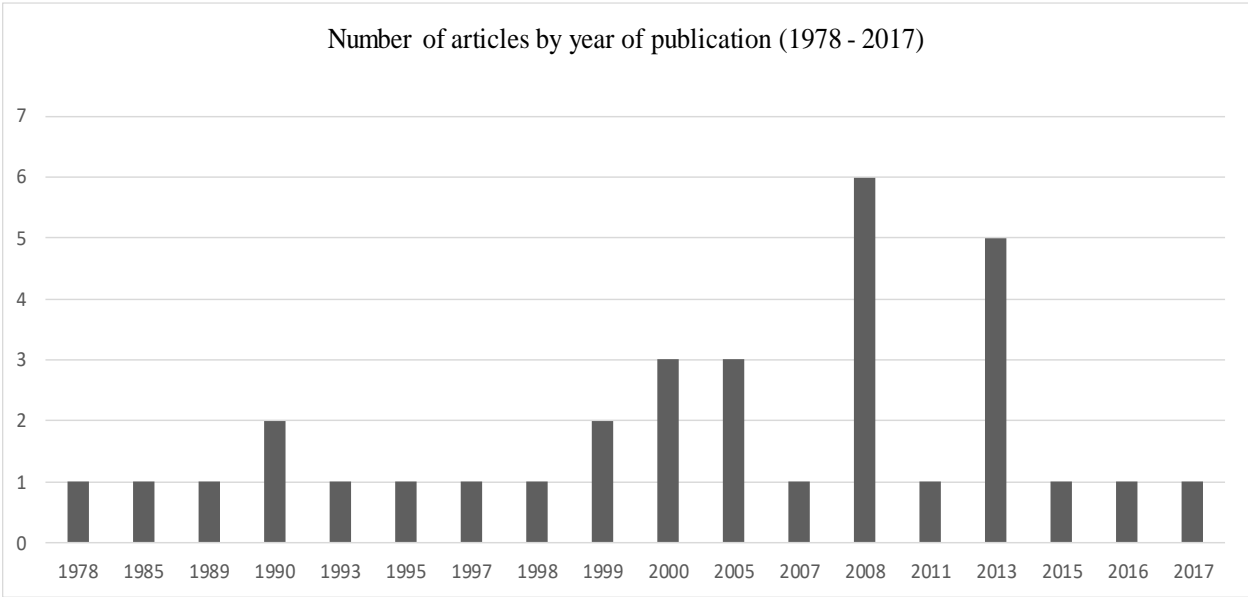
Appendix E Distribution of Articles by Source Title

Publication Title	Count	Percentage
<i>Journal of Management</i>	7	8.33%
<i>Human Relations</i>	5	5.95%
<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	5	5.95%
<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	4	4.76%
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	4	4.76%
<i>British Journal of Management</i>	3	3.57%
<i>Journal of Business and Psychology</i>	3	3.57%
<i>Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies</i>	3	3.57%
<i>Politics in organizations Theory and research considerations</i>	3	3.57%
<i>The Academy of Management Review</i>	3	3.57%
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Gender, Work and Organization</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Journal of Managerial Psychology</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Organizational Dynamics</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Social Forces</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Women in Management Review</i>	2	2.38%
<i>Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal</i>	1	1.19%
<i>American Psychologist</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Gender and Society</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Leadership Studies</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Management</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Administrative science quarterly</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Basic & Applied Social Psychology</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Canadian Psychology</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Futures</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Gender and Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Group and Organization Management.</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Handbook of the Sociology of Gender</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Human Resource Management Journal</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Human Resource Management Review</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Impression Management In The Organization</i>	1	1.19%
<i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i>	1	1.19%
<i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Social Issues</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Leadership & Organization Development Journal</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Organisations Studies</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Personnel Psychology</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Psychological Bulletin</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Research in Multi-Level Issues</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Research in personnel and human resources management</i>	1	1.19%
<i>Research in the Sociology of Organizations</i>	1	1.19%
<i>The Journal of Social Psychology</i>	1	1.19%
	84	

Appendix F Breakdown of Articles by Geographical Focus



Appendix G Number of Articles by Year of Publication (1978–2017)



Appendix H Summary of the Key Themes

Theme	Theme detail	Supporting literature	Theory
Theme 1. Gender differences in political will and differential access to positional power	1.1 Gender differences in political will	Bentley et al. (2015), Buchanan (2008), Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), Ferris et al. (2002), Ferris et al. (2007), Kapoutsis et al. (2017b), Liu, Liu and Wu (2010), Ferris and Treadway (2012), Treadway et al. (2005), Treadway et al. (2015).	Conservation of resources theory, Ferris et al. (2007)
	1.2 Gendered OPC and political will	Davey (2008), Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), Fritz and van Knippenberg's (2017).	
Theme 2. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes in personal power for men and women	2.1 Gender differences in political skill	Brass (1985), Buchanan (2008), Drory and Beaty (1991), DuBrin (1989), Ferris et al. (2005), Ferris et al. (2007), Ferris and Treadway (2012), Gandz and Murray (1980), Higgins, Judge and Ferris (2003), Kimura (2013), Kimura (2015), Kirchmeyer (1990), Krackhardt (1990), Mainiero (1994), Mann (1995), Perrewé and Nelson (2004), Treadway et al. (2013a), Treadway et al. (2013).	Human Agency Theory, Ferris (2007) Social role theory outlined by Eagly (1983) Sex-role stereotypes Schein (1978) Lack of fit theory Harris et al. (2007)
	2.2 Gendered political behaviours	Davey (2008), Doldor, Anderson and Vinnicombe (2013), Eagly (1983), Harris et al. (2007), Kacmar et al. (2011), Phipps and Prieto (2015), Rudman and Glick (2001), Shaughnessy et al. (2011), Westbrook, Veale and Karnes (2013).	
	2.2 Differential outcomes of political skill for men and women	Hall-Taylor (2002), Kottis (1993), Mainiero (1994), Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), Watkins and Smith (2014).	
Theme 3. Gendered barriers to network access and differential outcomes in connection power	3.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success	Bolander et al. (2015), Breland et al. (2007), Cullen, Gerbasi and Chrobot-Mason (2015), Fang et al. (2015), Ferris and Treadway (2012), Forret and Dougherty (2004), Seibert, Crant and Kraimer (1999), Todd et al. (2009), Treadway et al. (2005), Wei, Chiang and Wu (2012).	Social network theory Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont (2012). Social capital theory Seibert, Kraimer and Liden (2001) Power elite theory, Mills (1956)

H.1 Appendix H Summary of the Key Themes Continued

Theme	Theme detail	Supporting literature	Theory	Future research questions
Theme 3. Gendered barriers to network access and differential outcomes in connection power	3.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers	Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont (2012), Benschop (2009), Brass (1985), Brass and Burkhardt (1993), Brass and Krackhardt (2012), Blass et al. (2007), Brass, Butterfield and Skaggs (1998), Cornwell and Dokshin (2014), Ferris et al. (1996), Forret and Dougherty (2004), Hetty van Emmerik et al. (2006), Kimura (2013), Kimura (2015), Lyness and Thompson's (2000), Treadway et al. (2012).	Social network theory and Social class theory Baron, Lux, Adams and Lamont (2012). Gendered theory of organisations Kanter (1977) and Acker (1999) Social closure theory Tomaskovic-Devey (1993)	How does OPC influence individual networking behaviour and access to networks? Do men and women have differential access to powerful networks in organisations? Does networking, as part of the political skill construct, differ for men and women because of the gendered nature of informal and formal networks? How do gendered political environments impact men and women's networking behaviours and associated networking access? What are the consequences of this impact?
	3.3 Networking as a gendered practice	de Klerk and Verreynne (2017), McGuire (2002), Schein (1978), Tomaskovic-Devey (1993), Watkins and Smith (2014).		
Theme 4. Informational power and gender differences in political sensitivity	4.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours	Acker (1999), Blass et al. (2007), Chao et al. (1994), de Klerk and Verreynne (2017), Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989), Ferris, Frink, Galang et al. (1996), Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk et al. (1996), Perrewé and Nelson (2004).	Organisational socialisation theory Chao et al. (1994).	How does understanding gender expectations of political behaviour impact individual political will and political skill? Given the gendered nature of organisational politics, is political sensitivity required for women to effectively engage in political behaviours? Are women in senior leadership roles able to identify the political norms and overcome difficulties associated with gendered political behaviours? How does political sensitivity influence perceptions of OPC?
	4.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC	Bell and Nkomo (2003), Blass et al., Ferris et al. (2005), Ferris et al. (2007), Ferris et al (1994), Gilmore et. Al. (1996), Kacmar and Baron (1999), Tetrick and LaRocco (1987), Watkins and Smith (2014), Vredenburg and Maurer (1984).		

Appendix I Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Organisational Politics

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Baron, R.A., Lux, S., Adams, G.L. & Lamont B.	2012	Organizational politics in strategic management and entrepreneurship.	Politics in organizations Theory and research	Entrepreneurship relates to the complex processes through which, new and profitable organizations are	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power.	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers
Brass, D. J., Butterfield, K. D. & Skaggs, B. C.	1998	Relationships and Unethical Behavior: A Social Network Perspective	The Academy of Management Review	Recent models of unethical behavior have begun to examine the combination of	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power.	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers
Drory, A. & Romm, T.	1990	The Definition of Organizational Politics: A Review	Human Relations	A survey of the literature on organizational politics (OP) reveals a lack of consensus	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; B.OPC	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Ferris, G.R. et al.	2000	Perceptions of organizational politics: Theory and research directions	Research in Multi-Level Issues	Organizational politics has intrigued academicians and practitioners for decades.	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Ferris, G.R., Russ, G.S. & Fandt, P.M.	1989	Politics in organizations.	Impression management in the organization	attempt to address the theoretical limitations in . . . [the identification of factors that contribute to perceptions of	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours
Kacmar R. A., & Baron, R. A., K.M.	1999	Organizational politics: The state of the field, links to related processes, and an agenda for future research	Research in personnel and human resources	Virtually all human resources decisions (e.g., promotions, hiring) have the	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Landells, E.& Albrecht, S.L.	2013	Organizational political climate: Shared perceptions about the building and use of power bases	Human Resource Management Review	Organizational politics continues to be acknowledged as a real and	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; B.OPC	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP;	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics
Seibert, S.E., Kraimer, M.L. & Liden, R.C.,	2001	A social capital theory of career success.	Academy of management journal, .	A model integrating competing theories of social capital with research on	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Vredenburg, D. D. J., & Maurer, J. G. J.	1984	A Process Framework of Organizational Politics.	Human Relations	This paper attempts to advance the study of organizational politics by	1. Organizational politics	F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.2 Political sensitivity and uC32:N41 nderstanding OPC

I.1 Appendix I Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Organisational Politics Continued

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Breland, J. W. et al.	2007	The Interactive Effect of Leader-Member Exchange and Political Skill on Subjective Career Success	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies	Whereas previous research has examined the relationship between leader-member (textbackslash)nex	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Bolander, W. et al.	2015	Social Networks Within Sales Organizations: Their Development and Importance for Salesperson Performance	Journal of Marketing	Although the study of salesperson performance traditionally has focused on salespeople's activities and	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Buchanan, D.A.	2008	You stab my back, I'll stab yours: Management experience and perceptions of organization political behaviour.	British Journal of Management	This paper reports the findings of a survey of 250 British managers, exploring their experience and perceptions of organization	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; B. OPC; C. Political will; D. Political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 2.1 Gender differences in political will; 3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Chao, G. T., O'Leary-Kelly, A. M., Wolf, S., Klein, H. J., &	1994	Organizational Socialization: Its Content and Consequences.	Journal of Applied Psychology	Content dimensions of the socialization domain were defined in order to	1. Organizational politics	F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours
Ferris, G. R., Harrell-Cook, G., & Dulebohn, J.	2000	Organizational politics: The nature of the relationship between politics perceptions and political behavior	Research in the Sociology of Organizations	Organizational science has witnessed a great deal of theoretical and empirical	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; B. Political will	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will;	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 2.1 Gender differences in political will
Bedi, A., & Schat, A. C. H.	2013	Perceptions of organizational politics: A meta-analysis of its attitudinal, health, and behavioural consequences.	Canadian Psychology	In this study, we report the results of a meta-analysis of the relations between	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Benschop, Y.	2009	The micro-politics of gendering in networking	Gender, Work and Organization	Networking processes contribute to the perpetuation of gender	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers
Blass, F. R., Brouer, R. L., Perrew, P. L., & Ferris, G. R.	2007	Politics Understanding and Networking Ability as a Function of Mentoring: The Roles of Gender and Race	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies	Some have suggested that mentoring in organizations tends to focus on "learning the ropes," or understanding	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks and political skill F. Political sensitivity	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers; 5.1 Awareness of gender expectation and political behaviours 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Brass, D.J. and Krackhardt D	2012	Power, politics, and social networks in organizations	Politics in organizations: Theory and	While personal attributes and strategies may have an important effect on power	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers
Buchanan, D.A.	1999	The Logic of Political Action: an Experiment with the Epistemology of the Particular	British Journal of Management	The first objective of this paper is to develop understanding of organizational political behaviour in the context of	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Christiansen, N., Villanova, P., & Mikulay, S.	1997	Political influence compatibility: Fitting the person to the climate.	Journal of Organizational Behavior	This study investigated a person climate model in order to explain the effect of organizational politics on work attitudes. A unione	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; B.OPC	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics
Cullen, K.L. et al.	2015	Thriving in Central Network Positions	Journal of Management,	Theory suggests that thriving, the feeling of vitality and experience of	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Drory, Amos	1993	Perceived political climate and job attitudes	Organisations Studies	The relationships between perceived organizational politics (OP) and job	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics

I.2 Appendix I Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Organisational Politics Continued

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Fang, R. et al.	2015	Bringing political skill into social networks: Findings from a field study of entrepreneurs	Journal of Management Studies	The authors integrate the entrepreneurship literature's sociological and behavioural	1. Organizational politics	E. Networks	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power.	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Ferris, G.R. and Treadway, D.C.	2012	Politics in organizations: History, construct specification, and research directions	Politics in Organizations: Theory and Research	Power, politics, and influence in organizations have remained inextricably intertwined constructs for	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; C. Political will E. Networks and political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will; Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 2.1 Gender differences in political will; 4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success; 4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers;
Ferris, G.R., Frink, D.D., Galang, M.C., Zhou, J., Kacmar, K.M. and Howard, J.L.	1996	Perceptions of organizational politics: Prediction, stress-related implications, and outcomes.	Human relations	The perceptions of organizational politics model proposed by Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989) was	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours ; 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Ferris, G.R., Frink, D.D., Gilmore, D.C. and Kacmar, K.M.,	1994	Understanding as an antidote for the dysfunctional consequences of organizational politics as a stressor.	Journal of Applied Social Psychology	The proposition that organizational politics perceptions are potential	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours ; 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Gilmore, D.C., Ferris, G.R., Dulebohn, J.H. and Harrell-Cook, G.,	1996	Organizational politics and employee attendance.	Group and Organization Management.	Organizational politics has been conceptualized as a source of stress and conflict in the work environment, with the potential for	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours
Kimura, T.	2013	The Moderating Effects of Political Skill and Leader-Member Exchange on the Relationship Between Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment	Journal of Business Ethics	Previous empirical studies have shown that perceptions of organizational politics are negatively related to individuals' affective	1. Organizational politics	A. POP; D. Political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.; Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 3.1 Gender differences in political skill; 4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers.
Kolodinsky, R.W. et al.	2007	Political skill and influence effectiveness: Testing portions of an expanded Ferris and Judge (1991) model	Human Relations	The present study tested portions of an expanded Ferris and Judge (1991) framework	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Krackhardt, D.,	1990	Assessing the political landscape: Structure, cognition, and power in organizations.	Administrative science quarterly	This paper argues that an accurate cognition of informal networks can itself be a base of power, above and beyond power	1. Organizational politics	D. Political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Maslyn, J.M. & Fedor, D.B.	1998	Perceptions of politics: Does measuring different foci matter?	Journal of Applied Psychology	Recent research on perceptions of politics in organizations and other	1. Organizational politics	A. POP B. OPC	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics
Miller, B. K., Rutherford, M. A., & Kolodinsky, R. W.	2008	Perceptions of organizational politics: A meta-analysis of outcomes.	Journal of Business and Psychology	Organizational researchers during the past few decades have increasingly focused on	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Tetrick, L. E., & LaRocco, J. M.	1987	Understanding, Prediction, and Control as Moderators of the Relationships Between Perceived Stress, Satisfaction, and Psychological	Journal of Applied Psychology	This study provides a preliminary test of a model proposed by Sutton and Kahn	1. Organizational politics	F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Treadway, D. C., Adams, G. L., & Goodman, J. M.	2005	The formation of political sub-climates: Predictions from social identity, structuration, and symbolic interaction.	Journal of Business and Psychology,	Merging the climate and politics literatures, this study evaluates whether	1. Organizational politics	B. OPC	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics
Valle, M. and Perrewe, P.L.	2000	Do politics perceptions relate to political behaviors? Tests of an implicit assumption and expanded model	Human Relations	This study examined perceived political behaviors as a critical, yet largely	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Vigoda, E.	2000	Organizational Politics, Job Attitudes, and Work Outcomes: Exploration and Implications for the Public Sector.	Journal of Vocational Behavior	The study aimed to promote understanding of employees' reactions to organizational	1. Organizational politics	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics

Appendix J Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Political Behaviours

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Bentley, J. R., Breland, J. W., Xu, N., Campion, E. D., & Treadway, D. C.	2015	The political skill and will of expatriates in acculturating to the politics of an organization in a new culture.	International Journal of Intercultural Relations	This paper explores and conceptualizes the process through which expatriates acculturate to the politics of an organization in a new and	2. Political behaviours	D. Political Will	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will	2.1 Gender differences in political will
Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., Perrewé, P. L., Brouer, R. L., Douglas, C., & Lux, S.	2007	Political Skill in Organizations.	Journal of Management	Political skill is a construct that was introduced more than two decades ago as a necessary competency to possess to be effective in organizations. Unfortunately,	2. Political behaviours	C. Political will; D. Political skill	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	2.1 Gender differences in political will; 3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Ferris, G.R., Perrewé, P.L. and Douglas, C.	2002	Social Effectiveness in Organizations: Construct Validity and Research Directions	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies.	Social dynamics of interpersonal and group processes has been an active area of investigation in the	2. Political behaviours	C. Political will; D. Political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will;	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 2.1 Gender differences in political will;
Kimura, T.	2015	A Review of Political Skill: Current Research Trend and Directions for Future Research.	International Journal of Management Reviews	This paper reviews theoretical and empirical research on the use of political skill in	2. Political behaviours	D. Political skill; E. Networks and political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.; Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours ; 4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers.
Treadway, D.C. et al.	2015	Measuring Political Will in Organizations	Journal of Management	Political will is widely recognized as an important, yet profoundly underinvestigated, construct	2. Political Behaviours	C. Political will	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will	2.1 Gender differences in political will

J.1 Appendix J Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Political Behaviours Continued

