

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The driving proposition of this dissertation is that individual voluntary cooperation is of fundamental importance for successfully achieving organizational goals. The idea of cooperation is deeply rooted in the theoretical foundation of management scholarship, for it has long been recognized that attainment of complex organizational outcomes depends upon sustained cooperative actions from numerous individuals. Pioneering management theorist Chester Barnard maintained in his treatise on executive management that the accomplishment of organizational goals depended on *willingness* of persons to contribute efforts to the cooperative system” (1938: 83). Subsequent organizational scholars have augmented and reconceptualized Barnard’s ideas in the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (Katz and Kahn, 1966; Smith, Organ, and Near, 1983).

Katz (1964) proposed three kinds of activities crucial for the successful functioning of any organizational system. Employees must be hired and retained; work role performance must be accomplished in a dependable manner; and employees must exceed formal job requirements. Katz extended Barnard’s observations on cooperative actions with the introduction of the concept of extra-role cooperative behavior: “There must be innovative and spontaneous activity in achieving organizational objectives which go beyond the role specifications” (Katz, 1964: 132). Two years later Katz and

Robert Kahn made this same observation with more precision:

Within every work group in a factory, within any division in a government bureau, or within any department of a university are countless acts of cooperation without which the system would break down. We take these everyday acts for granted, and few of them are included in the formal role prescriptions of any job (Katz and Kahn, 1966: 339).

Extra-role cooperative behavior, then, includes individual actions that support or enhance an organization's goal performance, production system, public image, or provide beneficial suggestions to help other employees improve their skills and abilities. The essential aspect of these actions is that they all describe performance beyond a person's formal job role requirements that serve to achieve organization goals.

The academic discipline of organizational behavior has provided additional focus for previous scholarly interest concerning employee cooperation with the development of the research concept of organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), originally proposed by Smith, Organ, and Near (1983), conceptualized and measured the performance of individual extra-role actions that serve to benefit other individuals within their organization, or that supported overall organization goals.

Fifteen years of organization research concerning the nature and antecedents of OCB have succeeded in producing a robust multi-dimensional construct (Van Dyne, Cummings, and Parks, 1995). But while the OCB construct is now developed, research studies investigating hypothesized antecedents to OCB differences have proved relatively ineffectual, for the following reasons. Prior research studies concerning antecedents of OCB variation have focused primarily on employee job-related attitudes that developed as responses based on job situations (with some studied examining

interactions between individual characteristics and job situations), or primarily on individual psychological characteristics. Neither general approach has been very successful in predicting differences in OCB with correlations beyond $R^2 = 0.10$ to 0.20 . See summaries by Ryan and Organ (1995) and Organ (1997).

I believe a fresh approach utilizing a perspective on OCB developed from social contract theory will prove more successful.

PREFACE TO SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

Social contract theory represents an intellectual tradition explicitly developed by Hobbes (1651/1996) and Locke (1690/1980) in the seventeenth century and by J. J. Rousseau (1762/1978) in the eighteenth century. Following the ideas of these political philosophers founders, their heirs developed two ideal-type perspectives regarding human nature and the creation and justification of normative relationships between people and their political and economic institutions. Individualism and communitarianism are the contemporary social contract ideologies that express and justify their normative emphasis on the respective priorities of individual interests or emphasis on priorities of common interests.

While social contract theory initially addressed the origin and legitimacy of political institutions and authority, Adam Smith (1776/1976) and subsequent theorists working in this tradition incorporated economic arguments to justify economic relationships and practices. Smith built upon the more individualist ideas of Hobbes and Locke to develop an economic perspective founded on rational and self-interested

priorities without much social basis. A contrasting perspective argued that ongoing social relations are so tenacious that they strongly influence economic behavior (Polanyi, (1944). Granovetter (1985) contributed to this discussion concerning linkages between economic and social relationships with his theory regarding how economic behavior is embedded in social relationships at a level between the 'oversocialized' theories of social theorists and the 'undersocialized' theories of rational economists.

