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Structuring Constraints on Perceptions of Upward Influence and Supervisory Relationships

Kathleen J. Krone

Abstract

This research examined the effects of centralization of authority on employees' perceptions of the likelihood of attempting upward influence and their perceptions of supervisory trust and leader-member exchange. Three hundred and sixty-two employees from five different organizations responded to a questionnaire that assessed perceptions of centralization, attitudes toward upward influence, leader-member exchange, and supervisory trust. Consistent with earlier formulations, centralization was operationalized as perceptions of participation in decision making and job autonomy (Hage, 1980; Hage & Aiken, 1967). Results revealed that both job autonomy and participation in decision making significantly affect subordinates' attitudes toward attempting upward influence and the levels of trust and leader-member exchange they report concerning their supervisory relationship. The results are used to support the argument that centralization of authority acts as a structuring process in organizations to the extent that it constrains and most likely sustains variation in supervisory relational quality and attitudes toward attempting upward influence.

My biggest problem is getting my employees to tell me what they think.

—Middle-level manager, IBM

In puzzling over why her employees resist sharing thoughts and opinions when invited, this manager is revealing that a supervisor who intends to be participative may still have difficulty acquiring needed information. Simply because employees are invited to participate in organizational decisions does not mean that they will do so. The privately held

communication attitudes and behavioral preferences of managers and employees are embedded in and inevitably intersect with ongoing, organizationally preferred practices. To the extent that these practices persistently and evenly penetrate status-unequal relationships, they act as a form of structure that patterns superior-subordinate communication. These processes may occur quite subtly, leaving practicing managers puzzled by a resistant employee's unwillingness to articulate opinions and advice.

Some of the earliest organizational theorists argued that of all the possible structures in an organization, centralization of authority is of the greatest consequence since it orders the use of power through crucial processes such as information exchange and decision making (Barnard, 1938; Dubin, 1958; Simon, 1957). Because it also systematically affects employee attitudes such as satisfaction (see Miller & Monge, 1986), contemporary scholars have referred to centralization as a structuring process in organizations (Dalton, Todor, Spendolini, Fielding, & Porter, 1980). As a structuring process, it also is likely that centralization shapes and sustains variation in upward communication attitudes and in interpersonal relationships between supervisors and their employees. Of particular interest in the present study are subordinates' attitudes toward attempting upward influence and their perceptions of supervisory trust and leader-member exchange. The willingness to attempt upward influence at all, the desire to give unsolicited advice or even to provide opinions when supervisors have sought them can be shaped subtly and reinforced by centralization processes in organizations. Similarly, centralization structuring processes can play a role in shaping and reinforcing how subordinates perceive their relationships with supervisors. The extent to which authority is shared throughout an organization can act as a boundary on the levels of trust and perceptions of influence and support that employees perceive in their supervisory relationships.

Additional research is necessary to understand how communication and superior-subordinate relationships are affected by the structuring processes of centralization (Qablin, 1987). The purpose of this study is to identify possible upward communicative and relational consequences of centralized vs. decentralized authority structures in organizations. In particular, this research examines how perceptions of centralization of authority affect: (a) subordinates' attitudes toward attempting upward influence, (b) subordinates' perceptions of the likelihood that an upward influence attempt will be successful, (c) subordinates' level of trust in their supervisors, and (d) subordinates' perceptions of leader-member exchange quality.

Centralization and Upward Influence

Most researchers and theorists define centralization as the degree to which decision making authority is dispersed throughout an organization (Dalton et al., 1980). Centralization of authority is frequently operationalized at two levels: (a) the degree of perceived participation in decision making and (b) the degree of job autonomy or perceived control over how one's work is completed (Hage, 1980; Hage & Aiken, 1967). This two-part operationalization is grounded in the belief that each represents a different form of decision making power (Hage, 1980). Perceptions of participation emerge from actively engaging oneself in decision making matters, while perceptions of autonomy emerge from the extent to which

one is free to act without seeking the permission or opinions of supervisors or other authority figures. It seems reasonable to expect that the degree of participation in decision making and job autonomy both have implications for attitudes toward attempting upward influence. However, most of the existing research on centralization and subordinates' perceptions of communication with supervisors employs the first operationalization. Consistent patterns appear between perceived participation in decision making and the overall amount of upward communication, the types of upward influence tactics chosen by employees and various attitudes toward communication in the work group.

More specifically, the degree of participation in decision making is positively associated with the overall frequency of unscheduled, vertical communication. As decentralization increases so does the amount of: (a) unscheduled upward task communication between supervisors and those at the executive level in the organization, (b) unscheduled upward communication between workers and those at the executive level, and (c) unscheduled upward task communication between workers and their supervisors (Hage, 1974; Hage, Aiken & Marrett, 1971).