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Ferris, G. R. et al.	2005	Development and Validation of the Political Skill Inventory	Journal of Management	The present research was developed to examine the conceptualization and	2. Political behaviours	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational	3.1 Gender differences in political skill; 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Harris, K. J. et al.	2007	The impact of political skill on impression management effectiveness.	Journal of Applied Psychology	In this study, the authors investigated the effect of an individual's political skill on the relationships between 5	2. Political behaviours	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Hetty van Emmerik, I. et al.	2006	Networking your way through the organization	Women in Management Review	Purpose – The purpose of this study is to focus specifically on formal and	2. Political behaviours	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers
Higgins, C.A. et al.	2003	Influence tactics and work outcomes: A meta-analysis	Journal of Organizational Behavior	Recent research on influence tactics has focused on the benefits that accrue as	2. Political behaviours	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Kapoutsis, I., Papalexandris, A., Treadway, D. C., &	2017	Measuring Political Will in Organizations: Theoretical Construct Development and Empirical Validation	Journal of Management	Political will is widely recognized as an important, yet profoundly	2. Political behaviours	C. Political will	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will	2.1 Gender differences in political will
Liu, Liu, & Wu.	2016	Are You Willing and Able ? Roles of Motivation , Power , and Politics in Career Growth.	Journal of Management	A comprehensive model of political behavior and its influence on career growth	2. Political behaviours	C. Political will ; D. Political skill	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will	2.1 Gender differences in political will ;
Todd, S. Y. et al.	2009	Career success implications of political skill	The Journal of Social Psychology	The authors investigated the individual characteristic of political skill and its relation	2. Political behaviours	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Treadway, D.C. et al.	2005	Political will, political skill, and political behavior	Journal of Organizational Behaviour	The current study used Mintzberg's (1983) conceptualization of	2. Political behaviours	C. Political will ; E. Networks and political skill	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will	2.1 Gender differences in political will; 4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Treadway, D.C.; Breland, J.W.; Williams, L.M.; Cho,	2013	Social Influence and Interpersonal Power in Organizations: Roles of Performance and Political Skill in Two Studies	Journal of Management	This two-study investigation framed performance as one potential form of influence	2. Political Behaviours	C. Political will D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Wei, L. Q., Chiang, F. F. T. and Wu, L. Z.	2012	Developing and Utilizing Network Resources: Roles of Political Skill	Journal of Management Studies	This study examines the role of political skill in the development and utilization of network resources at the individual level. Drawing on	2. Political behaviours	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success
Westbrook, T. S., Veale, J. R. and Karnes, R. E.	2013	Multirater and Gender Differences in the Measurement of Political Skill in Organizations	Journal of Leadership Studies	Organizational political skill is an essential component of a leader's success. The purpose of the current study was to ascertain whether differences existed in how individuals rated themselves	2. Political behaviours	C. Political will D. Political skill F. Political sensitivity E. Networks and political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours

Appendix K Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Gender in Organisational Politics and Political Behaviours

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Acker, J.	1999	Gender and Organizations	Handbook of the Sociology of Gender	As the new women's movement took shape in the 1960s, feminists criticized	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours
Eagly, A. H.	1983	Gender and social influence: A social psychological analysis.	American Psychologist	Men and women are believed to differ in how influential and easily influenced they	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Fritz, C., & van Knippenberg, D.	2017	Gender and leadership aspiration: Interpersonal and collective elements of cooperative climate differentially influence women and men.	Gender and I Journal of Applied Social Psychology	Female leaders remain a minority. Because leadership aspiration is a predictor of	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	C. Political will	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will;	2.2 gendered OPC and political will
Hall-Taylor, B.	2002	Deconstructing organisational politics: A causal layered approach	Futures	This study raises some theoretical issues about research methodologies and	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.3 Differential outcomes of political skill for men and women
Kottis, A. P.	1993	Women in management: The glass ceiling and how to break it.	Women in Management Review.	Makes an attempt to explain the factors that cause the phenomenon of the "glass	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.3 Differential outcomes of political skill for men and women
Mann, Sandi	1995	Politics and power in organizations: Why women lose out	Leadership & Organization Development Journal	It is widely acknowledged that women are underrepresented in	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	A. POP B. OPC	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	1.1 POP and Model Limitations; 1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics; 3.1 Gender differences in
Perrewe, P. L. and Nelson, D. L.	2004	Gender and Career Success:: The Facilitative Role of Political Skill	Organizational Dynamics	The article reports on the plight of women in organizations, the reasons	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	Political skill; F. Political sensitivity	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational	3.1 Gender differences in political skill; 5.1 Awareness of gender expectation and political behaviours
Schein, V. E.	1978	Sex Role Stereotyping, Ability and Performance: Prior Research and New Directions	Personnel Psychology	Although there is a reasonable body of research pointing up the negative	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	A. POP; E. Networks and political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics; 4.3 Networking as a gendered practice

K.1 Appendix K Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Gender in Organisational Politics and Political Behaviours Continued

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Bell, E. L. J. E., & Nkomo, S. M.	2003	Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity	The Academy of Management Review	Much of what has been written about women in managerial careers leaves	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	F. Political sensitivity	Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Brass, D.J. & Burkhardt, M.E.	1993	Potential Power and Power Use: an Investigation of Structure and Behavior.	Academy of Management journal	This study explored the relationships between potential organizational	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics; 4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers
Brass, D.J.,	1985	Men's and women's networks: A study of interaction patterns and influence in an organization.	Academy of Management journal	This study investigated the interaction patterns of men and women in an	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill F. Political sensitivity	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational	3.1 Gender differences in political skill; 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC
Cornwell, B., & Dokshin, F. A.	2014	The Power of Integration: Affiliation and Cohesion in a Diverse Elite Network.	Social Forces	Amuch-theorized but seldom-tested theory is that elites achieve cohesion via the	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power;	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers;
Davey, K.M.	2008	Women's accounts of organizational politics as a gendering process	Gender, Work and Organization	Organizational politics is implicated in all levels of organizational functioning.	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	C. Political will ; D. Political skill; F. Gender and	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP ; Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will; Theme 3.	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics ; 2.2 gendered OPC and political will 3.2 Gendered
de Klerk, S., & Verreyne, M. L.	2017	The networking practices of women managers in an emerging economy setting: negotiating institutional and social barriers.	Human Resource Management Journal	Women managers face institutional and social barriers throughout their careers. In this research, we	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill; F. Political sensitivity	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	4.3 Networking as a gendered practice ; 5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours
Doldor, E.; Anderson, D.; Vinnicombe, S.	2013	Refining the Concept of Political Will: A Gender Perspective	British Journal of Management	While politics are known to be prevalent at managerial levels, there is currently	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	C. Political will; D. Political skill	Theme 2. Gendered organizational political climates and gender differences in political will; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential	2.1 Gender differences in political will ; 2.2 gendered OPC and political will ; 3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Drory, A. and Beaty, D.	1991	Gender differences in the perception of organizational influence tactics.	Journal of Organizational Behavior.	A short incident describing a political influence attempt was given to 152	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	C. Political will; D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill
DuBrin, A.J.	1989	Sex differences in endorsement of influence tactics and political behavior tendencies	Journal of Business and Psychology	Sex differences in the endorsement of influence tactics and political behavior	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Ely, R., & Padavic, I.	2007	A Feminist Analysis of Organizational Research on Sex Differences.	The Academy of Management Review	Based on a survey of empirical research on gender in organizations published	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP	1.1 POP and Model Limitations
Ferris, G.R., Frink, D.D., Bhawuk, D.P., Zhou, J. and Gilmore, D.C.	1996	Reactions of diverse groups to politics in the workplace.	Journal of management	The central research question examined in this study focused on whether diverse groups react differently, to politics in the	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill; F. Political sensitivity	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power; Theme 5. Political Sensitivity: Understanding gender in organizational politics	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers; 5.1 Awareness of gender expectations and political behaviours
Forret, M. L. and Dougherty, T. W.	2004	Networking Behaviors and Career Outcomes : Differences for Men and Women ?	Journal of Organizational Behaviour	Engaging in networking behaviors, by attempting to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to provide work or career	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.1 Networking ability as a key dimension for career success; 4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers

K.2 Appendix K Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Gender in Organisational Politics and Political Behaviours Continued

Author	Date	Title	Publication title	Abstract	Primary code	Secondary code	Theme	Sub-theme
Gandz, J. and Murray, V. V	1980	The Experience of Workplace Politics	Academy of Management Journal	This study investigates the perceived politicization of organizational processes and	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	A. POP	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Kacmar, K. M. et al.	2011	Fostering good citizenship through ethical leadership: Exploring the moderating role of gender and organizational politics.	Journal of Applied Psychology	Considering the implications of social exchange theory as a context for social role	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Kirchmeyer, C.	1990	A Profile of managers Active in Office Politics.	Basic & Applied Social Psychology	This study sought to develop a profile of individuals active in office politics. A sample	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill
Lyness, K. S., & Thompson, D. E.	2000	Climbing the corporate ladder: Do female and male executives follow the same route?	Journal of Applied Psychology,	This study compares the careers of matched samples of 69 female executives and	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	A. POP; B. OPC	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power;	4.2 Networking, networks and gendered barriers.
Mainiero, L. A.	1994	On breaking the glass ceiling: The political seasoning of powerful women executives	Organizational Dynamics.	This article determines the role that corporate politics played in shaping women	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.1 Gender differences in political skill; 3.3 Differential outcomes of political skill for men and women
McGuire, G. M.	2002	Gender, race, and the shadow structure: A study of informal networks and inequality in a work organization.	Gender and Society	In this article, I analyze survey data from more than 1,000 financial services employees to understand	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.3 Networking as a gendered practice
Phipps, S. T. A. and Prieto, L. C.	2015	Women versus men in entrepreneurship: A comparison of the sexes on creativity, political skill, and entrepreneurial intentions	Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal	Entrepreneurship is considered to be an essential driver of the economy and	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Ragins, B. R., & Sundstrom, E.	1989	Gender and Power in Organizations: A Longitudinal Perspective.	Psychological Bulletin	This article advances a longitudinal, resource development model of	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	A. POP	Theme 1. Gendered Organizations and POP; Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women;	1.2 OPC: A person-climate fit model for examining a gender perspective of organizational politics; 3.3 Differential outcomes of political skill for men and
Rudman, L. A. and Glick, P.	2001	Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes and Backlash Toward Agentic Women	Journal of Social Issues	In an experiment, job description and applicants' attributes were examined as	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Shaughnessy, B. a. et al.	2011	Influence and promotability: the importance of female political skill	Journal of Managerial Psychology	The current paper seeks to bring the political perspective to gender	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.	3.2 Gendered political behaviours
Tomaskovic-Devey, D.	1993	The Gender and Race Composition of Jobs and the Male/Female, White/Black Pay Gaps.	Social Forces	This study examines human capital, social closure, and status composition	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	E. Networks and political skill	Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power	4.3 Networking as a gendered practice
Watkins, M. B. and Smith, A. N.	2014	Importance of women's political skill in male-dominated organizations	Journal of Managerial Psychology	The aim of this paper is to investigate whether or not political skill helps women	3. Gender in organizations as it relates to 1.) and 2.)	D. Political skill; E. Networks and political skill; F.	Theme 3. Gendered political skill and differential outcomes for men and women.; Theme 4. Gendered barriers to network access and paths to power;	3.3 Differential outcomes of political skill for men and women; 4.3 Networking as a gendered practice; 5.2 Political sensitivity and understanding OPC

Appendix L Overview of OPC Dimensions and Indicators

OPC Power base Research Summary	OPC Power base Indicators	Gendered OPC Research Summary	Gendered OPC Indicators
<p>Positional power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational members will perceive that people build their positional power by seeking positions in which they will be able to exert significant influence and in which they will have control over significant resources (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Organisational members may perceive that people use their positional power by using their position to amend or introduce policies, influence recruitment decisions, bend the rules to fit situations, or influence the allocation of rewards (Landells and Albrecht 2013). Positional power dimensions include legitimate power, coercive power, and reward. 	<p>Landells and Albrecht (2013) indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which individuals perceive that positional power is used to exert significant influence and control over significant resources. The extent to which individuals perceive that positional power is used to amend or introduce policies, influence recruitment decisions, bend the rules to fit situations. The extent to which individuals perceive that positional power is used to influence the allocation of rewards i.e., high-profile assignments, promotions, salary increases and bonuses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which positional power decreases when women are appointed to powerful roles, following a man holding the position. The extent to which leadership roles occupied by women are perceived to be less powerful than similar roles occupied by men. The extent to which women are represented in senior leadership positions or the perceived organisational structural barriers that prevent women from advancing and accessing positional power. The extent to which individuals perceive power in the organisations to be associated with masculine attributes. The extent to which men make decision and can allocate rewards such as high-profile assignments, promotions, salary increases and bonuses. The extent to which men in powerful positions versus women in powerful positions use their influence to bend the rules or influence decisions. The extent to which women require more accomplishments or experience than men to be considered for a promotion. 	<p>Promotion decisions and associated structural barriers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotions processes and how they serve men and women differently. Promotion decisions and criteria used for men and women. The number of women in senior leadership roles. Structural barriers to promotions. Perceptions of power associated with roles and whether this changes when a man or woman occupies the role. Decisions regarding rewards such as promotions, salary increases and bonuses. The criteria used (i.e., qualifications, achievements, and experience) for promotions and whether this differs for men and women.

L.1 Appendix L Overview of OPC Dimensions and Indicators Continued

OPC Power base Research Summary	OPC Power-Base Indicators	Gendered OPC Research Summary	Gendered OPC Indicators
<p>Personal power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of organisational political climate, personal power is the extent to which organisational members perceive power to be associated with reputation, charm, charisma, worth and right to respect from others. It is the degree to which individuals perceive that others build their reputation and personal power on the basis of demonstrated expertise, experience and success versus exaggerated claims of expertise, experience and success. Personal power dimensions include referent, expert and charisma. 	<p>Landells and Albrecht (2013) indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which individuals perceive that competition is involved in high-profile projects. The extent to which individuals perceive that personal reputation is important to career progression. The extent to which individuals perceive that high significance is attached to status symbols such as titles, qualifications and office size and location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the ideal manager is considered as typically male, competitive, aggressive, firm, dominant and rational, and, as such, that women do not measure up. The extent to which women in positions of power are viewed as masculine not only relative to other women, but also relative to other men in positions of power. The extent to which women are perceived as violating gender stereotypes by engaging in the masculine behaviours associated with leadership. The extent to which women are given the opportunity to engage in overseas assignments, high-profile assignments or development assignments. The extent to which women feel that they need to fit in with male-dominated culture at senior management levels or change in some way in order to fit in with men. The extent to which women have access to male or female mentors that advance their career success. 	<p>Perceptions of the ideal manager and high-profile assignments/development opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of the ideal manager and if this is associated with masculine stereotypes; and the extent to which this is associated with leadership culture. The extent to which the ideal manager prototype associated with decisions regarding who is selected for fast-track development programs and high-potential assignments. The number of women versus men considered for high-profile assignments/development assignments. How decisions and criteria used for making the decisions regarding who should receive high-profile assignments/development assignments. The extent to which women versus men have access to mentors or strategic sponsors formally or informally who can advance their careers.

L.2 Appendix L Overview of OPC Dimensions and Indicators Continued

OPC Power-Base Research Summary	OPC Power-Base Indicators	Gendered OPC Research Summary	Gendered OPC Indicators
<p>Informational power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of organisational political climate, informational power is the extent to which organisational members perceive access to information that is valuable to others. • Informational power can derive from formal access to information (e.g., meetings, draft policies, position papers), informal access to information (e.g., watercooler talk, grapevine), as well as output or distribution of information. • Informational power dimensions include formal access, informal access, and output opportunity. 	<p>Landells and Albrecht (2013) indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which individuals perceive that they need to invest considerable time and energy mapping the political terrain, trying to understand others' agendas, or using the grapevine to gain information. • The extent to which individuals perceive that people need to know the 'real' way to get things done. • The extent to which individuals perceive that withholding, filtering and selective leaking of information is commonplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which women perceive men as having greater control over and access to information in an organisation. • The extent to which women have opportunities to engage in informal discussions with men. • The extent to which women are perceived as less powerful in organisations. • The extent to which men and women invest time and energy mapping the political terrain, trying to understand others' agendas, or using the grapevine to gain information. • The extent to which men and women invest time and energy trying to understand their political environment and individual agendas. • The extent to which men and women use the grapevine to share or gain access to information. • The extent to which women are willing to engage in the (masculine) political behaviours required to obtain informational power. 	<p>The way information is shared, formally and informally, and the associated behaviours required to access this information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formal processes for sharing important information. • The informal processes for sharing information. • The political behaviours used to access information. • The perceived value of informal information. • How men and women access information differently. • How much exposure men and women have to powerful leaders (to access important information).

L.3 Appendix L Overview of OPC Dimensions and Indicators Continued

OPC Power-Base Research Summary	OPC Power-Base Indicators	Gendered OPC Research Summary	Gendered OPC Indicators
<p>Connection power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of organisational political climate, connection power is defined as the extent to which organisational members perceive that power can be derived from internal networks, external networks and network centrality. Connection power dimensions include internal networks, external networks and network centrality. 	<p>Landells and Albrecht (2013) indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which individuals perceive that people invest considerable time and effort aligning themselves with important people. The extent to which individuals perceive that people are more likely to do things for influential people. The extent to which individuals perceive that people get ahead based on who they know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which men form solidarity groups that exclude women in organisations. The extent to which women receive informal and formal network support. The extent to which networking behaviours result in promotions and increased compensation for men but not for women. The extent to which women compared to men are able to access informal networks within an organisation. The extent to which women compared to men are able to access formal networks within an organisation. The extent to which women have strong ties with individuals who lack influence in organisations. The extent to which women have equal access to positions of authority – compared to men. The extent to which women have access to external contacts which provide information, career opportunities and advice. The extent to which women perceive that their careers are more successful. The extent to which women have strong ties to strategic sponsors. 	<p>Access to (internal) formal and informal networks, as well as the associated career benefits from accessing powerful individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men and women's access to internal formal networks. Men and women's access to internal informal networks. Perceived network exclusion of men versus women. Perceived motivation to engage in networking behaviours for men and women. Perceived ability of men and women to derive career benefits from accessing networks (formal and informal). Women's access to powerful individuals (formally) i.e., regular leadership meetings. Women and men's access to powerful individuals (informally) i.e., solidarity groups.

Appendix M Interview Questions

Opening 10 minutes

- Interview overview, reminder of consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation
- How long have you been at your organisation?
- What is your current position?

Promotions 20 minutes

- Can you share how individuals get promoted at your organisation? Do you have an example? i.e., how are decisions made?
- What role does personal influence, persuasion, and political skill play in getting promoted?
- To what extent do you feel you understand why promotion decisions are made at your organisation?
- To what extent do you feel you understand how to present yourself to be considered for a promotion?
- What type of individuals do you think get promoted at your organisation?
- What do you think the promotion criteria are for women and men? Is there a difference?
- Who do you think predominantly makes promotion decisions? Men or women? How do you think this influences how decisions are made?
- What role do you think gender plays in how others at work act as they do at work?
- Do you think there is a difference in how men and women are expected to lead or behave at your organisation?
- Why do you think there are fewer women in senior leadership positions at your organisation?
- What if any barriers do you think women face in advancing to senior leadership positions?

High-profile assignments and development opportunities 20 minutes

- What are the attributes of the ideal high-performing leader at your organisation – i.e., someone who is seen as ‘Management material’? Can you describe an example? Do you feel a requirement to try to fit this image?
- How does this ideal high-performing leader at your organisation influence decisions regarding who is selected for fast-track development programs and high-potential assignments?
- What is the process by which individuals receive high-profile assignments and development opportunities?
- How do individuals obtain mentors at your organisation? What is the formal or informal process?
- To what extent do you think you understand why some individuals are given high-profile assignments and development opportunities over others?
- To what extent do you feel you understand how to present yourself to be considered for a high-profile assignment and development opportunity?
- Do you think women fit the image of an ideal leader at your organisation? Why? What can women do to fit this ideal image?
- Do you think women and men are given equal access to high-profile assignments and development opportunities at your organisation?
- Do you think women have access to powerful individuals who can advance their careers?
- Do you think women and men are considered equally for high-profile assignments and development opportunities over others? Are they distributed equally? Why?
- Why do you think women struggle to obtain equal access to high-profile assignments and development opportunities i.e., mentoring? What are some of the barriers they face?

M.1 Appendix M Interview Questions Continued

Information sharing 20 minutes

- What are the behaviours required to access important information in your organisation? Do you have an example?
- At your organisation, how important do you think it is to invest time and energy understanding people's agendas? How do you think people do this at your organisation?
- To what extent at your organisation is there a 'real way that things get done'? How important is it to know the real way things get done around here?
- To what extent do you feel you know who to engage with in order to access important information at your organisation?
- To what extent do you think women have as much control and access to important information at your organisation as men do?
- Do you think men and women have the same opportunities to engage in informal discussions with powerful individuals OR individuals 'in the know'?
- How much time do you think men invest in understanding office politics or others' agendas?
- Do you think women and men are equally 'in the know' when it comes to important information?
- Why do you think it is that women and men are not traditionally given the same opportunities to engage in information sharing as men?