Utilizing Granovetter's embeddedness theory could prove more predictive for variations in cooperation and organizational citizenship behavior because his theory incorporated both social structure concepts from communitarianism and rational economic ideas from individualism. His theory allows for the inclusion of more variables in the theory and explanation of linkages between social and economic behavior.

Social contract theory is essentially a social rather than a psychological phenomenon because most people in the Western world do not create their own unique theories about the normative social contract. If social contract theory referenced essentially human psychological differences, then it would be unlikely that two ideal-type perspectives endured for approximately three hundred and fifty years (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton, 1985; Shane, 1994; Tocqueville, 1840/1945). Instead of novel social contract ideas developing within the Western cultures about normative social relations, people continue to employ prior ideas and justifications learned from the family and educational experiences. People use ideological orientations to explain and justify views and stance about the correctness of either a more individualist or more communitarian perspectives.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

I propose a more sociological approach as representing a more promising method for examining antecedents that predict individual differences in OCB. Sociological in the sense that variations in normative individual values, beliefs, and justifications linked to the two ideological orientations of individualism and communitarianism—derived from social contract theory and contemporary political theory—will have significant antecedent influences on individual variation in OCB performance. My emphasis is on normative ideological orientations that people will have learned prior to entering their work organizations, and that are not explained by reference to psychological characteristics. Ideological orientation describes normative beliefs about desirable conditions of social structure that are referenced to either support or challenge social conditions. My research question is:

Do people with a stronger communitarian perspective (with their accent on the common good) engage in greater amounts and greater varieties of organizational citizenship behavior than individualists (with their emphasis on self-interest)?

I propose that socially anchored differences—in the sense of simultaneous normative and nurture-dependent values and beliefs, represent individual ideological perspectives concerning the primary importance of an individual (self-interest) or a communal (common good) orientation exist. Furthermore, these values and beliefs will be found in American business organization employees. My general research hypothesis predicts:

Individuals with a stronger communitarian ideological orientation (the independent construct) will engage in greater amounts and varieties of organizational citizenship behavior (the dependent construct) than individuals with a stronger individualist ideological orientation.

The remainder of this introductory chapter briefly describes and illustrates the major concepts of this dissertation that will be used to construct the theoretical model and subsequently the empirical model utilized to field test the study's hypotheses.

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

Organizational citizenship behavior, the dependent variable for this study, was first described in general conceptual terms by Organ (1977). Bateman and Organ (1983) conducted the first empirical study, but used a different label they called 'employee citizenship behavior'. The OCB designation was developed by Smith, Organ, & Near (1983) to comprise beneficial employee actions directed at other individuals or the entire organization. Organization researchers over the past fifteen years have successfully produced a robust multi-dimensional OCB construct. Organ (1997) recently claimed that OCB research studies are beginning to comprehend those human behaviors that serve to create the advantages of the organization structure.

There have been two major phases of OCB construct development research published over the past fifteen years. Organ and his associates at Indiana University developed the first phase, emphasizing the conscientious employee who was cooperative, helpful, and obedient. The second phase of the OCB construct was a logical development from the first phase. This second phase commenced theoretically with Graham's (1986) proposal to extend the OCB concept with the inclusion of loyalty

and civic participation categories. This second phase of OCB construct development commenced empirically with the OCB survey instrument dimensions and specifications developed by Van Dyne, Graham, and Dienesch (1994). This newer and more inclusive OCB construct included employee voice and individual principled dissent (which is distinct from whistle blowing because dissent remains within the organizational boundaries), that incorporates the validity and previously ignored positive intention of employees who questioned and criticized particular organization assumptions and actions.