Beyond sheer frequency, perceptions of participation in decision making significantly affect the types of upward influence tactics subordinates select. When perceptions of participation in decision making are higher, subordinates select open and empathic upward influence tactics significantly more often than they do when perceptions of participation are lower (Krone, 1992). Relatedly, individuals in one high participation group reported a significantly greater desire to interact and perceived significantly greater accuracy of information than did those in one low participation group (Harrison, 1985).

While perceptions of participation in decision making unequivocally affect upward communication behaviors such as frequency and influence tactic choice, the effects of job autonomy on upward influence attitudes and behaviors are less clear. Increased employee control over work-related procedures could foster the ability to act independently in organizations, thus decreasing the need to attempt upward influence or to communicate with supervisors. It has been argued convincingly however, that increased job autonomy does not necessarily free employees from organizational control processes. Instead, as job autonomy increases and overt supervision decreases, employees may actually give more of themselves to the organization (Tannenbaum, 1962; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Available empirical research provides some support for the possibility of a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of job autonomy and their attitudes toward attempting upward influence and the likelihood of success. Organic organizational designs specify higher levels of job autonomy and participation in decision making while mechanistic designs specify lower levels of both (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Supervisory communication has been studied in both types of organizational arrangements. Specifically, manager-employee interaction patterns appear to be more consultative and supportive under organic circumstances and more command-like and competitive under mechanistic ones (Courtright, Fairhurst & Rogers, 1989). Because manager employee interaction is more cooperative under organic organizational arrangements, it also may be the case that when perceptions of job autonomy and participation in decision making are high, employees would report more favorable attitudes toward attempting upward influence and a greater likelihood that their upward influence attempts would be successful.

In summary, the extent to which research reveals that centralization is related to the frequency of upward communication, the types of upward influence tactics chosen by employees, and differences in supervisor-employee interaction patterns is suggestive of a general attitude toward attempting upward influence among employees. Specifically, less favorable perceptions toward the likelihood of attempting upward influence and the likelihood of success might be found to the extent that centralization processes inhibit opportunities for participation in decision making and/or constrain work-related autonomy.

The present study examines the effects of both centralization processes—participation in decision making *and* job autonomy—on employee attitudes toward attempting upward influence with their supervisors. Based on available research, the following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 1: When perceptions of PDM and Autonomy are high, employees will report more favorable perceptions of the likelihood of attempting to influence their supervisors' decisions.

Hypothesis 2: When perceptions of PDM and Autonomy are high, employees will perceive a greater likelihood that their upward influence attempts will be successful.

Centralization and Superior-Subordinate Relationships

The previous discussion highlighted ways in which centralization of authority relates to superior-subordinate communication processes. It is reasonable to expect that the extent to which authority is dispersed throughout an organization also would be related to variability in the quality of superior-subordinate relationships. Two dimensions of the superior-subordinate relationship closely linked to communication processes and thus, likely to be affected by centralization are trust and the quality of leader-member exchange. Available research clearly indicates that participative groups and organizations foster higher levels of subordinate trust in supervisors (Harrison, 1985; Likert, 1961), while research has yet to examine structural sources of variability in leader-member exchange. Less research has explicitly examined the possible effects of job autonomy on either employees' perceptions of trust in their supervisors or the quality of leader-member exchange.

Leader-member exchange theory conceptualizes supervisory relationships in terms of the amount of influence employees have with their supervisors. Egalitarian, mutually influential relationships are more characteristic of in-group exchanges while authority-based relationships are more characteristic of out-group exchanges (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975). Existing, communication-oriented research almost exclusively examines how the quality of leader-member exchange affects communication outcomes. Specifically, the quality of leader-member exchange appears to affect power and social distance communicated during conflicts between managers and their employees (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989), the types of upward influence tactics selected by subordinates (Krone, 1992), level of subordinate influence in decisions (Scandura, Graen & Novak, 1986), and the types of

relational maintenance strategies subordinates reported using with their supervisors (Wal-dron, 1991). Much less research has examined communication-oriented antecedents to leader member exchange quality.

In theorizing about potential causes of variability in leader-member exchange, early formulations suggested that in-group vs. out-group relational status emerged almost instantly in work settings. Dansereau et al. (1975) claimed that "negotiating latitude" given in high amounts to subordinates early on led to the development of in-group supervisory relationships while low amounts of initial negotiating latitude led to the formation of out-group relationships. Since that time, a series of studies have examined the effects of a variety of factors on ratings of *initial* exchange quality. The use of supervisor-focused upward influence tactics (e.g., praising the supervisor, doing favors for him or her) appears to affect supervisors' degree of liking for subordinates, which then influences supervisors' ratings of initial leader member exchange quality (Wayne & Ferris, 1990). In a laboratory investigation, the extent to which leaders and members reported similarity in their need for power appears to affect the initial exchange quality. Leaders who reported a high need for power granted greater negotiating latitude to employees who also reported a high need for power, while leaders with a low need for power granted greater negotiating latitude to employees who also reported a low need for power (McClane, 1991). Subordinates' work-related abilities appear to affect supervisors' leader-member exchange ratings (Scandura et al., 1986), although the results of a laboratory study suggest that low levels of negative affect (e.g., calm, relaxed) among subordinates also is necessary to result in more favorable LMX ratings from supervisors (Day & Crain, 1992).