Internal networks 20 minutes

- How important is it to invest significant time and effort in getting to know important people at your organisation? Why is it important?
- How do people access powerful individuals at your organisation who can support career advancement?
- What behaviours do individuals engage in to access powerful networks at your organisation?
- Why do you think some individuals are given access to informal networks and others are not?
- What about powerful individuals? Why are some individuals given access and others are not?
- To what extent do you feel you understand how to engage in networking behaviour required to access formal and informal networks?
- Do you think there is a gender difference in accessing informal and formal networks?
- How do men engage in solidarity groups at your organisation? Can you share an example? And women?
- Do you think these informal groups are important in relation to advancing career success at your organisation?
- How successful do you think women are at your organisation? What do you think is the reason for this? And men?
- Do you think women and men have equal access to strategic sponsors at your organisation (i.e. individuals who can help their career)? Why?
- Why do you think it is that women struggle to access powerful networks in organisations?
- Why do you think it is that women and men benefit differently from engaging in the same networking behaviour?
- Why do you think women struggle to obtain equal access to powerful individuals at your organisation?

Appendix N Gendered OPC: Informal Networks

Informal Networks	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – EnergyCo	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – FinanceCo
<p>Ideal worker networking behaviours and increased perceptions of trust.</p>	<p>I will only engage in activities where I feel it's sort of a safe environment to do so, I suppose you'd say. If there were more females, it would make the risk or the concern around that less, but I think because the males are in the majority, it's easy for them to have those sorts of informal networks and those activities, because that's just part of being one of the boys. Whereas, for a female there's a little bit more thought that has to go into it. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 001</p> <p>So how can you then authentically just genuinely go and have a conversation as a woman when you are different? And those are the ones, if you have a good, genuine conversation with influential people, they're having a massive impact on your career compared to the other ones that no one wants to have the formal conversation. That's got to count in your favour, the informal conversations, it's important. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p>	<p>I think there is issue around inclusiveness in the social stuff that we do, which we're trying to address. I think a lot of it historically was alcohol based, quite ladsy. What lots of male, typically male banter which can be quite intimidating. – FinanceCo Employee Female 003</p> <p>I wouldn't think in terms of differences of gender there's going to be a difference there because I think it's more a difference in character, how extroverted and outgoing you are as opposed to maybe introvert and less sociable. Maybe not in a bad way, but just less active socially. – FinanceCo Employee Male 004</p>
<p>Homosocial networking practices and shared common interests.</p>	<p>There'd be a difference here, because for our informal networks and outside of work, obviously everyone in Port Hedland goes fishing or camping, so when you're around site the guys are... even if you don't know anyone, but you hear someone talk about fishing or going fishing or camping, or whatever, they're... immediately got something in common and they're in the conversation, and before you know it, you've formed a bit of a network and you go out on the weekend. So for females, because they don't typically do that sort of thing, it's a bit harder for them to have something in common and start forming a bit of a network or partnership around that. – EnergyCo Manager Male 004</p> <p>I guess the divide only really comes in like male specific activities, which females don't get on to like male team sports and all the rest of it. So like, being a small town there is one manager here in particular that plays for a male Australian Football League team. So, there are other males from the workplace that are also on that team, so then they have more informal exposure to that manager. Which, as long as its good exposure obviously helps them, which kind of automatically rules out any females having the same kind of exposure somewhat naturally because of the environment that's in. – EnergyCo Employee Female 004</p>	<p>I think the only difference is around these informal social interactions, which I think do advantage men. I think that's where I would see that. But in terms of proactiveness, I think I don't see any gender differences. I think both men and women both do reach out. I think it's more in the informal social interactions where women probably miss out, but they don't even realise that they're missing out. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 004</p> <p>The second is that there's a certain amount of networking and relationship development, which I think is more difficult for women in a more male oriented environment, because a lot of this is about the speed with which you can form relationships. And some women can do it by quickly, and some men can do it very quickly, but men have more in common with which to do that relationship. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 005</p>

N.1 Appendix N Gendered OPC: Informal Networks Continued

<p>Leader similarity and network access.</p>	<p>There's definitely, whenever there are conferences and things like that, and there's time set aside for socialising and networking, you'll more often than not see men cluster together and women cluster together. And because the majority of leaders are men, that means that the majority of the clusters are men with the right, powerful men, and the women stick to themselves a little bit, which doesn't really help them. – EnergyCo Male Employee 001</p> <p>I mean, historically, I can see why that would have been problematic, and actually one of our leaders in a different part of the organisation was talking actually... I'll use the golf example again. He said, "A lot of decisions and a lot of high-profile people were getting along to golf days with the president and being highly visible." – EnergyCo Female Employee 001</p>	<p>What I would say is that I think there are some circumstances where some of the more senior men in the business are able to spend a day or will spend an afternoon playing golf or certain activities that may be kind of open the door and get you that time with someone that I do not typically see women doing. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001</p> <p>I'm not sure I can say if there's something similar where maybe not deliberately, but that the male partners, for example, have drinks of their own and then they don't bother inviting the women to that. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004</p>
<p>Gender differences in informal network access and utility.</p>	<p>My first thought would be that from a gender difference perspective that women probably get more opportunity to do that in terms of it's more of a natural pull to get women involved in a lot of the networking and development activities and that sort of stuff just because there's a number of initiatives and groups focused on the inclusion and diversity piece, which is leveraged largely towards women. – EnergyCo Manager Male 002</p> <p>What I'm struggling with, is to see the benefit, because when you invite yourself along to a formal forum, or even the professional development group, when you invite yourself along to these formal networking things you sort of get the same content, but you don't get the same build or proactive build and relationship, or access to the relationship. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 006</p>	<p>I think those opportunities maybe do come slightly easier to men. Just to have those more casual conversations and find out about those things. Whereas I feel like as a woman, I have to make an agenda to go and find out those opportunities. And networking with a capital letter rather than just it being a more informal thing. – FinanceCo Manager Female 002</p> <p>I feel slightly disenfranchised or disadvantaged when it comes to the networking because there seems to be quite a bit focus on women's network. There is not really any equivalent for men. – FinanceCo Employee Male 002</p>

Appendix O Gendered OPC: Connection Power

Connection Power	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – EnergyCo	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – FinanceCo
<p>Engaging in ideal worker behaviours to access networks and build awareness of network members.</p>	<p>I think with women, don't get the same opportunities as men, because as I said, there is definitely a boy's club, and I've seen that in all the organisations that I've worked in. When men feel that they can be more like men and behave more like some of the stereotypical behaviours you see in men, whereas if a woman is a part of that group, men feel more awkward to do it. So, as a result of that, then quite often, you don't get to build the same relationships. – EnergyCo Employee Male 002</p> <p>I think what makes it really difficult to be proactive about it, other than make yourself a strong brand so senior people want to spend time with you is because ultimately, they have the power. So, I think for women it's... Because the senior leadership team is completely male, probably women are identified less often as being like them. – EnergyCo Employee Female 006</p>	<p>Becoming a partner means you are a partner by name as well as by behaviour so you need to know these people and behave like them to be partnered with them. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 003</p> <p>Unless you are constantly shouting about yourself and really seeking out those informal sponsorship opportunities and you're very extroverted and comfortable doing that. It's going to be very difficult, unless you also fall into a couple of cliques naturally, which chances are, you won't. So it's very important, it's incredibly important, but very, very difficult for women. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 005</p>
<p>Investing in relationships with multiple leaders to build connection power.</p>	<p>I actually spend quite a bit of time, because I'm site based now, I spend quite a bit of time making sure I can catch up with those key people that I've built a relationship over the last two years to make sure I sustain that, so that like this morning, before I got on the phone with you, I went and had a half an hour coffee with one of the managers in [department] who is very influential, and I want to maintain that relationship, so I think it can take a lot of different forms, whether it's from a phone call to a face to face to a beer or, yeah, any of those sort of things, really. – EnergyCo Manager Male 003</p> <p>It is just trying to make them aware that I exist, I guess. Because it's not when you are in that session, you'll be not physically present, but there is power in getting other managers or other head of finance buy-in as well. Not just a manager that you report to. That's something that I practice on a regular basis here. Just to catch up for coffee with other head ofs. – EnergyCo Manager Female 004</p>	<p>I guess first you need to, especially when you're aware of what you're doing right, so if you're like, "Right I'm aware that what I'm doing is going to get access to these informal networks to further my career." You need, I think for me the struggle is being aware of that. And that I will need to do that, and it conflicts with how I feel. But you know, let's say you get over it, for me as a woman what would I do? I would figure out who [are] some of the key players in these informal networks, I would go and book them for a coffee or a 30-minute mentoring type catch up, discuss my skills and capabilities and that I'm, yes I need to look for some other opportunities and is there anything I can help you with or do you have anything going. And probably the work that do now, I'd be actively looking on how I can overlap that with some of these key individuals' initiatives or projects to get myself in there and get a foot in the door I suppose. – FinanceCo</p> <p>Challenge for women as there are so few of them. I think it's a little bit different now, for me in using those, informal networks I built up throughout the business. – FinanceCo</p>

O.1 Appendix O: Gendered OPC: Connection Power Continued

<p>Managing gender differences in access to shared experiences to build connection power.</p>	<p>It is exactly as I said. It is seeking out those projects, or initiatives, or opportunities where you may be working in a cross functional, or cross regional team. And there's plenty of those. I mean on a daily basis, there's something that you could easily put your hand up, and self-nominate, or have your leader nominate you into a particular working group, or opportunity. Another way this plays out, it is most these people trying to find some common elements in their lives. People, kids that go to the same school, same culture background, go to the same golf club, or some common sports interest. They usually come from stuff outside work. – EnergyCo Senior Manager 005</p> <p>I think it's mainly through common interests. So, like the one I see most often are peers. People having common interests outside of work and developing that network out there and you can see it definitely strengthening the inside of work relationships. Whether that's going fishing or being in the Australian Football League team or what have you. So, it's kind of being part of other groups. I mean if you just sit at home all week and didn't do anything outside of work you wouldn't receive those benefits, I guess. And that's where I see a lot of it coming from is those outside of work activities. – EnergyCo Employee Female 006</p>	<p>The people who have helped me along the way, in an informal capacity, have been people who I have [sought] out, worked with, drunk with, never let down, had a very open, transparent relationship with. For the most part, I've been the one who's had to initiate that. But once you do, it becomes very reciprocal. So, to get to the stage that I'm at now, going into the partnership process, I can point to a dozen people who, at different stages, have played that role to a lesser or greater extent. I think, where it happens quite naturally is, if you do work with someone, I think you've got to capitalise on the project experiences that you have to form those relationships because that's where you spend prolonged periods of time with someone. That's when someone gets to know you, that's when someone starts to take personal interest in you because you've been through a tough project together. They've helped you or you've helped them so you forge that bond. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 006</p> <p>Common groups you see are usually people who work together on those very long term big projects. Another clique here will be people who go to the pub on the Friday. There're some people who I know who do rock climbing together, mainly guys. – FinanceCo Manager Female 005</p>
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Appendix P Gendered OPC: Trust

Trust	Outcomes: Gender differences – EnergyCo	Outcomes: Gender differences – FinanceCo
<p>Trust enables collaboration and support at work.</p>	<p>Critical. [Informal networks] It's absolutely critical. Not only for your own personal growth, but to be able to succeed at your job. Very few of the things that we do are within one part of the business. For example, for me, I need to deal with technical people, I need to deal with financial people, I need to deal with legal people, and so, it's all relationships to get anything done. If you want your work prioritised for any particular reason, you need to have that relationship with them. So, I think it's not just EnergyCo, I think in any workplace, relationships are absolutely critical. – EnergyCo Employee Male 004</p> <p>So I think that is one of the challenges, because it's not about just talking to people and networking informally, and expecting that people have your back at the end of the day, because that actually very rarely happens. So I would say the challenges are really knowing who you can trust, and who you could really get that information that you might need out of or that support when you're not in the room. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 002</p>	<p>Mainly I think it comes back down to the people that can be trusted. They're just not the people that ever deliver a bad job. And therefore, people look at them and go, "Okay, I know I can trust these two. If we've got this big important client and it's a tight timeline, then I know that they can really deliver, and they will deliver not just this time but every time." And I think, yeah. That does lead to you going, "Okay, if I could choose anyone to staff that, it will be these guys." – FinanceCo Manager Male 004</p> <p>So, I think having those informal networks is really important, because it helps you connect people and build trust... open the lines of communication, and problem solving, and working together. – FinanceCo Employee Female 003</p>
<p>Trust enables access to career advancement opportunities.</p>	<p>I think in EnergyCo it obviously helps, because when you make a decision to promote someone, usually the final say, especially for senior positions, there would be a committee, some people that would give their opinions on your capability, and obviously if they know you, it increases your chance. If they know you as a person, not only as a professional, it increases your chances even more. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 003</p> <p>The real power in our organisation is in those relationships and in those sponsorships and in those informal networks. I actually think that there is a... I think it's key to success and I think that once you get over say superintendent kind of level, I think that it comes much more into play. You need to be talked about. You need to be talked about, you need to be given opportunities, and those do tend to come from informal type relationships where your network is working for you. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 003</p>	<p>I will say there was a particular case where someone didn't get promoted, and it was almost because of one particular clique just did not like this person. It's what the perception has been in the office. Obviously, there's a business reason for it, but in terms of if you look at it objectively, it just looked like a bit of a strange decision. Maybe there is a business decision behind it but personally I haven't really seen it. – FinanceCo Employees Male 004</p> <p>You could've done an amazing job on all those separate engagements, but nobody's really going to stick their neck out for you unless you're part of their network, you're part of their community, you're part of their team, and I don't mean team just in the place you work, I mean how they kind of perceive their community and that network, it's really important. And a lot of different opportunities are unadvertised. So yeah, it's very important. – FinanceCo Manager Female 005</p>

Appendix Q Gendered OPC: Informal Information Sharing

Informal Information Sharing	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – EnergyCo	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – FinanceCo
<p>Informal information sharing is perceived as masculine and political.</p>	<p>I feel like information sharing is office politics because personally, myself as well, I also feel the pressure, even as a man, to adjust my behaviour and the way I talk and communicate. – EnergyCo Employee Male 006</p> <p>To be aware of it and to access it [informal information] you must be political in the way that you act. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 005</p>	<p>And that is such a huge difference in behaviours, that the male groups are largely about gossip. And while I will not say that the female groups don't have a degree of gossip in them, it's not malicious. Whereas in the male groups it is how you use that for power. What hold does somebody have over me on the principle that they can possibly make jokes. And the women's behaviour is largely not like that. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 003</p> <p>Men are better at playing that game. I am just talking about fluidity of information flows and the people who have access to that... well it is skewed towards the male population. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 005</p>
<p>Accessing information requires displaying ideal worker behaviours.</p>	<p>I think just by the nature of men wanting to spend time with men, the boys club mentality again, I think they're always going to be able to get more access to information than women are. Not all men, but men usually want to be very professional with women, so as not to get themselves in trouble for other things and then maybe sometimes, and then we'll just not share what could be categorised as sensitive information with them. – EnergyCo Male Employee 001</p> <p>If the entire team that you're working in is majority male they potentially joke and laugh about different things or more macho styles of communication then you may not even know it potentially is unintentional and there's nothing kind of rude or honest. Like there is no borderline behaviours or anything like that involved. It's just maybe not as inclusive because it's all directed in one style of communication or one type of interest type thing if everyone's always talking about the footy and that doesn't really interest that type of person then I'm left out a little bit. So I think there has to be some kind of difference that plays out. I know like up into meetings where it's been all female and you can't help but feel a little bit nervous or not nervous but kind of it just feels a little bit different. – EnergyCo Manager Female 005</p>	<p>It is literally talking to people. Talking to the right people. But, honestly... and it becomes self-perpetuating because it's not talking in the sense of gossiping but if you are someone who is trusted, if you are someone who uses information responsibly... by the way, if you don't use information responsibly, people don't forget that right? The combination of sociability and being prepared to talk to people and credibility and trust, those two behaviours together, I would say, are the things that are the biggest drivers of who gets this information or access quickly. I think it's the same. Inadvertently, they don't have as much access as information because they're not... they're under-represented at the senior levels. There's no deliberate withholding of information because you're a female versus a male. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 003</p> <p>I was like, "I think I need to give him some feedback because if I don't say something then no one's going to say anything." And I spent like an hour and a half crafting this email to send to him, and just thinking about the language of it, which is like this is coming from a good place and it's because I know you respect and value women and it had like smiley faces and I never would have spent so much time doing that except for I'm up for promotion to partner in like a year and a half and I didn't want to anger anyone, but I also wanted to get my point across. And I think if [it was] my [male] peer, [he] could have just said, "Hey the email you sent was really naff. You really can't send that stuff." Whereas I need to justify that I'm not trying to be angry or upset and I'm just trying to be a good person. So, I think that's a good example of that double bind. Yeah. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 004</p>

Q.1 Appendix Q: Gendered OPC: Informal Information Sharing Continued

<p>Informal networks provide access to informal information.</p>	<p>You kind of come here and feel like you are already on the back foot and on the outside trying to break in and form these relationships to access information. That would make you feel like you don't fit into this workplace or in this environment. You might not know whether you even want to stay here in the first place or if this is the kind of business that you want to be a part of. And it's probably more not feeling like you fit in that would impact your progression within the business rather than not having as many opportunities. – EnergyCo Employee Male 002</p> <p>I know that the women's ... When I see office politics with women, they're often talking about more of a sort of group holistic element, something that doesn't seem quite right, something that they're unsure of, frustrated by, don't know enough of. I think for males, I think, and a lot of our leaders are males, that a bunch of office politics may actually be the stuff that's discussed behind the doors, which is sort of secret information that is of use. So I don't know that given our sort of gender population, et cetera, that women always get their hands or their ears on the stuff that really matters. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 003</p>	<p>I think you probably just have to build your network. So the way I've tried to do it and get access to this information, the inside scoop, is I usually have a counsellor. So depending on how politically savvy or just savvy they are in general, they could provide you with some information – FinanceCo Employee Male 001</p> <p>From the few people that I've spoken to, I think we're all aware of it. I'm not necessarily sure we know how to overcome it. There are a lot of people I work with in the team that I have great working relationships with, but on a personal level, I don't really connect other than asking you, "How was your weekend? How are your kids?" That's it. I am speaking to another female colleague as well in the team who's also considered top performer and she was saying the same thing as well. She just doesn't have any personal relationships. For example, I wouldn't go on a Friday as one of these people to the bar to have a drink. To me, that feels really awkward. But I don't know how to overcome it. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001</p>
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Appendix R Gendered OPC: Informational Power

Informational Power	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – EnergyCo	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – FinanceCo
<p>Engaging in ideal worker behaviours to build relationships with powerful individuals to access information.</p>	<p>Getting credibility, to build relationship with the people who know. And it's building that credibility that, as you see now, can take a bit more effort than what it does as a male. So for me to be able to access the politics, understand this backdoor, I need to have contacts with the right people. So if it's not within my team, and I don't have these relationships, then I need to go and build up the credibility, outside of my team, which I feel that I can only do by proven performance and achievements, which then, will give me a chance to create these relationships with other people who can give me access to other information. – EnergyCo Manager Female 004</p> <p>If there's a guy in my team that I know particularly well then the way that I share information with him might be a little more casual than how I share with women, like even the language that I use is probably different with women. It's a little more structured and the language would be a little bit more cold and it just happens naturally without realising. They're male to begin with and there is a kind of rapport that you can have with blokes that you can't have with women. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p>	<p>So for me it's always been I do a project if you, I prove how good I am and therefore that will build that relationship. I've never once gone to speak to a person without having proven myself and go, "Hey, can you help me?" sort of thing, which may not necessarily be the right way to do things. – FinanceCo Employee Female 004</p> <p>There's already an inherent mode of operation, if you like. You have to flex your style to be aligned to that position to find out what is going on. Of course, if you don't fit that then you just don't make it. I think that's where a lot of the whole office politics starts happening because they haven't been able to do it. They do not fit in. They're not necessarily going to be able to get hold of information to trade it and get the right job or the right promotion of project. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004</p>
<p>Awareness of gendered information-sharing practices.</p>	<p>I think being able to access and the different information that's not you know publicly available, like a job being advertised or things more like potential things that are coming up do come about from those outside of work relationships which, I said before can rebuild stuff. Activities that females aren't often particularly engaged in at the engineering department here. Men are pretty tight. They go on fishing and camping long weekends and whatever. – EnergyCo Female 005</p> <p>My back-to-back supervisor is one of those old school guys and we were really trying to work with him, but you know he does not think there is a problem. So he's one of those people that doesn't share information openly and he doesn't do that with me. And then the day the issue there is then the superintendent the next level of needs to deal with it. And unfortunately, sometimes that's not happening. So yeah, there are definitely challenges but I think it's more about having trust in women's capabilities. – EnergyCo Employee Male 006</p>	<p>I don't know why necessarily guys are wiser to that, but they tend, from what I've seen, they tend to be on the same channel with the senior partner. And that's all guys. And they're junior guys working on that with that senior partner, who is giving them access to a lot of external networks, and support and visibility. But for whatever reason the guys are quicker to kind of be aware of it. I certainly wasn't aware of it in my first three to four years of working. I did not realise the importance of that visibility and that connecting outside of the workplace with partners and things like that. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001</p> <p>I don't think men exclude women. I think just by the nature of men wanting to spend time with men, the boys club mentality again, I think they're always going to be able to get more access to information than women are. Not all men, but men usually want to be very professional with women, so as not to get themselves in trouble for other things and then maybe sometimes, and then we'll just not share what could be categorised as sensitive information with them. – FinanceCo Employee Male 001</p>