Studies investigating antecedents to OCB variation have not proved as successful. Organization researchers have conducted numerous studies attempting to discover antecedents to explain individual variation in organizational citizenship behavior. These studies all focused either on job-related attitudes or individual personality differences. Job-related antecedents include work-related attitudes such as job satisfaction; organizational commitment; satisfaction or trust in leadership and managerial evaluations; perceptions of managerial or organizational fairness; evaluations of psychological contracts and implied contracts; and evaluations of interpersonal trust. Additional control variables on attitudes in these studies have included task characteristics and organizational context issues (e.g. membership tenure, work unit size, and interpersonal interaction measures). Studies that attempted to link personality factors to OCB have focused on the psychological dimensions of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and service orientation. Empirical results suggested rather weak relationships between all of these antecedents and OCB performance. See summaries by Organ (1988, 1990, 1994, and 1997); Organ and Ryan (1995); and Van

Dyne, Cummings, and Parks (1995).

Two published studies provided some initial support for my proposed relationship between socially anchored individual antecedents and individual variation in OCB. Wagner (1995) employed the cross-culture psychology construct of individualism-collectivism as a moderator in a laboratory study of student group cooperation. Moorman and Blakely (1995) used individualism-collectivism as an individual difference independent construct with multiple variables utilized to predict performance of OCB in a financial service organization. Neither study found significant empirical support for a strong predictive relationship between individualism-collectivism and cooperative group behaviors or OCB.

Nevertheless, these two studies were important precursors for my research because they represented the only published studies that endeavored to utilize more socially anchored (compared to individually anchored) individual differences to understand OCB. Individualism-collectivism is essentially a cross-cultural psychological construct applied to study the impact of national culture characteristics on values, attitudes and behavior. See Hofstede (1980) for a description of the construct's origin and Triandis (1995) for a comprehensive summary and review of the construct. Since the individualism-collectivism construct primarily focused on individual versus group priorities in terms of normative attitudes about family relationships, this focus on the family may help explain why this construct has not been successful in predicting individual OCB differences within the same national culture, micro-culture, or economic organization.

Therefore, a construct was needed to examine variables that serve as

antecedents of individual differences in cooperative behavior within business organizations. Building upon social contract theory, Watson (1997) developed a theoretical construct and instrument to measure individual differences in priorities concerning self-interest versus the common interest. Building upon Watson's (1997) research, the present study conducted an extensive literature review of individualist and communitarian ideology, constructed a theoretical and empirical model, and further developed Watson's survey items to more accurately measure socially anchored individualist and communitarian ideological orientation.

As I stated at the beginning of this introductory chapter, I think an approach utilizing ideological orientation derived from social contract theory will more successfully explain variation in OCB. Instead of following previous organizational behavior research that focused on job-related attitudes or psychological characteristics, I propose turning to factors people bring with them from their social environment into their business organization work activities. These factors come from socialization experiences prior to entering the work organization that result in either a more individualist or a more communitarian ideological orientation. I think that ideology is a sociological phenomenon and thus a product of a person's social environment. This approach follows Granovetter's (1985) ideas on how economic concepts and behaviors are influenced by social relations and social embeddedness. The specific socially anchored factors I propose to predict OCB variation are grounded in social contract theory in the tradition of political philosophy. I now turn to that literature.

SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

Social contract theory encompasses two conflicting perspectives on human nature, the social compact, the origin of the political state, and the proper role of social and economic institutions. Social contract theory began with the seventeenth-century individualistically oriented political theories of Hobbes (1651/1966) and later Locke (1690/1980).¹ These two political theorists endeavored to explain and justify the advantages of individual autonomy, private selfish interests, political liberty and the primacy of individual rights over traditional obligations toward sovereign or ecclesiastic authorities. (Interpret references to 'liberal' as individualist for purposes of this study. Individualist and individualism are used because these words convey less political connotations than liberal and liberalism).

The contrasting communitarian perspective is rooted in the eighteenth-century theories of J. J. Rousseau (1762/1978). He emphasized the importance and priorities of community and of the collective group. For Rousseau, in order to maintain and preserve a workable community, individuals may be asked to sacrifice their own priorities. For the consummate individualist, the idea of self-sacrifice is anathema to what it means to be an autonomous person. In contrast, for the consummate communitarian, service to the community is the essence of a viable human life.