R.1 Appendix R Gendered OPC: Informational Power Continued

<p>Withholding or sharing information to maintain informational power.</p>	<p>I'd probably break it down from, with that information flow, there's the formal and the informal. So I think, from a formal perspective, it's less prone for any of those biases or leaving people off the email distribution lists or otherwise. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p> <p>I guess I've had previous managers down the track, years ago, where they actually felt that knowledge was power, and they kept things from people, and just filtered it out when they felt that people deserved to know and it was on their timetable, and it always frustrated me that, it was kind of like a power play, and it frustrated me. It was like, "Well, we're all a team here. If we had all the information we could actually be all thinking about it instead of just you," so I'm very quick to roll things up, to disseminate them out, to pass on information. If I get information, if it can be shared, unless it's confidential, it gets shared with my team pretty much as soon as I get it. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 006</p>	<p>I think having quite a strong position in the team and having relationships with various people across the team helps me to be trusted and people will come to me with information if they think it's important. For example, recently we just had found out that somebody handed in the notice and he's quite a bit more senior than me, but he came to me to inform me of that information because I have a good relationship with them. So I think the politics and making sure you are in with the right people. And I like to think that having a broad set of relationships across the team from various different levels, from partner right down to analyst, I think that helps me to feel like I have a position in the team where people would respect and trust me with information. It's about relationships, I think for me. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001</p> <p>It's almost like the horse trading or something is how it means to me anyway, how I think about that, but it's sort of knowing about who gets on with who or who doesn't get on with who and taking it and making the most advantage of that. So sort of swapping some information for some others, some other information to help you think in terms of office politics. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004</p>
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Appendix S Gendered OPC: Organisational Insight

Organisational Insight	Outcomes: Gender differences – EnergyCo	Outcomes: Gender differences – FinanceCo
<p>Organisational insight enables career performance and advancement.</p>	<p>Again, the high-profile opportunity, if you're not in the room or if you don't associate with the people in the room, you don't even know that the opportunity exists. You don't even know about all the work that's happening in the background, where it's progressing and how you could help, or how you could align the actions that you're doing within your operation to actually deliver an outcome which is important. You don't even know the work that's going on to be the enabler of the future. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 005</p> <p>As you get higher up that there's a lot of positioning and making sure you're aligned with different groups and people so I guess the politics side is more around not putting yourself in a position where you could be moved or cut out of that little circle. Yeah. I guess it's making sure you're in reasonable, taking care of yourself position. Often, it's not necessarily about your capabilities but it's now on who you know and who you're aligned with. – EnergyCo Manager Male 004</p>	<p>If a person does not engage. I think they just, you know depending on what they will do, they might become a little bit disgruntled, they might become disengaged, or, "That's the kind of behaviour that has to happen so I'm just going to be a bit sour or not as productive." So maybe performance in roles might decline, so you might have someone who would come in and show that discretionary effort in their job, but now because they have seen all of this and they don't want to engage in it, they might not [do] that discretionary effort anymore, just come in, "My contract says 37.5 hours a week, that's all they're getting out of me." That, yeah maybe a little of bit discussion, maybe just not pursue. Maybe just not pursue senior promotions, or high-profile assignments because they do not want to have to deal with that kind of behaviour. Or maybe they will look for another job. – FinanceCo Employee Manager Male 001</p> <p>Accessing information, I think it is important and you need to play the game. I am awful in it so that's why I'm not successful. – FinanceCo Employee Female Manager 005</p>
<p>Organisational insight and influencing powerful individuals.</p>	<p>It's sort of a bit of a who can play <i>Game of Thrones</i> the best, and who can manipulate the situation the best for their outcome, if that sort of makes sense. That's what I would term as the office politics, it's a bit of <i>Game of Thrones</i>, bit of <i>Survivor</i>, outwit, outplay, outlast, sort of dynamic, if you like. It can be perceived as being a bit manipulative of situations and people for ultimate personal sort of gain or personal fulfilment or their objectives, I suppose. To a certain extent, there's an element that is needed from the point of view that if you don't engage then you leave your team exposed. So there's an element of it. But from my perspective, only to the point of it needs to be done to serve the team, not the self-interest of the individual. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 003</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that there is that network of, you know, "Hey, you got an invite to this." It gives rise to a sense for people who are on the outside of that, "Well, what is it that's going on in those closed sessions?" And I think that's possibly the same feeling that you would get whether it was any group of individuals. If you're feeling excluded from that or on the outside, you may be left thinking, "Well, what's going on there?" – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p>	<p>It kind of goes to how you're viewed in the office as well. Although there kind of are informal relationships and I will go for a drink with some people that I speak to. There is that perception that they are well connected and it's actually also how it looks to your team as well. – FinanceCo Employee Female 005</p> <p>You see it play out all the time. You see, you walk out of a meeting, you go, "Jesus, why are we spending \$10 million on that?" Someone will go, "It's a political based decision." What that means is that everyone is too scared to give the GM or the VP or the president or whatever the news that his or her idea is stupid, and we should not be spending \$10 million on that. It is easier just to go with the flow. It is less disruptive to your career and you personally to just go with the flow. We have seen multiple examples of that. – FinanceCo Employee Male 003</p>

Appendix T Gendered OPC: Informal Development Opportunities

Informal Development Opportunities	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – EnergyCo	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – FinanceCo
<p>Alignment to the ideal worker and gender differences in perceptions of competence.</p>	<p>Again, the high-profile opportunity, if you're not in the room or if you don't associate with the people in the room, you don't even know that the opportunity exists. You don't even know about all the work that's happening in the background, where it's progressing and how you could help, or how you could align the actions that you're doing within your operation to actually deliver an outcome which is important. You don't even know the work that's going on to be the enabler of the future. How does that stop you from getting a mentor? That stops you working on the stuff that they're interested in. That is aligning with what they're working on now. The other thing is that females, and me included, tend to be less liked. It feels uncomfortable to sell yourself as some of the guys do. You can be just overpowered by other people who are more proactive or louder in selling what they're doing. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 006</p> <p>Personally, [I] don't think they [women] should change or have to change anything they do to get those opportunities because I think you should be who you are whether you are male or female. And we should be providing these opportunities to people without asking them to change necessarily what they're doing. I don't know how true it is but that potentially females are less confident to ask for those opportunities. – EnergyCo Employee Male 006</p>	<p>If you're perceived to be a particularly strong performer, then everyone wants you on their project. And it could be that you are genuinely a strong performer, or it could be that just somehow, you've managed to build up that reputation in the office as being better than your peers. I think people use the phrase "perception is reality" in our office quite often. – FinanceCo Employee Female 002</p> <p>People that have established themselves and can very much have that conversation with directors, with partners, and go, "What's coming in at the moment? Is there anything interesting? If that's going to come in in a month, can you help me to get through the next month, keep me busy? And then when the project comes in, I'm ready to do it for you." So, yeah. I'd say that's more kind of the behaviour that you kind of have to have to really get on the good projects, I'd say. So that's why it's a political organisation at times, and I think that is one of the elements that can be political, is getting onto good projects. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 001</p>

T.1 Appendix T Gendered OPC: Informal Development Opportunities Continued

<p>Homosocial support with access to development opportunities.</p>	<p>So, it kind of has this domino effect I guess. Once you've got one good opportunity it leads to more, because you know you're kind of in working with people and if it is based on someone's opinion of you and you fulfil that opinion then they rely on you and it kind of self-builds for the future and it kind of grows. – EnergyCo Employee Female 006</p> <p>I'm sure there are women who haven't got close relationships with the leadership team, but there are certainly some women in the organisation that have got senior leadership sponsors. No doubt about that. But whether or not that is as available as it is to women, probably not. I think there's probably a lot more male opportunities because of the kind of boy's club mentality, which is pervasive through all organisations, I think. – EnergyCo Manager Male 001</p>	<p>So there's some concern in our office the moment that we do socialise and drink too much as a group. And when we are a group, we get quite leery. I think that is being driven by the head of our office who doesn't drink, who's now kind of made this blanket statement that we need to think more about our drinking as a group. But there's a lot of pushbacks against that because people are aware of that that's where the real mentorship relationships can be formed. – FinanceCo Employee Female 002</p> <p>Part of making yourself known is a lot of that can be down to going to these social events that get puts on. And if someone does not feel comfortable at the social events, then inevitably they might be a bit of a disadvantage, potentially. I mean I am not saying any of the activities are there to make people uncomfortable, but if you're in a team of basically male-dominated team and you're the only women or there's only two women, you may feel slightly more uncomfortable than if it was a more even balance. – FinanceCo Manager Male 003</p>
<p>Motherhood stigma and a lack of access to development opportunities.</p>	<p>When they become mothers, basically, there's responsibility for them to take care of the kids. So especially as a mother I think you come at a disadvantage in terms of being able to do your work fully if other people don't take that into account. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p> <p>So, it's a bit of a no win situation. To succeed, you've got to be seen to commit to the organisation, but when you do commit then people look down on you because you've essentially, you've given up the opportunity to spend time with your children for the organisation. So, it's a vicious circle. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p>	<p>For example, like what I was saying maternity leave, so sometimes when they come back because they have kids and family obligations they may not be considered for certain projects. – FinanceCo Employee Female 005</p> <p>I think that women tend to do a lot more childcare, so it's like... And I think that it's really hard in this kind of business to do childcare and know that someone's child had chicken pox and she worked from home, I think. Yeah, that really badly affected the project. So I think there's probably an inner flinch a lot of the time when women with kids [get] onto projects because you know that it's going to damage the project. And I know that men at work complain about things like having to babysit their kids, so I know that there is the cultural expectation that if a woman has kids, it will only be her doing things and it's followed through. – FinanceCo Employee Female 006</p>

T.2 Appendix T Gendered OPC: Informal Development Opportunities Continued

<p>Development opportunities and gendered perceptions of risk.</p>	<p>So it's quite natural to make mistakes along the way. That's the way you learn. But if every time you make a mistake, you step back 10 steps, it's going to take you a lot longer to, then, move up. And I think that's what's happening for women. So it takes you longer to prove yourself, than if you happen to make a mistake along the way. It steps you back, further backwards, so that timeframe to be able to get to the top is a lot more extended. And at some point in time, the longer it takes, the more you lose people along the way, because you get exhausted from trying and from putting so much effort into demonstrating yourself. Eventually, you just give up. – EnergyCo Employee Female 005</p> <p>There might be a slight bias towards giving some females those development opportunities, but those high-profile projects, I don't think anyone wants to see them fail, so there's probably more of an emphasis on just putting the right, in inverted commas, person in that role, and looking at how have we dominated EnergyCo with males, I would think. Well, I use that operating system project that we're currently rolling out at the moment as an example. Everyone in a leadership role on that project is a male. – EnergyCo Manager Male 005</p>	<p>To be honest, Michelle, there is gender difference, but clearly today, favourable to women. Yeah. For instance, we have in the company mentoring programs that is designed only for women, no men can apply. We have entry programs in the organisation like a graduate, like clearly that is a target to recruit women. Today, driven by the target, I think most of the... to be completely honest, women are getting better opportunities to develop in the organisation. I see this as being great for them, so being a little bit selfish here. I think we are overdoing some few things. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 005</p> <p>I know just through women on my team in particular, I'm constantly talking to them about it. Them saying they feel they have to prove themselves. I'm like, "You don't have to. You got the job because you deserved it, not because you now have to do something superhuman." – FinanceCo Employee Male 001</p>
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Appendix U Gendered OPC: Personal Power

Personal Power	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – EnergyCo	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – FinanceCo
<p>Gender differences in awareness of opportunities.</p>	<p>Our knowledge as a leadership team, of all of the seven, eight hundred plus people in technology, was really only kind of limited to about a handful less than ten talent... Or people who would be suitable. And so that to me kind of then meant, “Well, we have to fall back to some of the informal mechanisms of who knows who.” And even some of those appointments that we saw eventuate out of that were as a result of a person recommending, “Hey, I know this person and I would highly recommend them for that opportunity.” – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p> <p>I think sometimes people are just not aware. So I’ve certainly had team members who have said, “Well, I don’t know why I didn’t even get considered. It’s always Fred or Joe or Bill that gets considered and I never even get considered.” And my question to them in that sort of space is, “Well, have you told anybody that you’re interested in that?” “I shouldn’t need to, they just went and tapped Bill.” I’m like, “Yep, I know, but the thing is it may not happen like that so go and have a chat.” And sometimes they found out that a similar bias was at play. So I think much of the time many women are not actually aware that they’re getting passed over for something.” – EnergyCo Employee Female 003</p>	<p>I think it’s very much about who you know, because these types of projects are sorted out in the background and allocated to people before most of the people ever know about it. So you, basically, need to have the right connection, to know what’s happening in the background, to have a chance to raise your hand and say, “I’m actually interested in this,” and try and make it happen or to be tapped on the shoulders, really, about it. If you don’t have this connection, or you don’t know this is happening, you’ve got, really, little chance, in my mind, that you’re going to be on one of these projects. So it’s very much about the connections and knowing what’s happening in the business, before it gets communicated. – FinanceCo Manager Female 003</p> <p>I mean it’s very difficult to break into a network. But if I’m honest, I think that’s probably more because it’s a bit of a boy’s club than anything. Probably the only way I’ve only really found that it’s worked for me is you’ve either worked with them or gotten some exposure to them. But you have to consciously make that effort. It’s not something that, “Oh hey, welcome to this particular site. Here’s our network.” And you are straight away accepted into the network. – FinanceCo Employee Female 005</p>
<p>Gendered behaviours associated with personal power.</p>	<p>Men are better generally better at selling their... Or blowing their own trumpet than women do. That’s how big projects get to men more often than females in my opinion. Don’t really know how we can tackle that to be honest with you. I wish I had the answer to that. Because it’s actually a bias. [...]. Like I said, I’m knocking on the door. I’m pretty keen to take the step up in the organisation. I’m being very open about that I’m okay that it takes time, and I’m okay that I’m going to earn it. That’s okay. The advice I’ve been given is that I need to boost my profile. My capability and my achievements and all that sort of stuff are all good, but I need to sell myself that I struggle with. – EnergyCo Manager Female 001</p> <p>It’s often very male-like behaviours. So narcissism goes a long way. If you’re a bit of a self-promoter, if you manage to attach yourself to things, if you kind of make sure that the project looks like it’s yours, those are the types of things that help get you noticed. So what we came to see is that males will often lead from the front in a lot of these group situations. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 003</p>	<p>Personally, I really struggle. I mean there are one or two people that I always work with, and I know they think very highly of me, so therefore we have a working relationship, but even then, on a personal level, we don’t necessarily connect and yet they’re both white males. They are really nice people, but it’s just we don’t really have a lot in common and I struggle even more to do that with people that I’ve never worked with just because you just don’t have anything in common. So, it’s difficult to build that personal relationship. – FinanceCo Manager Female 005</p> <p>People who get picked for high-profile opportunities tend to be similar. Like the ideal. But if someone is picked for it, they do well they’re going to continually get picked. So, I definitely think it plays a huge role in that. – FinanceCo Employee Male 004</p>

U.1 Appendix U Gendered OPC: Personal Power Continued

<p>Overcoming gender differences in establishing relationships.</p>	<p>I really need to show what I can do, before I can look at demonstrating that I'm worthy of getting something else. The key thing for me is to get credibility. And I think the only way I can get credibility, at this point in time, is by performing well, delivering really, really good results, so that I can actually increase my relationships and get a name for the team. But until I've proven that, until I've got a few projects under my belt that the team has delivered, where we've done really, really well, I think it will be extremely difficult for me to get any exposure to high-profile projects and be taken seriously. – EnergyCo Employee Female 003</p> <p>Men are better at selling themselves or blowing their own trumpet than women do. That's how big projects get to men more often than females in my opinion. – EnergyCo Manager Male 002</p>	<p>So I do think, in order to get the higher profile opportunities, you need to be loud, you need to be shouting. You need to be, you know, sort of behind the scenes canvassing to get those when they come in. And not very many women feel comfortable doing that. So, as a result, I have seen women who have not been given the opportunity to take some of these engagements, purely because they just do not shout and scream, and they don't go for drinks after work every time. Or they don't play in the same cricket club. And a lot the decisions happen, not within working hours. And that is the fundamental thing that sort of excludes a lot of women. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 004</p> <p>It can be tougher for women in general to forge those relationships and base it on similar personality traits, which is always the most common way to build trust. – FinanceCo Manager Male 005</p>

Appendix V Gendered OPC: Exposure and Visibility

Exposure and visibility	Outcomes: Gender differences – EnergyCo	Outcomes: Gender differences – FinanceCo
<p>Accessing development opportunities through exposure to powerful individuals.</p>	<p>I don't think we get exposed to business quite in the same way. I think, whenever we do have to get that exposure to higher up in the business, I think we've got to work really hard to get exposure to that. But it's probably provided a little bit more easily to some of our male counterparts. – EnergyCo Manager Female 003</p> <p>So I think there's a very strong need to develop and maintain your own personal brand. That's something that I feel particularly strongly about. And for me, my personality style is being more introvert. So I do actually find that I have to push myself to be more extroverted in the work environment and really kind of work hard on that. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 002</p>	<p>I think it's about, not doing only good job, but being proactive. And as I say I've mentioned before, just making sure you have a personal brand, and you are... Communicate with people making yourself known. I know who to access, but in terms of being able to get those opportunities, it might be slightly different, because a lot of the time you'll speak to people and they'll go, "Yes, we'll consider you when this comes up," but it just doesn't really happen. They fall back to what they already know. I think that could be a problem for most women because it comes back into what I was saying earlier that it's hard to break in and get that original first opportunity to really show what you can do. – FinanceCo Employee Female 004</p> <p>Then that individual will be spoken about, this is a very relationship-based organization, so the more conversations that are had about you... It's kind of like if everyone knows about your reputation then everybody knows to look out for you. Then if there is a project that needs or a piece of work that needs that type of skill or that function represented, or that area represented, that's the name that's on the top of everybody's tongue basically. Then when we go into talent reviews, that is the person that people will spend most of their time talking about. Then when we think about things like mentoring or sponsoring, those are the individuals that tend to get the more attention and that more and more senior people are willing to sponsor. – FinanceCo Employee Male 006</p>
<p>Increased visibility within the organisation due to undertaking a development opportunity.</p>	<p>So not only do you have to prove yourself a lot more, but if you do happen to make a mistake along the way, then it's almost starting back from scratch. While it would be a lot more accepted from a man who almost takes it as, "Well, at least he tried. Now, let's try again." It doesn't set him back quite as much. – EnergyCo Manager Female 005</p> <p>So, when the opportunities arise, people won't even know your name. I guess the exposure to the leadership team is probably key to getting promoted here. And when I came here, I was just doing my job well and things were going well, and then my manager's like, "Oh, the other managers don't know who you are and what you do." – EnergyCo Employee Male 002</p>	<p>So the thing that I was going to tell you about rampaging ambition, rampaging ambition in people is regarded as, you know, it's kind of like a ticket to play. When we see ambition, then we actually associate with talent. We quite often find some of these more sort of overt, look-at-me behaviours and ambition coming out of males. When we see it in women, we actually call it aggressive ambition, and it isn't liked. Those women are often slowed down in our organisation. – FinanceCo Senior Manager 006</p> <p>So, when the opportunities arise, people won't even know your name. I guess the exposure to the leadership team is probably key to getting promoted here. And when I came here, I was just doing my job well and things were going well, and then my manager's like, "Oh, the other managers don't know who you are and what you do." – FinanceCo Employee Male 002</p>