In social contract theory, one central concept is the state of nature. The state of nature is a logical abstraction based on presumptions regarding human nature and an original social compact. Another aspect of the state of nature argument involves justifications for the origin of the political state. Hobbes and Locke on the one hand, and Rousseau on the other, represent two ideal type perspectives regarding these

issues about the basis of political freedom. These perspectives play out as a dialogue involving the advantages of individual freedom and choice versus the contrasting advantages of democratic community and social affiliation. These normative ideas exist today as the two opposing ideological orientations exemplified by the individualist emphasis on self-interest, and the communitarian emphasis on the democratically determined common good.

TRANSITION TO CONTEMPORARY INDIVIDUALIST AND COMMUNITARIAN THEORY

The ideas and theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau are articulated in the language and rhetoric of contemporary individualist and communitarian social and political theory through the intellectual contributions of many eminent philosophical, political, and economic thinkers. I utilize Adam Smith and Alexis de Tocqueville to illustrate this progression. Smith and Tocqueville provided theoretical insights and paradoxes that continue to influence discourse on the respective priorities of self-interest versus the common good.

INDIVIDUALIST AND COMMUNITARIAN IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

The ideological orientations of individualism² and communitarianism are derived from differing perspectives articulated in the social contract theory of Hobbes, Locke, and J.J. Rousseau. I want to emphasize that the communitarian social contract perspective highlights consensual democratic discussion and process, and should not to be confused with authoritarianism. The contemporary political theory debate

between individualism and communitarianism emphasizes the relative priority of the individual good versus the democratically determined community good using language and concepts directly derived from 17th and 18th century social contract theory.

Current issues of social contract theory are best illuminated through the political theory debate between the advocates of individualism (Dworkin, 1989; Gauthier, 1986, 1993; Kymlicka, 1989; Nozick, 1974; Waldron, 1993) and communitarianism (Etzioni, 1995a, 1995b; MacIntyre, 1981; Taylor, 1989; Sandel, 1982, 1996; Walzer, 1983). These two ideological orientations are articulated using competing ideas and rhetoric regarding human nature, the origin of the political state from a state of nature, and normative conceptions of how social, political, and economic institutions ought to operate.

Individualism as a political philosophy focuses on the person as the foundation of social life. "A person is conceived as an independent centre of activity, endeavouring to direct his capacities and resources to the fulfillment of his interests" (Gauthier, 1986: 8-9). From the individualist perspective, the state should never specify what is the good life, for then the state's power could claim the power to restrict an individual's right to choose how to live his or her life.

The communitarian ideological orientation, in contrast to the individualist perspective, places primary importance on the group and society. Communitarianism, consequently, proposes a very different theory of the self. Instead of self-interested autonomous individuals as the foundation of society, the communitarian perspective views social relations as "the social preconditions that enable individuals to maintain their psychological integrity, civility, and ability to reason" (Etzioni, 1995a: 16). Stated

more strongly, the communitarian perspective views the individualist theory of the autonomous self as a flawed and misinformed idea.

Proponents of individualism and communitarianism subscribe to different perspectives regarding the proper relationship of individuals in regard to the political state and to economic organizations. Yet these two fundamentally conflicting views of the political and social contract presently coexist within the United States. Although political scientists tends to regard individualism as representing the dominant political ideology of the United States, communitarian perspectives have always existed and prospered in America (Shain, 1994).

THEORETICAL MODEL, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND HYPOTHESES

I contend that to understand individual differences in OCB one must turn to normative values and beliefs that reside outside of the situational work context. This study utilizes values and beliefs from the ideological orientations of individualism and communitarianism derived from social contract theory to understand and explain individual differences in the performance of OCB in business organizations.³

The basic research question is as follows:

Do people with a stronger communitarian ideological orientation engage in significantly greater amounts and varieties of organizational citizenship behavior than advocates of the ideology of individualism?

Individualist and communitarian ideological orientations have difference perspectives on human nature and the state of nature, the origin of the political state and the basis for its legitimacy, and the obligations and duties of individuals in regard to

political and economic organizations. Three ideological dimensions are utilized as independent variables for this study: (1) personal identity, (2) self-respect, and (3) duty. Each of these three dimensions will be described using contemporary individualist and the communitarian political and social contract perspectives.