Appendix W Gendered OPC: Informal Promotion Processes

Informal Promotion Processes	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – EnergyCo	Intervention: Gendered Perceptions – FinanceCo
<p>Individuals aligning their behaviour to the ideal worker to be perceived as competent.</p>	<p>It is based on your relationship with the people above you and what their values are whether you align to their values. – EnergyCo Employee Male 005</p> <p>More often than not, I see it's that somebody has expressed an interest in the role and happens to fit the criteria of the lead who's actually looking for an individual to fill that spot. I also think there's quite a tendency to hire somebody who's very similar to yourself because you understand them, they're exactly the same, well, not exactly the same. But they're very similar to you, and so it's an easier transition, and when you're talking about upper leadership, it's natural that you're going to look for someone similar to yourself, and to a certain extent, it's the same sort of opportunities and speaks the same speak, talks the same talk things, so I think that's something that would actually hold back females in this industry. – EnergyCo Manager Female 006</p>	<p>We don't look for people that provide challenge. We don't have a huge diversity in social styles and behaviours because we want largely fairly conformant, frankly white males. And it is a very formulaic type of person. And the nature of the promotion process seeks that type of person. We want somebody that's a bit of an extrovert. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 002</p> <p>I think it's much more, I would call like set in stone for the first, let's say six to seven years of your career because once you hit the associate senior, associate consultant, assistant director, director partner, I think up until the assistant director level, the timeframes are pretty clear cut. Because once you hit the assistant director level and above, a lot of the promotion is really much more based around you demonstrating partner-like qualities. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 002</p>
<p>Career advancement opportunities accessed through relationships.</p>	<p>There is a talent management process, and it is your line leader who is really responsible for representing you in those talent conversations. There is also as I said, that kind of informal approach to selection that... You know, it's based on a lot of personal relationships, and who knows who. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p> <p>I think a lot of it is driven by the leader and whether they see an individual as someone with those attributes and that potential to get to that level. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 001</p>	<p>It's almost like if you have people in your corner willing to fight for you, then you've got a step up, an advantage, instead of someone who might be just as good but doesn't have that support. – FinanceCo Employee Male 004</p> <p>I've seen other people get promoted, it seems to be more through the informal network that sort of allow these promotions to happen, but these seem more if you've got a pre-existing, informal relationship, with other people at that level. That seems to be what sort of has gotten people over the line in getting a promotion. Those who may be hobnobbing in the right circles, shaking the right hand, taking the right people out for coffees. And then you have another group of individuals who are equally, if better, qualified, capable and experienced. But because they're not building or leveraging those internal networks, they seem to get overlooked for promotions or not seen as capable as some of the others, that would be my opinion. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001</p>

W.1 Appendix W Gendered OPC: Informal Promotion Processes Continued

<p>Gender recruitment targets and gendered perceptions of competence.</p>	<p>My point of view [is] if you're going to try and increase the representation in leadership through promotions you kind of have to not just throw them [women] in there because of the agenda you need to create that succession planning and mentoring and training to support them into that role to be successful there in the first place. I've probably seen a lot of examples of being thrust up there maybe just to hit a target but they haven't performed or haven't been set up for success in getting there in the first place. – EnergyCo Employee Female 001</p> <p>My girlfriend also works at my company and some of the stuff that she's going through at the moment she's on the fast track for the leadership. I think she's ready for it for sure but people will be thinking well she's only got that leadership role because of the agenda. That discredits her good work and earning that role in the first place. So that's kind of what I mean by that people's perceptions. Although it's wrong it can kind of hurt that and your respect or thinking of that leader as a good leader is kind of undermined it because everyone is talking like, "Oh you're only there because you're female anyway, not because you've earned it." – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p>	<p>People look to female leaders differently, and in a sense that it's almost like you have to justify why you were the right candidate for the role as a female, particularly in those situations where the tough decisions that I was talking about earlier, where you have equally qualified or even perhaps less qualified female who's going into the role, there's perhaps a perception that while yeah, all eyes are on you, watching you to make sure that you're successful in the role. And particularly in leadership roles. When you have a female leader in the role, and therefore you're perhaps a little bit more watching for those cues that of either success or potential risk in the role. – FinanceCo Employee Manager Female 004</p> <p>I think if you say political game and what people do, is there a political agenda it says... There's 20 people going for a promotion to a manager, and we've only got ten slots. Who do we want to pick? "Well, I've already got seven men already on the job and performing very well. Do we need to balance that out to just tick a box?" And rather than thinking actually have we really properly assessed everyone on the same playing field? Are the women that are on there being appropriately judged? No. We just promote women. – FinanceCo Employee Manager Male 005</p>
<p>Reduced career advancement due to work family conflict.</p>	<p>I actually think when women go and have children, that there are assumptions made around what we want, and our careers take a penalty for that. Then, access to opportunity. – EnergyCo Senior Manager 006</p> <p>I think women have to sacrifice more to get promoted. The people at EnergyCo who have been promoted are the ones, for example, who had a baby, and then were back at work six weeks later. I'm not saying that they weren't incredibly talented people, but I think they have to be seen to give everything to the organisation. Maybe more so than a man who might have the same level of family obligations. I think it's just because... In all organisations, I think, the organisation wants to ensure that you are 100% committed. And any sort of waver from that, then people think you're not, maybe you're not committed, and that they would rather go with somebody who they can think would possibly give more than you. Which is unfortunate. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p>	<p>Then I would say that not working all the hours is considered weakness, so therefore there's no... once you've gone on maternity leave or have kids, basically you're... Because promotion isn't actually done in a [inaudible] fashion, it isn't actually done on what you deliver, it's done on what you look like and how hard you look like you're working. Women are kind of ruled out, even competent women, even very competent women that bring in large amounts of work. If they're leaving at 5:00, they're definitely seen as lesser. – FinanceCo Employee Female 006</p> <p>What does happen though is because you're working so many long hours, that a number of women start dropping off once you get to the team manager level, which is about five years into your career. Maybe three to five years into your career. You start seeing that trailing off. I know of a lot of people that have left our team because the hours just get a bit crazy. The promotions, like the ratio of men to female promotions gets distorted as you go to higher levels. – FinanceCo Employee Male 004</p>

Appendix X Gendered OPC: Positional Power

Positional Power	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – EnergyCo	Mechanism: Gendered Practices – FinanceCo
<p>Displaying masculine ideal worker behaviours to align to powerful individuals.</p>	<p>Yeah. It's definitely important for me. I think promotions in EnergyCo are linked towards more of who you know and who you can influence. Who are your circle of sponsors and mentors? From there you can try to invest time with these people to try to get you to your next role or to your next promotion. – EnergyCo Manager Female 005</p> <p>I think political skill is as important, if not more important than your ability, for promotion I think. Personal relationships are critical, because however good you are, unless you're able to get on with people and work in a team, and interact with your boss, and get your boss' support, then you're not going to get anywhere. So, you can be a fantastic individual, but unless you're able to persuade other people that you can work with them, and be somebody who is both liked, and is respected, then I don't think you're ever really going to get promoted, however good you are. – EnergyCo Manager Male 001</p>	<p>I feel here is a lot of based on who knows you, who is the right people, the team knows you and also who are they, how are they perceived? For example, you could be doing a really good job and you could be working for someone who is also doing a good job, but if this person doesn't have visibility, you kind of don't get much visibility. So you kind of depend on how much everyone knows you, but also how much everyone knows and respect the people that you work for. So basically, if you work for the right people, you'll be good, but if you work with someone who is kind of not part of like these ... not very well recognised, then the feedback kind of gets minimised. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001</p> <p>If I guess if the business promotes people off essentially political skill. I think that's quite important especially in a big organisations like this where there's a lot of people say there's a lot of different views and opinions and sometimes just being pigeonholed and doing a good job isn't enough I suppose. So you need to be able to influence and engage and network with other people, not just your one leader, but a lot of powerful leaders. – FinanceCo Employee Male 001</p>
<p>Displaying masculine ideal worker behaviours to increase visibility.</p>	<p>I don't know that people recognise that it's the talkers that often get promoted when those [inaudible] got ability of an equal nature but are more quietly spoken or not the great salesman, do often get overlooked. And I think that is a flaw in our system and I think there is a massive gap in the business around that. – EnergyCo Manager Female 005</p> <p>What really stepped me into a superintendent level position was that discretionary effort. That was five, six years ago, at a time where the people working the 80-hour weeks were the ones that were rewarded. Your boss would be happy to see you working on a Saturday or on a Sunday and at 10:00 at night. That's less so now than what it was. Once you start getting to superintendent and looking to go to manager, and I look at the people historically that have made those promotions, they're the people that have had good relationships. From superintendent to manager comes much more around less what you know and more of who you know, if that makes any sense. – EnergyCo Manager Male 001</p>	<p>But I think that makes it really difficult for you to do much proactively about it, other than make yourself a strong brand so senior people want to spend time with you, because ultimately, they have the power. So I think for women it's... Because the senior leadership team is completely male, probably women are identified less often as being like you or being in your sector because they don't seem similar. – FinanceCo Employee Female 006</p> <p>There are actually, you know, the ability for an individual to either garner support and sponsorship, to create a business case, or indeed to develop their own business case, with help, will largely influence their ability to progress. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 001</p>

X.1 Appendix X: Gendered OPC: Positional Power Continued

<p>Managing collective perceptions of capability.</p>	<p>Obviously, there are politics. It's a lot about if someone is assertive in terms of promoting themselves, talking to the right people, getting the right, between the quotation marks, "friends", not as much ... Basically, it's the more people like the likelier it is that you'll get promoted, so it's kind of doing thing but also aggressively promoting yourself in terms of why waved on. If you do not do it, people will notice. – EnergyCo Manager Male 002</p> <p>I like to just get in and get things done, and I struggle with what I call kissing babies. Being like a prime minister and getting around and making sure you are rubbing shoulders with the right people, that's something that makes me feel very uncomfortable, but it's feedback that I've had before. If you want to get into a general manager level, you need to be good at that, and you need to be able to market yourself and make yourself visible and have people understand the good work that you are doing, rather than just doing it in the shadows. – EnergyCo Manager Female 002</p>	<p>If you've got enough people supporting, you. The way it works in the panels is that everyone is discussed and if there's enough people supporting an individual then I think (as long as you've got somebody who would scream and shout if they were to say, no, we won't promote this candidate,) then I think you will get promoted. It is all about having the right supporters. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 002</p> <p>So, promotions kind of depend on how much everyone knows you, but also how much everyone knows and respects the people that you work for. So basically, if you work for the right people, you will be good, but if you work with someone who is kind of not part of like these ... not very well recognised, then the feedback kind of gets minimised. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001</p>
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Appendix Y Gendered OPC: Career Advocacy

Career Advocacy	Outcomes: Gender differences – EnergyCo	Outcomes: Gender differences – FinanceCo
<p>Alignment to the ideal worker provides access to career advocates.</p>	<p>Sponsors normally tended to come from people when they worked with somebody. They tended to be very, like the mini-me syndrome. They tended to be people that worked really well with them, they could see themselves in that person, and then they would self-promote that person because they know that, or if they got promoted, they'd get that person to fill in behind them because they knew exactly their style, how they'd manage it, they'd manage it exactly how they wanted, and that's kind of how I think the golden child thread thing kind of happened in the past. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 006</p> <p>A role came about because I had done a piece of work supporting the shows and business planning team. And then when a role came up in that team, the head of that area came up to me and said, "Hey, Dave. I enjoyed working with you. The team enjoyed working for you. And this, I think you'll be a great fit for this opportunity. Is it something that you're interested in?" It was something I was interested in and that time, so went through that recruitment process, which was an open recruitment process. But again, I think because I had done work for that person in the past, and they were obviously happy with the work I had done, plus had some form of informal relationship with them, it put me in a good place to succeed in that application for that role. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 002</p>	<p>Yeah, so sort of the stars. Okay, so the stars to me are, the majority of them I would say are male. They're white, in most cases their British. In most cases they've sort of been mentored or taken under the wing of, informally mentored of course. Taken under the wing of a partner that looks exactly like them, sounds exactly like them. And as a result, has brought them up. The star performers are those people that are very much reflective of the partner group. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 005</p> <p>I've seen... For me though, I think it's more about being personable. People can get to the top on talent, but I think a leader is, the people or person who will actually take a personal interest in you and that's how you build the teams below you. – FinanceCo Manager Male 003</p>
<p>Token promotions (without a career advocate) reduce the likelihood women will succeed.</p>	<p>I still think flexibility poses a big thing around wanting to start families. I think it's the support that they receive when they go into roles. And the saddest thing that I've seen with us going for this [inaudible] by 2025 is ... is that people like females put into roles, probably before they're ready to be. And then you got to sink or swim, pretty much. So no real support to help them do well in that role. And then if you don't do well, then yeah, it's hard to then progress any further after that. – EnergyCo Manager Female 001</p> <p>There's a drive to get diverse people in leadership roles. Obviously some people get picked out because they're natural leaders, but they don't really want to do it. And when we force them down that path, we don't set them up for success and then they end up dropping out anyway. You probably heard, in terms of people leaving the business, there has been a lot of diverse people, and it might be a common trend there. We probably promote getting them that hard that we don't set them up for the roles that we put them in. – EnergyCo Manager Male 003</p>	<p>My organisation feels a lot more traditional, a lot more like a boys' club with ritualistic processes to initiate you and get you up to speed and get you into a promotion ladder, that I think it is very hard for any woman coming in – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 002</p> <p>I don't think we address how we can support, fundamentally, women are different to men. We can all be talented, but there may be additional support as women progress, that they need. And the obvious examples with life decisions around, well, children. I don't necessarily have the answers, but I don't think we do enough to support women more. – FinanceCo Manager Male 003</p>

Appendix Z Summary of the Key Themes Emerging from an Examination of the Ideal Worker Attributes

Ideal Worker Attributes	Detailed Themes	Example Quotations
The ideal worker is gendered.	The ideal worker is described as having masculine attributes, including being dominant, action-oriented, outspoken, loud, assertive, self-promotional, competitive, willing to work long hours, free from dependent care responsibilities and focused on advancing individual interests.	I think the ideal worker it is like what I've talked about, is that strong action orientation, bias to action. And then I would say that about males as well. That it is the same characteristics we see in males that would let them succeed. EnergyCo, Employee Female 002
The ideal worker is free from dependent care.	Supporting Acker's (1990a) conceptualisation of the ideal work, this study found the ideal worker is perceived by men and women to be completely committed to work and free from dependent care responsibilities.	The majority of the company traits and the partner competency model actually seems to churn out a lot of managers rather than leaders. I think there is a huge expectation that if you want to get promoted, you have to be absolutely super styled in all of those dimensions all of the time. And to do that, you mean you have to make significant sacrifices about being present in the office, being happy to accept horrendous travel engagements at the drop of a hat, and to put your private life on hold for very extended periods to meet the operational expectations of delivery. FinanceCo, Manager Male 002
The ideal worker is political.	The ideal worker is politically skilled, men and women described the most competent leaders as 'highly skilled' politicians. These individuals' network, influence, persuade, and display social astuteness in a way that is stereotypically masculine and aligned to the ideal worker personality characteristics.	Obviously, there are politics, and it is a lot about if someone is assertive in terms of promoting themselves, talking to the right people, getting the right, between the quotation marks, "friends". Basically, the more you are like the ideal the likelier it is that you will get promoted. So, it's kind of doing things but also aggressively promoting yourself. Because if you do not do it, people will notice. FinanceCo, Manager Male 002
The ideal worker is associated with increased perceptions of power.	Aligning to the ideal worker by engaging in gendered political behaviours is how individuals align to powerful others. Ideal worker behaviours serve as a proxy for power.	Ultimately, I think the golden boy is a model, it's the work hard, play hard, make demands, let people know what you're doing, you are the best, you are the most confident, the most powerful and anybody else is an idiot, kind of bravado is kind of the mould of success. There is more people that fill the golden boy than the golden girl kind of construct. EnergyCo, Employee Male 006

Z.1 Appendix Z Summary of the Key Themes Emerging from an Examination of the Ideal Worker Attributes Continued

<p>The ideal worker is associated with increased perceptions of leadership effectiveness.</p>	<p>The ideal worker is associated with effective leadership. Existing leaders display ideal worker behaviours to be perceived as more leader-like, and in turn this sets the standard for employees, who are encouraged to mimic these behaviours to be accepted and supported by other senior leaders.</p>	<p>The ideal worker. Yeah, so sort of the stars. Okay, so the stars to me are, most of them I would say are male. They are white, in most cases they're British. In most cases they've sort of been mentored or taken under the wing of, informally mentored of course. Taken under the wing of a partner that looks exactly like them, sounds exactly like them. And as a result, has brought them up. The star performers are those people that are very much reflective of the partner group.</p> <p>FinanceCo, Senior Manager Female 005</p>
<p>The ideal worker is associated with increased perceptions of confidence and competence.</p>	<p>Displaying ideal worker behaviours is associated with perceptions of competence. The more an individual displays ideal worker behaviours the more confident and competent they are perceived to be.</p>	<p>I guess, just getting well-meaning advice from more senior male leaders. But just sort of suggesting that yeah, because I am not really being male and loud and dominant and, I do not know, alpha male leadership. You are giving me guidance to try and make me that because you think that you need that to get to the next division. You can see that I am quiet and hardworking, and I get good results but there is a loudness or a maleness that I am not doing that you want to see before you think that I am ready.</p> <p>EnergyCo, Manager Female 003</p>
<p>Engaging in ideal worker behaviours is perceived to enhance career advancement.</p>	<p>Given that displaying ideal worker behaviours is associated with competence, when individuals engage in these behaviours it, they are more likely to be considered for development and advancement opportunities.</p>	<p>To be the golden child, because you may not have to know what you are doing, but if you can talk the talk with the big managers and rattle off the right buzzwords at the right time, that generally makes you go up the ladder pretty quick. So, you might be awesome at your job and get all the work done and your results are showing that, but if you cannot talk the talk in the right forum with upper management, you typically will not get looked at.</p> <p>EnergyCo, Manager Male 003</p>

Appendix AA Political Sensitivity Group 1 Gender Differences In Awareness

Informal Process	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal networks	Female	I guess the divide only really comes in like male specific activities, which females don't get on to like male team sports and all the rest of it. So like, being a small town there is one manager here in particular that plays for a male Australian Football League team. So, there are other males from the workplace that are also on that team, so then they have more informal exposure to that manager. Which, as long as its good exposure obviously helps them, which kind of automatically rules out any females having the same kind of exposure somewhat naturally because of the environment that's in. – EnergyCo Employee Female 004	What I would say is that I think there are some circumstances where some of the more senior men in the business are able to spend a day or will spend an afternoon playing golf or certain activities that may be kind of open the door and get you that time with someone that I do not typically see women doing. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001
	Male	I think with women, don't get the same opportunities as men, because as I said, there is definitely a boy's club, and I've seen that in all the organisation that I've worked in. When men feel that they can be more like men and behave more like some of the stereotypical behaviours you see in men, whereas if a woman is a part of that group, men feel more awkward to do it. So, as a result of that, then quite often, you don't get to build the same relationships. – EnergyCo Employee Male 002	I'm not sure I can say if there's something similar where maybe not deliberately, but that the male partners, for example, have drinks of their own and then they don't bother inviting the women to that. So women just don't get the same support – FinanceCo Manager Male 004
Informal information sharing	Female	If the entire team that you're working in is majority male they potentially joke and laugh about different things or more macho styles of communication then you may not even know it potentially is unintentional and there's nothing kind of rude or honest. Like there is no borderline behaviours or anything like that involved. It's just maybe not as inclusive because it's all directed in one style of communication or one type of interest type thing if everyone's always talking about the footy and that doesn't really interest that type of person then I've left out a little bit. So I think there has to be some kind of difference that play out. I know like up into meetings where it's been. All female and you can't help but feel a little bit nervous or not nervous but kind of it just feels a little bit different. – EnergyCo Manager Female 005	I think having quite a strong position in the team and having relationships with various people across the team helps me to be trusted and people will come to me with information if they think it's important. For example, recently we just had found out that somebody handed in the notice and he's quite a bit more senior than me, but he came to me to inform me of that information because I have a good relationship with them. So I think the politics and making sure you are in with the right people, which tend to be men. And I like to think that having a broad set of relationships across the team from various different levels, from partner right down to analyst, I think that helps me to feel like I have a position in the team where people would respect and trust me with information. It's about relationships, I think for me. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001

AA.1 Appendix AA Political Sensitivity Group 1 Gender Differences in Awareness Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal information sharing	Male	I think just by the nature of men wanting to spend time with men, the boys club mentality again, I think they're always going to be able to get more access to information than women are. Not all men, but men usually want to be very professional with women, so as not to get themselves in trouble for other things and then maybe sometimes, and then we'll just not share what could be categorised as sensitive information with them. – EnergyCo Male Employee 001	It is literally talking to people. Talking to the right people. But, honestly... and it becomes self-perpetuating because it's not talking in the sense of gossiping but if you are someone who is trusted, if you are someone who uses information responsibly... by the way, if you don't use information responsibly, people don't forget that right? The combination of sociability and being prepared to talk to people and credibility and trust, those two behaviours together, I would say, are the things that are the biggest drivers of who gets this information or access quickly. I think it's the same. Inadvertently, they don't have as much access as information because they're not... they're under-represented at the senior levels. There's no deliberate withholding of information because you're a female versus a male. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 003
	Female	Again, the high-profile opportunity, if you're not in the room or if you don't associate with the people in the room, you don't even know that the opportunity exists. You don't even know about all the work that's happening in the background, where it's progressing and how you could help, or how you could align the actions that you're doing within your operation to actually deliver an outcome which is important. You don't even know the work that's going on to be the enabler of the future. How does that stop you from getting a mentor? That stops you working on the stuff that they're interested in. That is aligning with what they're working on now. The other things is that females and me included tend to be less liked. It feels uncomfortable to sell yourself as some of the guys do. You can be just overpowered by other people who are more proactive or louder in selling what they're doing. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 006	I think that women tend to do a lot more childcare, so it's like... And I think that it's really hard in this kind of business to do childcare and know that someone's child had chicken pox and she worked from home, I think. Yeah, that really badly affected the project. So I think there's probably an inner flinch a lot of the time when women with kids onto projects because you know that it's going to damage the project. And I know that men at work complain about things like having to babysit their kids, so I know that there is the cultural expectation that if a woman has kids, it will only be her doing things and it's followed through. – FinanceCo Employee Female 006
Informal development opportunities	Male	I'm sure there are women who haven't got close relationships with the leadership team, but there are certainly some women in the organisation that have got senior leadership sponsors. No doubt about that. But whether or not that is as available as it is to women, probably not. I think there's probably a lot more male opportunities because of the kind of boy's club mentality, which is pervasive through all organisations, I think. – EnergyCo Manager Male 001	Part of making yourself known is a lot of that can be down to going to these social events that gets puts on. And if someone does not feel comfortable at the social events, then inevitably they might be a bit of a disadvantage, potentially. I mean I am not saying any of the activities are there to make people uncomfortable, but if you're in a team of basically male-dominated team and you're the only women or there's only two women, you may feel slightly more uncomfortable than if it was a more even balance. – FinanceCo Manager Male 003

AA.2 Appendix Z Political Sensitivity Group 1 Gender Differences in Awareness

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal promotion processes	Female	<p>More often than not, I see it's that somebody has expressed an interest in the role and happens to fit the criteria of the lead who's actually looking for an individual to fill that spot. I also think there's quite a tendency to hire somebody who's very similar to yourself because you understand them, they're exactly the same, well, not exactly the same. But they're very similar to you, and so it's an easier transition, and when you're talking about upper leadership, it's natural that you're going to look for someone similar to yourself, and to a certain extent, it's the same sort of opportunities and speaks the same speak, talks the same talk things, so I think that's something that would actually hold back females in this industry. – EnergyCo Manager Female 006</p>	<p>But I think that makes it really difficult for you to do much proactively about it, other than make yourself a strong brand so senior people want to spend time with you, because ultimately, they have the power. So I think for women it's... Because the senior leadership team is completely male, probably women are identified less often as being like you or being in your sector because they don't seem similar. – FinanceCo Employee Female 006</p>
	Male	<p>My girlfriend also works at my company and some of the stuff that she's going through at the moment she's on the fast track for the leadership. I think she's ready for it for sure but people will be thinking well she's only got that leadership role because of the agenda. That discredits her good work and earning that role in the first place. So that's kind of what I mean by that people's perceptions. Although its wrong it can kind of hurt that and your respect or thinking of that leader as a good leader is kind of undermined it because everyone is talking like oh you're only there because you're female anyway not because you've earned it. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p>	<p>We don't look for people that provide challenge. We don't have a huge diversity in social styles and behaviours because we want largely fairly conformant, frankly white males. And it is a very formulaic type of person. And the nature of the promotion process seeks that type of person. We want somebody that's a bit of an extrovert. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 002</p>

Appendix BB Political Sensitivity Group 1 Gender Differences in Engagement

Power base	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Connection power	Male	<p>It is exactly as I said. It is seeking out those projects, or initiatives, or opportunities where you may be working in a cross functional, or cross regional team. And there's plenty of those. I mean on a daily basis, there's something that you could easily put your hand up, and self-nominate, or have your leader nominate you into a particular working group, or opportunity. Another way this plays out, it is most these people trying to find some common elements in their lives. People, kids that go to the same school, same culture background, go to the same golf club, or some common sports interest. They usually come from stuff outside work. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 005</p>	<p>The people who have helped me along the way, in an informal capacity, have been people who I have seeked out, worked with, drunk with never let down, had a very open, transparent relationship with. For the most part, I've been the one who's had to initiate that. But once you do, it becomes very reciprocal. So, to get to the stage that I'm at now, going into the partnership process, I can point to a dozen people who, at different stages, have played that role to a lesser or greater extent. I think, where it happens quite naturally is, if you do work with someone, I think you've got to capitalise on the project experiences that you have to form those relationships because that's where you spend prolonged periods of time with someone. That's when someone gets to know you, that's when someone starts to take personal interest in you because you've been through a tough project together. They've helped you or you've helped them so you forge that bond. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 006</p>
	Female	<p>I think it's mainly through common interests. So, like the one I see most often are peers, People having common interests outside of work and developing that network out there and you can see it definitely strengthening the inside of work relationships. Whether that's going fishing or being in the Australian Football League team or what have you. So, it's kind of being part of other groups. I mean if you just sit at home all week and didn't do anything outside of work you wouldn't receive those benefits, I guess. And that's where I see a lot of it coming from is those outside of work activities. – EnergyCo Employee Female 006</p>	<p>Common groups you see are usually people who work together on those very long term big projects. Another clique here will be people who go to the pub on the Friday. There're some people who I know who do rock climbing together, mainly guys. – FinanceCo Manager Female 005</p>

BB.1 Appendix BB Political Sensitivity Group 1 Gender Differences in Engagement Continued

Informational power	Male	If there's a guy in my team that I know particularly well then the way that I share information with him might be a little more casual than how I share with women like even the language that I use is probably different with women its a little more structured and the language would be a little bit more cold and it just happens naturally without realising. They're male to begin with and there is a kind of rapport that you can have with blokes that you can't have with women. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001	There's already an inherent mode of operation, if you like. You have to flex your style to be aligned to that position to find out what is going on. Of course, if you don't fit that then you just don't make it. I think that's where a lot of the whole office politics starts happening because they haven't been able to do it. They do not fit in. They're not necessarily going to be able to get hold of information to trade it and get the right job or the right promotion of project. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004
	Female	I think being able to access and the different information that's not you know publicly available, like a job being advertised or things more like potential things that are coming up do come about from those outside of work relationships which, I said before can rebuild stuff. Activities that females aren't often particularly engaged in at the engineering department here. Men are pretty tight they go on fishing and camping long weekends and whatever. – EnergyCo [Manager Female 005	There's already an inherent mode of operation, if you like. You have to flex your style to be aligned to that position to find out what is going on. Of course, if you don't fit that then you just don't make it. I think that's where a lot of the whole office politics starts happening because they haven't been able to do it. They do not fit in. They're not necessarily going to be able to get hold of information to trade it and get the right job or the right promotion of project. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004
Personal power	Male	It's often very male-like behaviours. So narcissism goes a long way. If you're a bit of a self-promoter, if you manage to attach yourself to things, if you kind of make sure that the project looks like it's yours, those are the types of things that help get you noticed. So what we came to see is that males will often lead from the front in a lot of these group situations. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 003	People who get picked for high-profile opportunities tend to be similar. Like the ideal. But if someone is picked for it, they do well they're going to continually get picked. So, I definitely think it plays a huge role in that. – FinanceCo Employee Male 004
	Female	I really need to show what I can do, before I can look at demonstrating that I'm worthy of getting something else. The key thing for me is to get credibility. And I think the only way I can get credibility, at this point in time, is by performing well, delivering really, really good results, so that I can actually increase my relationships and get a name for the team. But until I've proven that, until I've got a few projects under my belt that the team has delivered, where we've done really, really well, I think it will be extremely difficult for me to get any exposure to high-profile projects and be taken seriously. – EnergyCo Employee Female 003	I mean it's very difficult to break into a network. But if I'm honest, I think that's probably more because it's a bit of a boy's club than anything. Probably the only way I've only really found that it's worked for me is you've either worked with them or gotten some exposure to them. But you have to consciously make that effort. It's not something that, "Oh hey, welcome to this particular site. Here's our network." And you are straight away accepted into the network. – FinanceCo Employee Female 005

BB.2 Appendix BB Political Sensitivity Group 1 Gender Differences in Engagement Continued

Positional power	Male	Obviously, there are politics. It's a lot about if someone is assertive in terms of promoting themselves, talking to the right people, getting the right, between the quotation marks, "friends", not as much ... Basically, it's the more people like the likelier it is that you'll get promoted, so it's kind of doing thing but also aggressively promoting yourself in terms of why waved on. If you do not do it, people will notice. – EnergyCo Manager Male 002	If you've got enough people supporting, you. The way it works in the panels is that everyone is discussed and if there's enough people supporting an individual then I think (as long as you've got somebody who would scream and shout if they were to say, no, we won't promote this candidate,) then I think you will get promoted. It is all about having the right supporters. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 002
	Female	Yeah, certainly. Look, it comes back to the comment what I just shared with you around the fact that I don't know that people recognise that it's the talkers that often get promoted when those [inaudible] got ability of an equal nature but are more quietly spoken or not the great salesman, do often get overlooked. And I think that is a flaw in our system and I think there is a massive gap in the business around that. – EnergyCo Manager Female 005	Yeah, so sort of the stars. Okay, so the stars to me are, the majority of them I would say are male. They're white, in most cases they're British. In most cases they've sort of been mentored or taken under the wing of, informally mentored of course. Taken under the wing of a partner that looks exactly like them, sounds exactly like them. And as a result, has brought them up. The star performers are those people that are very much reflective of the partner group. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 005

Appendix CC Political Sensitivity Group 2 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement

Informal Process	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal networks/ Connection power	Female	<p>I think the most important thing, and this would be the advice that I give to my own team. I think it's worked for me. And I'm believing in is that the most important thing that you can do for your next job is do a great job in your current job. That's it, it's not politics. The other thing that I do, is make a concerted effort that while I'm in town, just have a coffee with them or a half hour conversation or whatever, just to connect and find out what they've done in their time. And or even when I'm going to a different office, if I know that I've got a couple people that's part of my network that I built through work, that I will reach out to them and say, "Hey, I'm going to be in town. Have you got time for a coffee? Have you got time for a beer? Are you free for dinner one night? Are you free for lunch one day?" Or go to drinks on a Friday with the guys. Whatever. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 003</p>	<p>And I don't know why necessarily guys are wiser to that, but they tend, from what I've seen, they tend to be on the lawyer channel with the senior partner. And that's all guys. And they're junior guys working on that with that senior part in a specific lawyer channel, which is giving them access to a lot of external networks, and support and visibility. But for whatever reason the guys are quicker to kind of be aware of it. I certainly wasn't aware of it in my first three to four years of working. I didn't realise the importance of that visibility and that connecting outside of the workplace with partners to develop and things like that. – EnergyCo Manager Female 003</p>
	Male	<p>It just makes it easier during the nine to five when you've got a direct work issue to pick up the phone and say, "Hey, I need help with this." That's exactly what's happened today. One of the general managers called to say, "Hey, I need help here." Now, the fact that we have beers after work doesn't mean that... If we hadn't had beers, it wouldn't have changed the outcome. He still would've called me, and I still would help. It makes it that much easier. Where I've seen it working is similarly for the females doing that networking. Do I see it crossing over very much? Probably not a lot. There appears to be females supporting each other equally. There's probably just less of them. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 005</p>	<p>I haven't seen anything that I think could make women feel uncomfortable, but I don't know, maybe I have a perception that it can... Maybe it's a bit of a boy's club. I don't really know. There's obviously a reason women leave social events earlier than the men. I just, I just couldn't really say. I stay late and join in because that's how I build relationship. I guess for women it is a bit more tough to really get the informal sponsorship, but I don't know. I think I would sort of know what to do to sort of build it on so I would get this informal sponsorship. From what I've seen. I think women do benefit in the same way. – FinanceCo Employee Male 001</p>

CC.1 Appendix CC Political Sensitivity Group 2 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

Informal information sharing/ Informational power	Female	<p>I don't know how it works but for me, I'm friendly to them and ask how they are, but I don't need to know much else than that. Maybe that's bad. I mean, within an organisation this side and with the number of interfaces, it's not uncommon for you to ask someone for something and then not be the right person, and then have to ask, end up catching up with somebody else. For me, it's about openly ask the question saying, "I need this piece of information. Are you the right person?" and trying by phone if you can't catch them, then by email. Usually they'll call you back, yeah. Now, if your personality was not to want to talk to a lot of people and for you to consistently go to the same people and people you know, you may struggle in this environment. You may need to think about what strategies do you do to get that to work. Is there a lot of information that you need to get from lots of people? Yes. Is it sometimes hard to get the information? Yes, but that's okay. Do you sometimes need to think of strategies on how you could get it easier in the future so it doesn't waste so much time? Absolutely. I don't find it difficult... I make an effort to socialise outside of work and connect with the right people... No I don't think there is a gender difference. I have not seen one, it is the same for men and women. – EnergyCo Female 003</p>	<p>I don't know really to be honest if I have. I know I would have a close relationship with my manager and maybe I'll scope him out to see... you see, I don't know. It doesn't really relate to our work I guess. But I'd scope out my manager. I'd have a really casual conversation like, "Oh you know, is that person going for promotion?" And then that will let me assess, "Okay, who's my competition?" But for work, it doesn't really come into play, I don't think in our line of work. Maybe on the levels above me it might. I don't know. I haven't come across that other than that. Again I think just having... With the department being predominately male, I would say that I wouldn't be aware of a lot of the politics that do go on. I think women have the same access to informal information. – FinanceCo Employee Female 002</p>
	Male	<p>In terms of younger women coming into it or women coming into our organisation at junior levels, I think that we make it... My perception is that it's pretty normalised. It's not even an issue. That it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman coming in at a production tech or at an engineering level or an apprentice level. It makes no difference at all. It's not even a talking point. Not that I've picked up. I think that's more or less around individual preference as opposed to gender. Fishing is a large, so I'd say 70% of the people on my team enjoy fishing, but probably only 30% of the women enjoy fishing, if that makes any sense. Yeah, it's one of those ones that we're talking about personal preferences as opposed to gender bias. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001</p>	<p>In terms of accessing information, like on a pure professional perspective, like in terms of what's in the pipeline, what are the projects that are coming up, what's happening with recruitment, that stuff happens really well, and it's equal across channels.</p> <p>Yeah, I think in our case, more than gender specific, it's about how often are you in the pub, because then you probably have access to some of the information or that information a little faster than through the normal channels. In terms of the actual serious work-related information, no, it doesn't make a difference at all. – FinanceCo Employee Male 005</p>

CC.2 Appendix CC Political Sensitivity Group 2 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

<p>Informal development opportunities/</p>	<p>Female</p>	<p>I think opportunities are... I think naturally at times people will have a perception or say, "Why did that person get an opportunity and why didn't I?" I'm a little bit... I struggle with sometimes our perception of people being given opportunities because I think people get given these opportunities because they see how they grow and they learn from it, and then they seek other opportunities. People who don't get opportunities tend to be people who don't see it and see it as work or complain. I don't know. I get opportunities because I seek them out. – EnergyCo Female Manager 003</p>	<p>I wouldn't see any difference. I think in that regard gender doesn't really come into play. It's just who's most able for the work and who would be a good fit for this. I haven't seen any instances, or I haven't seen a trend where I've thought, "Oh now, they're just sending out to this client, and all men out to that client." No, I think it's just who's the best fit for the job. I guess from an internal perspective, a lot of the, and again this isn't a hush hush point, it's been expressly stated to me by my own manager who's male, that the... Let's say I know someone who'd be on the panel for my interview, my promotion interview and it's a male director and he works very closely with the partner here. And a lot of the directors in here are male. I don't know many female directors. On my department, there's none within our office. It's all male. "Would I maybe feel like I've to adjust my behaviour?" I guess, for the ones that I haven't worked directly with before, if we go to some team activity, I will purposely try and get on one of their teams or if we go for a drink after, I'll sit next to one of them and try and build up a relationship that way. – FinanceCo Employee Female 002</p>
	<p>Male</p>	<p>I think it's not so much gender based. It's more personality based. What you will find is, I think, it's about where you put yourself into certain situations, right. I think that during a project sometimes, you go out for a drink, and that will give you the opportunity to network with someone who is quite senior as well as get to speak to them in a more informal setting and get actual live feedback. I don't know where you end up net on that, but I do see that in certain pockets it can be different in terms of your access to senior people. From a gender perspective again, I don't think it's a gender thing. It's a personality thing. – EnergyCo Employee Male 005</p>	<p>I think it comes down to productivity. Maybe, there is a stereotype that you can apply, which I don't actually see in our team, to be clear. People, will, probably, instinctively tell you, well, males are more proactive, more direct, more confrontational, and, therefore, get these opportunities more than females, in the squeaky wheel gets the oil type of analogy. I don't see that, to be honest. Certainly, on my team where I experience this, I think we are very deliberate around how we allocate opportunities to people. There's definitely a predisposition to people who express interest. For example, I'm having lunch with one of our female managers because she wants to talk about what her next projects are and I will listen to her, as thoughtfully as I listen to a male person. I would say most of my partners and directors will do the same thing. So, I don't see a difference in terms of gender attributes or behaviours to access these. I think it comes down to the individual and whether they seek them out and they push for them and, I think, if you push, you're probably more likely to get. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 005</p>

CC.3 Appendix CC Political Sensitivity Group 2 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