The three major dimensions of OCB, the dependent variable, are represented by the concepts of (1) organizational loyalty, (2) altruism, and (3) participation (Van Dyne et al., 1994). I will present brief literature reviews concerning loyalty and altruism. A more extensive literature review is offered regarding political participation because this research area illustrates a broad source of empirical studies with potential linkages to OCB.

CONTRIBUTION AND PLAN OF THE STUDY

The theoretical contribution of this study consists of the application of ideas from political and economic social contract theory that I believe can provide an enhanced understanding of antecedents to OCB variation. The empirical contribution of this study will be the results of my field study linking communitarian ideological orientation with enhanced amounts and varieties of organizational citizenship behavior.

The plan of the study follows a six-chapter format. Chapter one presented an introduction of the study, and the proposed theoretical approach linking differences in OCB to individualist and communitarian ideological orientations as developed in social contract theory. The research question, a brief overview of previous research, an introduction to the theoretical concepts and their relationships, the general research hypothesis, the empirical model, and the expected study contributions are described.

My proposals for future research close chapter one.

Chapter two reviews the literature on organizational citizenship behavior and antecedents to individual differences in OCB performance. Social, cultural, and ideological influences on individual differences in OCB are reviewed and discussed. Chapter three continues the literature review with an emphasis on social contract theory, and individualist and communitarian ideological orientations. Linkages between political and economic social contract theory and cooperative behaviors in business organizations are proposed. The relationship of individualism and communitarianism as antecedents that may influence individual differences in OCB performance is developed. The complete theoretical model concludes this chapter.

In chapter four I describe the study's research design and empirical model relationships. The process of survey instrument development and pretesting is described and the results of these survey instrument pretests are briefly presented and subsequent survey question and format development issues and methodological solutions are discussed. My justification for the resulting individualist and communitarian three-dimension ideological orientation instrument is stated. The previously established and tested OCB survey instrument utilizing a five dimensional structure is described and the reasons why it was employed are explained. The research hypotheses are formally stated. The characteristics of the organizational survey sites are described and discussed.

Chapter five reports statistical analysis results from the data provided by the study's 315 respondents. Results are discussed in relation to the research hypotheses from calculations using factor analysis, descriptive statistics and correlations, linear

regression analysis, multiple linear regression analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis to examine relationships between the independent and dependent variables, and the effects of the demographic and organizational context control variables.

Chapter six presents a summary of inferences and conclusions. Theoretical relationships and issues are examined and evaluated and discussed in light of the study's purpose and subsequent analytical results. Specific limitations pertaining to the respondent samples, survey instruments, and subsequent analysis are addressed and discussed. Applications for theoretical development and managerial practice are elaborated. Recommendations for further research in business organizations are proposed and illustrated. Conceptual linkages between social capital constructs and OCB are explored and future research studies utilizing these linkages are proposed.

Chapter 1 Endnotes

¹ The priorities of community and the common good can certainly be traced back to many sources within Western tradition. Major contributors of scholarly writings prior to Hobbes political philosophy included the original Greek and Roman theorists, political writings of Machiavelli, Christian church doctrine and commentaries, and medieval scholarly discourses and writings about the Roman Empire and the classical city-states of Greece.

² Individualism in the context of political philosophy is usually referred to as liberalism. However, since the term liberalism possesses considerable connotations about specific political stances that may not correspond with this study, I use the more politically neutral term individualism.

³ Political theory discussions of social contract theory and the contemporary debate between individualists and communitarians are all conducted within the assumed framework of democratic political institutions. However, while capitalistic business organizations are often (but certainly not always) embedded in democratic societies, the vast majority of business organizations are not participatory democracies. Traditionally, American corporations have been run in a highly autocratic and undemocratic manner. The authoritarian governance of business organizations may suggest that communitarians would not engage in larger amounts of OCB if they do not view the achievement of organizational goals as resulting in the common good.