Informal promotion processes/ Positional power	Female	<p>From my own experience I haven't seen that that actually has been something that is really come out here. People in these companies are very heavily reliant on people's capabilities and leadership to make decisions for such a big type of company don't heavily rely on influencing like saying this is my friend or this is the person or things like that. I think that is probably the lowest common denominator of our selection process. I think the leadership and experience and capabilities and skill set's heavier than that. I know how to present myself and a lot of things will stick by themselves. Yeah. How to get promoted? I think that has probably been more difficult especially at EnergyCo whereas any company do more with less so options are limited. Then there's a little bit much more difficult to identify what the opportunities that out there that you can probably consider for your next step. So in terms of how to get promoted, it's a little bit more difficult but how I present myself I think I have that clear. – Senior Manager Female EnergyCo 002</p>	<p>I was going to say, I just don't think that necessarily exists lower down, because I think there is a slight generational gap, where those in the middle have that more rounded view and are actually trying to pull people up irrespective of however they really get on. Sure, you're going to forge relationships, but there's more education around why I get on with certain people or others and am I taking that into my choices when I choose to staff projects? I think that's slightly better lower down. They just don't think about it. It is still very subconscious for them, and they will slowly gravitate to people who are more similar to themselves. Share information with people who are similar to themselves. And I don't think they ever stop because they are very busy and they're flying from meeting to meeting and project to project. I don't think they ever really stop and go actually, "Is this the right mix? Am I making sure that everyone in my team below me is getting the right experiences? Or am I just relied on the people who I already know and therefore feel like I trust?" So I think whilst they engage in it, I just don't think they ever stop to reflect. – FinanceCo Manager Female 005</p>
	Male	<p>If a person does not engage. I think they just, you know depending on what they will do, they might become a little bit disgruntled, they might become disengaged, or "That's the kind of behaviour that has to happen so I'm just going to be a bit sour or not as productive." So maybe performance in roles might decline, so you might have someone who would come in and show that discretionary effort in their job, but now because they have seen all of this and they don't want to engage in it, they might not who that discretionary effort anymore, just come in, "My contract says 37.5 hours a week, that's all they're getting out of me." That, yeah maybe a little of bit discussion, maybe just not pursue. Maybe just not pursue senior promotions, or high-profile assignments because they do not want to have to deal with that kind of behaviour. Or maybe they will look for another job. – FinanceCo Manager Male 001</p>	<p>I know who to access to get opportunities. In terms of actually being able to get those opportunities, it might be slightly different for some people, because a lot of the time you'll speak to people and they'll go, "Yes, we'll consider you when this comes up," but it just doesn't really happen. Male leaders fall back to what they already know. I think that could be a problem for most people, because it comes back into what I was saying earlier, that it's hard to break in and get that original first opportunity to really show what you can do. I wouldn't say I've ever noticed anything different based on gender here. I think, again, how you act on this is based more on personality traits and who you were, similar to especially the leaders than a gender thing. You have to be willing to make those connections to get ahead. – FinanceCo Employee Male 004</p>

Appendix DD Political Sensitivity Group 3 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

Informal Process	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal networks	Female	So a really difficult subject. It's a really difficult topic because, throughout my career, I've known in the back of my mind that it's something that's there because it's obvious that when you go to meetings, you're typically the only woman in a meeting of 20 men or in a team you're the only woman and it is something that is there. But I personally haven't ever felt like it held me back or stopped me thinking I could have a career here. I just didn't engage. – EnergyCo Manager Female 006	I don't find it's a gender thing. It's a personality thing. My prior team of 12, I had five of them that struggled with the type of environment that we're in. Now three of them were males, two were females. It's not a gender thing as men struggle too. It was their type of personality. They don't like the diversity or the amount of interacting you have to do. – FinanceCo] Manager Female 003
	Male	No. I don't think men exclude women. I think just by the nature of men wanting to spend time with men, the boys club mentality again, I think they're always gonna be able to get more access to information than women are. Not all men, but men usually want to be very professional with women, so as not to get themselves in trouble for other things and then maybe sometimes, and then we'll just not share what could be categorised as sensitive information with them. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001	I think it depends on how plugged in you are to those informal networks. I would say that the, it would be consistent through your line communication, and if it's not, then it's not a male/female issue, it's just a leadership issue. I suppose it depends on how actively, or not actively, but how the informal network which tends to be men has been managed and maintained or built or established. I build my networks and don't have an issue so I imagine it is the same for women. – [FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 003
Informal information sharing	Female	EnergyCo has given me fantastic opportunities. That's been from hard work and being able to get things done. I never walked into a meeting I think it's actually about the capability of the person you're influencing. I don't think it has anything to do with gender. At the moment, from where I, I've never felt like the reason I didn't get anything across was gender based. I do think there's certain traits that probably present at a GM's forum where everyone was male. At times sometimes I felt quite intimidated, and it took a lot for me to get a message across in that sort of forum. I'm not sure if that was my lack of experience or the lack of diversity. It was probably me – EnergyCo Manager Female 006	I'm trying to think. I think it (accessing information) comes down to just more about personality than gender. But I think there's probably a legacy boy's network, which existed from the kind of boys club stuff that happened. So they have Friday football, which the girls are invited to, but they don't really feel totally included. So they'll probably have more of those kind of vertical relationships, which are built up less formally through social stuff. But I think a lot of the informal stuff does happen through socials. I think men and women have equal opportunities. I don't think it makes a difference. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001

DD.1 Appendix DD: Political Sensitivity Group 3 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
	Male	<p>I guess for whatever information it may well be that is more likely or common if there's some leakage with your role, rather than just general gossip, it's not relevant. Or, it may well be. Information cascades according to hierarchy, relational hierarchy. I don't see gender being a key part of it. I don't see, for example, the female on the EnergyCo leadership team, I don't see her being excluded from information that concerns her. I'm sure that we've got a few working mothers on the job. They're dealing with looking after kids, some of them as equal working mothers, some of them But, they're dealing with all the other issues that most males in traditional households don't deal with. They do an amazing, amazing job but I'm sure that they, because they're rushing out after getting kids ready and they're rushing out to pick kids up from day-care and things like that, I'm sure they're excluded from informal information flow that they might not otherwise be excluded from simply because they may not be there. But we don't treat men and women differently. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 005</p>	<p>No. I don't think there's any difference, and I think it's, sometimes it's a bit refreshing that some of the very old white middle-aged partners that actually do take this seriously, this diversity stuff and are quite vocal. Say, "Look, this is very disappointing that we haven't got as many women promotes or whatever." I'm being quite vocal on it, and so I've said we should be doing more to bring people through and get people to the level that are on speed to promote through. I think they get treated with similar respect. – FinanceCo Manager Male 005</p> <p>I think my big point here is, it's just that there is an unintended discrimination to females by virtue of the fact that information flows happen at a senior level in the firm and there's just less females involved at those levels. It's a structural thing. It's purely a structural thing. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Male 005</p>
Informal development opportunities	Female	<p>I feel like personally I've not really had any barriers in my journey so far. I'm trying to think of how they might be perceived to be barriers. The thing is it is a very male-dominated environment and providing, I guess some people, and I'm not particularly that confident all the time, but provided that you feel confident to hold your own in those meetings or in those discussions with all males, I think sometimes you could feel a bit intimidated, but personally I've not really faced that many barriers or challenges in the sense that I think it's kind of a level playing field for people, but it is a male-dominated environment. There's no getting away from it. It's really hard to say because there's not many women. But yeah I think it's equal. I think it's equal to the extent that people... If I just take an example, there's a guy who has a very good reputation in another team from mine who is always busy on these big deals and always works on these high-profile large projects. And he's in favour of one of the partners in that team. – EnergyCo Manager Female 001</p>	<p>When I was talking my manager, my counsellor, we were talking about careers and I think his view of my career is totally different than my view. He sees it very much that I'm like him and I would have the same experiences as him, and that can be quite grating when I don't think there's any... I don't think the counsellors or the people who are supposed to be guiding you do any kind of gender training or thinking about how my career is different in that... – FinanceCo Employee Female 006</p>

DD.2 Appendix DD: Political Sensitivity Group 3 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
	Male	I think a lot of it is because women don't wanna engage in office politics, so it's left with just the hardy few who are prepared to stick it out in the trenches, and become that battling person to get to the top. I think a lot of great talent is wasted and lost through the career process, as women just don't want to engage. Whereas you see a lot of men who will continue to do that. And some of that is because of families. You know, women will decide it's better just to ... Why fight the battle when they can be with their families, is it the best thing for them and their families? – EnergyCo Employee Male 002	I don't see a difference in development. I think if they're the right people, everyone's treated exactly the same. A bit of background, you probably know TAS is, as a business is very male orientated. The team in Leeds that I work with has historically been very female orientated. But I've worked with a lot of talented women who progressed because they were good enough. They were the top of their peer group and that's why they've progressed. So I've seen them treated the same as anybody else would. And they've commanded the respect of people because they are very good at what they do. – FinanceCo Manager Male 003
Informal promotion processes	Female	Something that I over the years of being in a manager role have noticed is, you can't be blind sighted, you have to be very open to understanding that some people don't sell themselves well. You have to make sure that you recognise capability and potential for what it is, not how well they can talk, sort of portray themselves or market themselves. And when it comes to promoting, I have seen, and in my early days have been responsible for myself, having someone that can sell themselves very well, promoting them when in actual fact I sat back and reflected a year later that someone who had very good capability, very good engagement skills and very good influencing skills but wasn't a great sales person of their capability, didn't catch my attention more. And that's something that I've definitely had to do. I've definitely had to make sure that I just don't go about my normal every day leadership role. I've actually had to consciously make sure I do, I consciously go and sponsor meetings that need major change so that I can influence, and actually showcase myself in my capability. Because it is a natural bias that we do have that males can often do things better. In the business it's still live, but I don't think it's aggressive by any means. – EnergyCo Manager [Female 006	I think just trying to have as much clarity as possible about promotions and what it takes to get to the next level. Because I think the confusion comes when you don't know why people are getting favoured over others. And I know that the world doesn't really work like this. But if you do genuinely have a tick box exercise of this is what it takes to get to this level. This is what we're looking for. If you meet these criteria regardless of your gender, then you should be considered. And then they actually should stick to that. Because I think the problem is that because those become so blurry and nuanced, that then it's very hard to know why people are being favoured over others. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001

DD.3 Appendix DD: Political Sensitivity Group 3 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
	Male	<p>I think in terms of evaluating people from a promotion criteria, it's quite fair and quite gender neutral. Everyone who is a top performer will get promoted regardless of gender. I think what I have noticed though is there are some times when you get these feedback forms, you can have... I think the language changes in some of these cases. Sometimes people might be noted as being either too docile or not assertive enough, especially if they're women. In terms of promotion, I don't think it really affects your chances if you're male or female. – FinanceCo Employee Male 005</p>	<p>I actually think it's probably a balanced approach. I haven't really spotted any real gender differences in the organisation. But I think it's pretty balanced, to be honest. Some of my female colleagues are the best performing individuals. So yeah, I don't think any one particular set gets favoured more than the other. I think it is quite merit driven. To be honest, I imagine a lot of women still want to be mothers, like I'd say that, and it's probably more difficult or they're not quite as long career oriented. Whereas most men are completely focused just on career, career, career. Maybe a lot of women have a bit more of a holistic approach to life. Not all of them, for sure, that'd be ridiculous, but as like a general number of the population. Like if only a very small number of people end up becoming partners and let's say ten out of ten men or nine out of ten men really are just focused in their careers, and say you said 50% of women are just focused on their career, 50% want to have a more balanced lifestyle, start a family, et cetera, you've got a much larger proportion of men who are going to be gunning for those positions so they're more likely to get there. There's just more people going for them, if that makes sense? – FinanceCo Employee Male 004</p>

Appendix EE Political Sensitivity Group 4 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement

Informal Process	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal networks	Female	<p>So there are individuals, and I think it's the mass of individuals incidentally, that are not as successful at building their internal networks. I see them beavering away at their work everyday, looking for snippets, or maybe they're just head down and they're very busy. I see that a lot of people don't get how important this stuff is, or perhaps they just don't think that they're ever going to be able to get to that spot. The real power in our organisation is in those relationships and in those sponsorships and in those informal networks. I actually think that there is a ... I think it's key to success and I think that once you get over say superintendent kind of level, I think that it comes much more into play. You need to be talked about. You need to be talked about, you need to be given opportunities, and those do tend to come from informal type relationships where your network is working for you. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 003</p>	<p>I think the main challenge in our department is whether a woman feel comfortable being in an environment where it's mostly men basically, because if they're not, and they start to avoid these social drinks because of it, then I guess that would be a challenge. Personally, I don't go because I feel uncomfortable. – FinanceCo Employee Female 002</p>
	Male	<p>If I do a good job. Put my head down pretty soon people will notice me. I watch people spending a lot of time managing politics, but I just don't believe you need to. I've got more experience and good technical and leadership skills and so on than this person who is engaging in it. So I will get there. – EnergyCo Manager Male 005</p>	<p>I've probably invested a little less than I probably should. I think it's important in the sense that especially, and I can only speculate, but as you get more and more senior the process gets a bit more competitive. I can imagine that the informal network that you have and the relationship you share with other people within your team as well as across other FinanceCo teams gets more and more important. Personally I've not really experienced this. I think so far it's been quite meritocratic. Yeah, going forward, I can see that there are benefits obviously of that informal network, yeah. – FinanceCo Employee Male 005</p>

EE.1 Appendix EE: Political Sensitivity Group 4 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

Informal information sharing	Female	Office politics? To be honest, I think it's a waste of time. I don't know, to me office politics is like ... it's just, we're talking about issues behind people's backs, and stuff like that. And drama about different people, and how things are rolled out. And yeah it affects me and what information gets shared... I don't engage. – EnergyCo Manager Female 001	I think the hardest lesson that I've had to learn here is that they tell you when you arrive, that it's very much a meritocracy. I don't think it is a meritocracy. I think there is an element of game playing, which we spoke about earlier. And I think it took me slightly longer to catch onto that than others, and I don't know if that's because I am a woman or if that's just because I was a bit naive. And I think at the time when I clocked that I was maybe being overlooked at the expense of others, there was a gender lens. But I think once you know that you do need to do the game playing, then I think women and men are equally good at it. It's just knowing that there is that element to the job in order to be taken seriously and promoted. I think just trying to have as much clarity as possible about promotions and what it takes to get to the next level. Because I think the confusion comes when you don't know why people are getting favoured over others... Or if you choose not to engage in it. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001
	Male	I feel like there's a lot more backroom wheeling and dealing and you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours over the male side of things. Female peers that I've worked with have been a lot more... This is the way it needs to be done, because this is what the procedure says, or something along those lines, more direct than persuasive, I guess. I think about the people who've come to me when I was in a more functional role and said, "Oh, we can do that if we have to, but in return, I need this." They've all been male... But I don't engage in it. – EnergyCo Manager Male 002	The reason I laughed is I've never done information sharing well. I suspect that's probably why I'm in the position I'm in. I suspect that's also why my career is probably capped within this organisation. I think office politics, what does it mean to me? It's a little bit of not wanting to give anyone bad news and not challenging effectively or not challenging the way that we should do or not being comfortable with the challenge. I think the office politics sort of things is important from a career progression and I guess greasing the wheels, I suppose, in a number of avenues. – FinanceCo Manager Male 001
Informal development opportunities	Female	So there's certain people within the organisation who seem to be really well connected to a lot of people, and also seem to be in the know of things that are going on within the organisation. So those people sort of become these conduits of connecting people to opportunity, is something that I've seen happen. Yeah, so I definitely I would say definitely I've improved in my sort of awareness people in the breadth and experience of people across the functional sort of dynamic that exists within EnergyCo. – [Female Employee 006	And it's quite difficult to know how those connections are necessarily made from my standpoint because I don't... We don't necessarily directly work with people. I am not quite sure how people make them. I know one of the ways that it's done quite a lot is people have innovation ideas, and then they'll go and they'll tell the main partner, Rob, about their ideas. And then they'll build up a relationship with him, and he'll argue for their promotion or he'll argue for them to get special bonuses, and then they'll get special bonuses. – [FinanceCo Employee Male 005Because it's not supposed to happen, it's all under the table, so it's impossible to challenge people to why it happens or discuss why... It's just not for me – FinanceCo Employee Female 006

EE.2 Appendix EE: Political Sensitivity Group 4 Gender Differences in Awareness and Engagement Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
	Male	I think a lot of it is because women don't wanna engage in office politics, so it's left with just the hardy few who are prepared to stick it out in the trenches, and become that battling person to get to the top. I think a lot of great talent is wasted and lost through the career process, as women just don't want to engage. Whereas you see a lot of men who will continue to do that. – EnergyCo Employee Male 001	I've probably invested a little less than I probably should. I think it's important in the sense that especially, and I can only speculate, but as you get more and more senior the process gets a bit more competitive. I can imagine that the informal network that you have and the relationship you share with other people within your team as well as across other EY teams gets more and more important. Personally I've not really experienced this... Yeah I haven't. I don't engage in it. – FinanceCo Employee Male 005
Informal promotion processes	Female	I was always told, "Sit down. Be a good girl. If you work really hard success will come," and I have massive tiara syndrome. I sit there, and I get things done, and I don't tell anybody about it and I expect to be rewarded. Now people are saying they don't know the good stuff I do, and I'm like, "Well, I did that. I did that. I did that," but it's worthless because I'm not shouting from the rooftops. – EnergyCo Manager Female 002	Whereas I feel like, there is kind of maybe the culture in women that we... don't necessarily want to be the ones in the face, asking for promotion, asking for certain opportunities, where... I think that's where you see the biggest gender divide. – FinanceCo Employee Female 004
	Male	I think understanding the process is helpful. I don't think you need to engage in any office politics to understand that. I think it's quite transparent. I don't engage in it I think there's a little bit of if you're being pessimistic, there's a little bit of this is what we say we'll do, well then behind closed doors, slightly different decisions being made for whatever reason. Which is all about positioning yourself in the best position possible to answer all the questions that might arise for you, and knowing where I suppose the challenge will be on if this was a business case or your year-end performance, what would someone say that might be negative and how would you address that? Try and address that head-on. And I think that's just a, a kind of a sensible thing to do anyway to understand your strengths and weaknesses. – FinanceCo Manager Male 006	For me I don't see it (political skill). It's not something I keep in the forefront of my mind all the time. I'm not always just looking for that next step but I think the main thing that helped me and I'm actually will just be transitioning into another role as we speak. It's not a promotion but it's like an equivalent level role. But what I always sort of keep my mind is what peers and superiors think. You know and how I come across. I'm not necessarily trying to market myself to people like that but I guess that's just not in my personality. – EnergyCo Employee Male 007

Appendix FF Shared Perceptions of the Ideal Worker Norm

Informal Process	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal networks	Female	<p>The longer you've been there the more contact you have. You can just get things done a lot easier because you know someone who will help you out with things. You don't know because it's such a big organisation. There's no clear understanding of who to talk to in certain situations. So the longer you been you may not know exactly the person to talk to but you know someone who will know someone to talk to and that really can affect how effective you can be. – EnergyCo Employee Male 002</p>	<p>Yeah. No, it's interesting actually when you put it like that, I think I don't feel like I change myself or feel like I have to change the way I communicate or I guess, but I've observed it before where it's hard to know what this individual, to what extent they changed themselves or whether that was just them. But there was a director who was a female who was trying to go up to partner. She ended up leaving the firm but she was very aggressive and I mean I used to hear her shouting on the phone to people and just being really rude and demeaning and I don't know if obviously at that point it was hard to know whether that was just her as a person or whether that was because she felt like she had to be that way in order to stand out amongst the men. And I didn't know her personally on a more of a social level to know what her personality really was like. But it might have been that she'd changed so much so that that was who she really was then. That it felt like she had to not be a very nice person in order to succeed. And she didn't end up succeeding. Because I think ultimately she didn't have a lot of respect from people. – FinanceCo Manager Female 001</p>
	Male	<p>Women we have to prove ourselves. We have to prove that we are good enough sort of in terms of getting a promotion or getting an activity for us to be considered it's like you need to prove yourself. While I feel sometimes with men they've been given the chance to grow into a role. There is still a difference. There is much more opportunity today. Definitely much more but it's still a difference. Yeah. I think the difference is based on for someone to be promoted into a role generally is because that person has demonstrated already that is pretty good at what she does. For men to be promoted sometimes is because they want to give him a chance and see what he can develop in that role. I have seen how other females try really hard to adapt to that environment and to be calm sort of part of that conversation topic and that thing. I naturally gravitate to the men in the things that I have to do. So it's a little bit easier for me to connect with the GMs but for other people, it's just I can see that they try to fit into that main oriented world. It's difficult. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 002</p>	<p>I would probably say historically, that women maybe have had to adapt it. Yeah I think that is probably a fair call. I think maybe some of the more senior women in the organisation, yeah, I can definitely see that being the case. Particularly, I hear about how the organisation used to be 15 years ago. And it was very much lunches and it was the big four and we had much less competition, and it was all cushty, cushty. And taking clients out for lunch, where I think that definitely would have had much more of a baring. I think there's been a bit of a shift now, in terms of how we compete. I think we do compete much less on a relationship basis. And it is more about how capable are you and how capable are your teams. Which I think is probably to the benefit of women because it doesn't come down to how can you develop a good relationship with a client. Be it, say the CFO of a PLC of a 250 organisation which obviously 15 years ago or even now, the majority of whom are men. And building that relationship might be a little bit harder for a woman than a man is. But I think now it's kind of like, it's much more professional and your relationship with your client is driven by if you give them value or not. – FinanceCo Employee Male 006</p>

FF.1 Appendix FF Shared Perceptions of the Ideal Worker Norm Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
<p>Informal information sharing</p>	<p>Female</p>	<p>So, to me, the entire process is not transparent, it's very subjective. There's a systemic bias where the people that assess you believe that you need to look and sound like them, because it is a partnership and that's what they would accept. And if you're any different, it's very hard to actually get through that process itself. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 004</p> <p>Yeah, I think that they do, and I also think that women have less... you have less room to play as a female. So you know that a behaviour that is... Okay, so take the classic kind of thing on aggression versus assertiveness or that kind of thing. You have a lot more kind of less restrictions on who will accept whether you're speaking up, et cetera, had feedback for a lot of years that I then realised were in a different group and said, "Oh look this is one of the things that I need to work on, not taking over all the space and so on," [inaudible] previously. I'm not talking about being female, I didn't realise at the time but when I went into another group I said, "I probably need to make sure I let other people talk more and so on," had this feedback fairly consistently. And other groups were saying, "We don't see that at all. We would like to hear your views more," et cetera. And it was really quite, it really threw me because I had so much, so many times heard, "No, you talk too much, or you're taking over too much of the space." And when I reflect I actually don't think I was taking up very much of the space at all but you're expected to take up even less as a female. So there is this piece on how do you actually make sure balancing what I was talking about before and now visibility of what the work that you're doing and that your teams are doing and so on, but playing within the space that's kind of "allowed" in inverted commas, because otherwise you might actually make the situation worse. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 004</p>	<p>I think if you are a woman and you are too masculine or too feminine, it's going to be tough for you. I am super conscious about coming across in meetings as the angry woman stereotype. Or the loud woman or, "Oh, Anna's just raising that DNI issue again." And it's like, "Well, it's because you're all men and you don't think about this every day. And I do, and if I don't raise it, it ain't going to happen." So I definitely think you have to ... I think if you are a woman, it is this like whatever. I think it's this double bind where you can't be too feminine but you can't be too masculine. Because if you're too masculine then it freaks men out because they don't really know what to do with you. And if you're too feminine, then you're not seen as aggressive enough to be in the transactions business. So I personally feel that I have had to, not tamper, but really think about the language that I use when I use it. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 005</p>

FF.2 Appendix FF Shared Perceptions of the Ideal Worker Norm Continued

	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
	Male	<p>So lots of women's experience where they have felt that, because male dominated or otherwise, that they've had to take on some of that persona. So be, whether it's more aggressive or assertive or whatever some of the words are. Even I heard a story the other day more just swearing, if that's the local ... They don't actually swear, but lots of circles do. So they felt the [inaudible] do all these things to fit in and be seen to have those male attributes in order to be promoted. So there's obviously something there in our systems. And again, I don't know how much you've had a look at EnergyCo, but we're probably doing lots of things in other groups, too, but really attacking that bias is one of the key things that we're trying to do, as well as attracting people, which I think we're doing a much better job. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p>	<p>I think what's part of what's happening is that I don't think it is the same, but I think that there's more flex on the women's side because they're having to operate in a male environment. I guess that's what I'm trying to say. So if I also speak to more senior female partner and there aren't that many who for me, I wouldn't experience that very differently to talking to a senior male partner because I see that there's already a inherent mode of operation, if you like, there, that's not trying to save someone's [inaudible] you have to flex your style to be in that position anyway from within going there. Of course, if you don't fit that then you just don't make it. You don't make it to that point, and I think that's where a lot of the whole office happening in terms of a manager maybe been in perhaps that's enough to answer your question, which is because they haven't been able to do it. They're not necessarily being able to get hold of you to buy information to trade it and get the right job or the right promotion of project and that's a tough one. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004</p> <p>I think they get treated with similar respect. I think sometimes they probably have to shout a bit louder, and that's because unfortunately, sometimes people just assume that if you go into a room and there's five people, the oldest looking person who's male is probably the person in charge, which isn't always the case. I think people have that bias and that I suppose would pose a challenge to females in certain instances. From what I've seen in meetings and leadership, and that I think there's women of various different roles, and they get the same air time, and space, and respect in what they say and what they do. I think it'd be nice to have some more women in probably some of the more senior and probably more I suppose high-profile roles. – FinanceCo Manager Male 005</p>

FF.3 Appendix FF Shared Perceptions of the Ideal Worker Norm Continued

<p>Informal development opportunities</p>	<p>Female</p>	<p>I definitely think men are not aware of it because, it's just something they've never really had to think about. And I see it with even the more junior men that are reporting to me. They don't really think about it as much. Women definitely adapt their style and I think it makes you be somebody that you're probably not at times. But it's probably one of the only ways to make sure that some cases that there is some justice, whether women are aware of it, I'm pretty sure that they are. So, there's simple things, right? And you do see yourself changing in certain scenarios and I've definitely seen it. I've also seen the behaviour of other women change. And I mean, they've admitted to it right? But that's just what you do to get opportunities. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 005</p> <p>But obviously when you're looking at kind of manager and senior manager levels, there's no differentiating between, why a woman would get promoted over a man, or man opposite, vice versa. But then obviously you caveat with the point that, there aren't as many females that are going for those promotions. I think predominantly, it's probably... This isn't... My view of it is that it is more kind of being able to get the balance right, when you, obviously we're taught [inaudible] obviously, it's a bit rubbish for women in [inaudible] that there is still that kind of traditionalism where, when you have kids, that the woman obviously will do pick ups, drop offs and stuff like that. So I know for example when I was in audit, I spent all of my time when I was in audit. And actually CF... We have nobody in our team that has young kids. We have no women in the team that have young kids. And the one who did in corporate finance has now left the team for more of a nine to five job. – FinanceCo Manager Female 006</p>	<p>The other point I like to make as well is, I had noticed that given that we were in a mining company, the females that we hire are... Tend to be more... Tend to show a higher traits of men traits. Being slightly dominant. Slightly outspoken to work their way through in a men dominated industry. I found that quite interesting. Because the people that we were hiring and developing were either single, without family or just given birth to a child, so that we know that we'll get someone for the next 12 months kind of thing. There's a lot of deliberate hires I find. As I observe in finance anyway. Even the male, even the female managers that I work with, they tend to have higher dominant masculine traits. This based on experience in the past. Then someone that is motherly and loving and fun living and stuff. Yeah, they probably do. I wouldn't categorise them as one of them. They're probably [inaudible] people want to get things done. Happy to have a tough conversation with people than.... Then that's one of my thing. I think we sometimes tend to bias towards female that show that dominant trait. – EnergyCo Manager Male 005</p>
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FF.4 Appendix FF Shared Perceptions of the Ideal Worker Norm Continued

	<p>Male</p>	<p>Well, I mean when it comes to daily work I don't think there's a lot of difference. I think people get treated equally. Maybe one I can think of is again, the case is with the women. When they become mothers, basically, there's responsibility for them to take care of the kids. Sometimes I'm not sure people are aware of the ... We had, for example, this project I'm working on with this female director. She has kids and her husband is also partner somewhere else it sometimes happens that the nanny cancels last minute or there's some issue, so she needs to take the kids to school, pick them up and put them to bed at 6:00-7:00. Basically she's just running all around the place and trying to keep up, also with the meetings that we're having with regards to this project. – FinanceCo Manager Male 002</p> <p>See you're automatically under some pressure and there's an additional part to that which is, in this case I know this person has two children and we've had conversations about how she manages that with work. I've seen some of the emails which are confidential and I know this conversation is confidential as well, but it's almost like the male partner or director who she's working for don't want to get that these might be issues for her, in terms of working late or working around those other commitments, which of course then makes it harder for her then to impress because it seems like she's not putting in the effort in the way that they want to see the effort being put in. I just think that because the leaders have said 70%, because the proportion is just so male dominated at that leader level, at that partner level, there's just a lack of or just not a clear understanding of where people are coming from and say, where women are coming from. – FinanceCo Manager Male 004</p>	<p>I can't, it's difficult. On my team, we could, well we're not too bad. So we've got six partners on my team, one lady and then I think the next level below we've got two directors, both guys, and then the next level below that we've kind of got two guys that are full time in the team and then a lady, she kind of spends some time in our team, some time in another team. So split between my team directly, we don't really have many women. But then broader in terms of my department, I don't really think that it does have that much of a bearing, particularly at my level. I think what they're looking for the people is just who's the best at their job, and I don't think that I suppose managers are usually in their mid to late 20s, gender I suppose is less of an issue. You don't have children, you're capable of committing just as much as a guy is. – EnergyCo Manager Male 004</p>
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FF.5 Appendix FF Shared Perceptions of the Ideal Worker Norm Continued

Informal promotion processes	Female	<p>I also think there's quite a tendency to hire somebody who's very similar to yourself because you understand them, they're exactly the same, well, not exactly the same. But they're very similar to you, and so it's an easier transition, and when you're talking about upper leadership, it's natural that you're going to look for someone similar to yourself, and to a certain extent, it's the same sort of opportunities and speaks the same speak, talks the same talk things, so I think that's something that would actually hold back females in this industry. – EnergyCo Manager Female 006</p> <p>Trying to adapt to this male culture they try to behave a little bit like bloke by trying to fit into that culture. Trying to fit like male will do probably and that doesn't go very well with the people that they are reporting to them. So they actually didn't fit the organisational culture so they have to go and fair enough they have to go. But what you think is why they probably felt under pressure to behave like that to the point that the company had to say goodbye. So that is the thing a lot to reflect for those leaders and a lot to reflect for a specific company because you want to promote people and get people in positions that inspire others not that are going to behave badly. So yeah. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Female 003</p>	<p>I think it's much more, I would call like set in stone for the first, let's say six to seven years of your career because once you hit the associate senior, associate consultant, assistant director, director partner, I think up until the assistant director level, the timeframes are pretty clear cut. Because once you hit the assistant director level and above, a lot of the promotion is really much more based around you demonstrating partner like qualities. – FinanceCo Senior Manager Female 002</p> <p>No, I think it's different. I think despite what we say it's ... yeah, inherently it's different. I think I could be an overconfident man, and I could bullshit my way through ... excuse me, yeah, I could bullshit my way through not knowing something, and I could be an equally, if not more, competent woman, but because I don't have the propensity to bullshit my way through things I will not be as successful. So, bravado, which stereotypically is more common in the men that I work with at least in my industry group, that can kind of go over any sort of technical skillset or knowledge gap. I think we're harder on women. Essentially, I think a mediocre man can get promotion, and an exceptional woman will get promoted, is how I kind of look at it. So, to be a woman in my team and my organisation I think you have to be exceptional, where I think you could be average and be a man and get promoted. – FinanceCo Employee Female 005</p>
	Male	<p>I would say that if we go back to the thing that differentiates is I think whether you're male or female, if you do a great job in your current job, and then you display these other top characteristics, I think you should naturally get set up to a promotion type of opportunities. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 001</p>	<p>Yeah. I mean look, I can only talk from my own frame of reference. You see personally, if I take myself as an example, when I went through up the ranks, I found that a challenge. There was some big alpha male partners that I was sometimes, I felt threatened by. I didn't have the courage sometimes to stand up to and engage as a peer, which they might have expected at times because I'm from an Asian community. I'm very hierarchical. I'm also submissive in my mindset, so as much as I'm very a confident guy and good at what he does... Now, would I see that there are women in the practice that probably have the same challenge, but I wouldn't say more so women because some of the partner characters that you see in alpha males, perhaps. Most definitely, but I don't think it was because they're women or men. I think it's just the behaviour some of them may demonstrate. – FinanceCo Manager Male 005</p>

Appendix GG Political Maturation

Informal Process	Gender	EnergyCo Example	FinanceCo Example
Informal networks	Female	<p>Well-known, well-recognised, is probably the key thing. I would say that, the longer you have been in EnergyCo, the more chance you probably have, because you know more people. That would be the key thing I have seen so far. I'm not 100% sure about performance or anything like that. I really feel like it's the networking that really helped the most. I think it's a bit of a mix. I think, as you move in your career, you realise what has helped you to move up and what hasn't and what recognition you have had and/or that you might have missed out on. So I think there's a part of it that comes from experience. I don't think it's something that gets explained to you very much, at all, how to navigate this world and what is good or bad to do and how to network properly or to sell yourself, et cetera. I don't think that ever gets explained to you, as a woman. – EnergyCo Manager Female 002</p>	<p>That's in the operational environment. Otherwise I mean we've got a few more female engineers and sort of female professionals. I don't get the sense that they need to be something wildly different to what they are. We all tend to need to adapt to the environment that you're in in some way. That's funny, I'm mentoring a lady who's wonderful. She's very different and she's quite proud of herself and I sort of have these challenging conversations with her as she wants to get to a position X and I'm trying to say, to me I believe that I bring ... I put different hats on but they're all actually still elements of me. I just bring out bits and parts of me to suit the certain ... the situation that I need. To me that's quite natural and I'm not being true to myself. She's very much of the no, I'm like this and this is me and this is what I do. It's like yep, but you might need to be a little bit more of this to get to the next level. – FinanceCo Manager Female 002</p>
	Male	<p>I've probably invested a little less than I probably should. I think it's important in the sense that especially, and I can only speculate, but as you get more and more senior the process gets a bit more competitive. I can imagine that the informal network that you have and the relationship you share with other people within your team as well as across other teams gets more and more important. Personally I've not really experienced this. I think so far it's been quite meritocratic. Yeah, going forward, I can see that there are benefits obviously of that informal network, yeah. – EnergyCo [Employee Male 005</p>	<p>I mean, I'd say it's probably the single most important thing that you can do to get into the higher levels. I mean, most of where I am up to my career now, it's all been about execution and can you deliver on reports and can you run engagements and can you do everything you need to in terms of execution? But where that flips is going to the next level, where it actually starts to be about can you bring in work and can you work with all the other teams collaboratively and lead the whole engagement rather than just your team? And I think that's where the networks become pivotal, and as you progress, you don't really need to execute, you need to just be bringing in work. And it is that flip; it's the level above where I am now. And I think that's where you get some of the biggest gender splits in terms of you don't get as many women coming through, mainly because I think finance is still just so male dominated. And I think the conversations and the ability to build rapport is still mainly around male gender topics, sports and those kind of ... football, rugby, going for the odd beer or breakfast and things like that that whilst is improving, I think is quite slow to improve. – FinanceCo Manager Male 003</p>

GG.1 Appendix GG Political Maturation Continued

Informal information sharing	Female	It's a huge importance [informal information sharing] and primarily because it's hard to find that information, if that makes sense. So you have to rely on other people, and ask for help, and get some guidance around decisions, and all that kind of stuff. Yeah, definitely. I think you learn it over time. But if you just have key people, then you find it all out through those key people, if that makes sense. So it's like a ... What are they called? I've read it in a book before, like a connector, or connector person. – EnergyCo Manager Female 001	So I think for us, it's all about the quality of the work. And as you got more senior, then it becomes more about how good you are at selling the work. And communicating the findings at a higher level. So then that's more of the presentation skills rather than just getting data and putting it in slides. – FinanceCo Employee Female 001
	Male	Ability to influence and be political I think that would have more of an influence depending on the type of role that that person is going forward. Yeah the higher up the organisations. I think the you know a role that's lower in the org chart the need to influence in that role isn't going gonna be significant. They're going to have smaller departments and scope to work within so it's potentially going to be less of a concern as to how that person can you know display themselves to the hiring manager. And it's not going to be as substantial in terms of impact to the organisation as to who was in that role depending on where it fits in in the org chart. – EnergyCo Male Manager 004	I think as you get higher and higher up the organisation, it becomes extremely important. I think the wide your network, I think once you get really to the upper level as soon as you get to partnership it does suddenly become about, you become a salesman, a saleswoman, and you have to have an informal network to improve your chances of hearing what's going on, what's happening. – FinanceCo Employee Male 006
Informal development opportunities	Female	I think when you're entrance level like a graduate, when I was in EnergyCo, it was not as needed as it is now when I'm in functional level. So in the functional level, I think persuading, networking, connecting on a personal level is much more important to get ahead than it was back then. On a graduate and entrance level position or fitters and electrician and frontline supervisors the knowledge is important whereas the network is not as much. So it's more towards the technical knowledge rather than ability to navigate them, persuading and networking and influencing. Whereas now, as I moved into a functional role there is much, much more of the persuading and networking, connecting to people. So it's more of that rather than technical knowledge. – EnergyCo Employee Female 001	It's a really difficult topic because, throughout my career, I've known in the back of my mind that it's something that's there because it's obvious that when you go to meetings, you're typically the only woman in a meeting of 20 men or in a team you're the only woman and it is something that is there. But I personally haven't ever felt like it held me back or stopped me thinking I could have a career here. But now that I'm getting a bit more senior, I think it is difficult to manage your work-life balance when you start to become more important to the client. You really feel like there is no way that you can just step back from it or get a grasp of a really good routine in your life or work-life balance. there's no one that whose career as a female that I think that the career I want to have and that's the way I want to live my life. So I think it is challenging now, it's starting to become a bit more obvious to me around where can I go from here as a female? – FinanceCo Manager Female 001

GG.2 Appendix GG Political Maturation Continued

	<p>Male</p>	<p>When you're starting to be superintendent and knocking on the door of manager, that was when I did see that, actually, some other people were almost that felt passed over when they got the job. And I went, "Oh, what was going on there?" I thought I was doing as good or better job than they were, which was when that ... You'll have better language around it, but that aspect of actually managing your career and promotion potential struck me as an extra thing that I needed to do, whereas prior to that, it was just head down, tile up, and good work will get noticed. Until I had a few of those where you just go, "Oh. Actually, you've got to do a little bit of managing upwards or..." which I've never found compelling. So managing outwards has more been something that I've been able to go, "Okay, yep." Managing outwards, managing stakeholders in all directions, including up, that's something that I've found compelling hints could put time into it. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male 004</p>	<p>In terms of partners, we've only got male partners. It's obviously visible that as you get more and more senior, the diversity seems to be decreasing. I think it's quite meritocratic in terms of what is required to get promoted. Obviously what happens is that, especially in our kind of a team, it's about vacancy at the top to some extent, because these are one or two partner led sectors, so it's almost like unless, let's say, one of the partners leaves or one of the directors leaves, there's almost no space for someone to fill in. It would just be an expensive cost to the company and stuff like that, so I think that becomes one issue. Definitely I think it's the work hours and the demands of this job, because you do have to work quite a few long hours. But it is not a gender thing. – FinanceCo Employee Male 005</p>
<p>Informal promotion processes</p>	<p>Female</p>	<p>I also think there's quite a tendency to hire somebody who's very similar to yourself because you understand them, they're exactly the same, well, not exactly the same. But they're very similar to you, and so it's an easier transition, and when you're talking about upper leadership, it's natural that you're going to look for someone similar to yourself, and to a certain extent, it's the same sort of opportunities and speaks the same speak, talks the same talk things, so I think that's something that would actually hold back females in this industry. – EnergyCo Manager Female 006</p>	<p>It's a service based industry and very little of what you do can actually be marked. It's not like we're building a house and you can see what we're doing, or we're selling things and you can actually see what we're doing. Most of our work is incredibly subjective of what success looks like, so you have to sell that you've been successful and then ask for things in return. And you have to sell that what you bring to a project is worth something and has high value, and then ask for things in return. Yeah, I just think business it doesn't make anything. It's mainly politics. I would say it's 15% of my time. I would say it's a lot, particularly at the moment, because I'm going from analyst to senior analyst, so I have to start thinking about planning and thinking about... I'm not just given a task now, I have to shape the task and I have to see if... even if I do it right, if that's going to be seen as success. So yes, it's a high portion of my time. – FinanceCo Employee Female 006</p>

GG.3 Appendix GG Political Maturation Continued

	<p>Male</p>	<p>I would say that if we go back to the thing that differentiates is I think whether you're male or female, if you do a great job in your current job, and then you display these other top characteristics, I think you should naturally get set up to a promotion type opportunities. – EnergyCo Senior Manager Male – 001</p>	<p>Promotions? Trying to think at particular levels. I feel probably as you get more senior politics would become more important. Then I think potentially then it would become more important. I think in terms of advancing your career, the most basic level I think you'd have to be aware of it and you'd have to not be deaf to it. Because if you are deaf to it completely you could end up really putting your foot in an awkward situation or misreading something and ending up... It could be some politics going on that you're not aware of. So being able to recognise it might be useful. – FinanceCo Employee Male 003</p>
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