To some extent then, personal characteristics of supervisors and subordinates appear to determine the quality of the *initial* leader-member exchange. Ultimately however, leader-member relationships are sustained over time at least in part by existing organizational circumstances. As a pervasive structuring process in organizations, centralization of authority needs to be examined as a potential source of variability in leader-member relationships. If increased job autonomy and participation in decision making also increased resistance to supervisory authority, then trust levels and the quality of leader-member exchange could conceivably be jeopardized. However, it has been argued that increased employee control and participation in decision making are associated with more integrated supervisory relationships (Likert, 1961) and in fact, that both may occur because employees have internalized pivotal organizational values and decision premises (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). That is, acquiring and maintaining control does not necessarily involve wresting control and influence away from supervisors. Rather, as employee autonomy increases, the total amount of control and influence that can be exercised in the supervisory relationship also increases (Tannenbaum, 1962). To the extent that increased job autonomy augments the authority of a supervisory relationship, it also might be associated with increased perceptions of trust in supervisors and higher levels of leader-member exchange. The present study examines how subordinates' perceptions of work-related control and participation in decision making shape their perceptions of trust in their supervisors and leader-member exchange quality.

Hypothesis 3: When perceptions of PDM and Autonomy are high, employees will report higher levels of trust in their supervisors.

Hypothesis 4: When perceptions of PDM and Autonomy are high, employees will report higher levels of leader-member exchange.

Methodology

Participants

In order to secure research participants, entry was gained to a variety of organizations including a computer software company, a public utility, a manufacturing organization, a state agency, and an insurance company. The researcher worked with an organizational liaison to notify employees of the purpose of the study, when and how data would be collected, and to assure them that individual responses would remain anonymous. As part of a larger study, three hundred and sixty-two employees responded to a series of questionnaire items. Of these, approximately half (47%) were female. Twenty-two percent had been employed with their organization for one year or less, 40% for two to five years, 20% for six to ten years, and 17% for eleven years or more. Approximately 46% of the sample perceived themselves to be in the lowest levels of their organization's hierarchy, 48% perceived themselves to be in the middle, and 2% perceived themselves to be in the highest levels.

Data-Gathering Instruments

The Hierarchy of Authority Scale was used to measure employees' perceptions of the extent to which they control how they approach and complete their work. The scale consists of a series of four items that participants responded to on a series of one-to-four-point scales (1 = definitely false; 4 = definitely true). Previous research indicates that this instrument is fairly reliable (Dewar, Whetten & Boje, 1980). A reliability analysis of the responses on this scale in the present study indicates that it is sufficiently reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .80).

The Index of Actual Participation was used to measure employees' perceptions of the extent to which they participate in administrative and policy decisions in their work units. This instrument consists of a series of four items that individuals responded to on a series of one-to-five-point scales (1 = never; 5 = always). Previous research also indicates that this instrument is fairly reliable (Dewar et al., 1980). A reliability analysis conducted on this scale as it was used in the present study indicates that it is internally consistent (Cronbach's alpha = .90).

Attitudes toward upward influence attempts were assessed using: one three-item scale designed to measure respondents' likelihood of attempting upward influence with their supervisors, and one single-item measure that assessed respondents' perceptions of the likelihood that their upward influence attempts would be successful. Participants responded to all of these items on a series of one-to-five point scales (1 = very unlikely; 5 = very likely). Subordinates' trust in their supervisors was measured by using a trust index

composed of three items (one-to-five-point response scales), which prior analyses indicated had a test-retest reliability of .69 (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). The original items were revised slightly to increase their clarity. A reliability analysis conducted on the revised version of the scale indicates it is approaching internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$). The Leader-Member Exchange Scale (Graen, Liden & Hoel, 1982) was used to assess subordinates' perceptions of relationship quality with their supervisors ($\alpha = .76$). Participants responded to these items on a series of one-to-four-point scales (Appendix A includes copies of all scales used in this study.)

Data Analysis

Before testing the hypotheses, median-splits were computed for data secured from the Hierarchy of Authority Scale (median = 8.00, $sd = 2.59$) and the Index of Actual Participation (median = 8.00, $sd = 4.58$). Following this procedure, participants were classified into a high or low PDM group and a high or low Autonomy group. Previous research has utilized the median-split procedure to form high and low groupings of respondents (see Krone, 1992). Because the dependent measures were moderately correlated, a MANOVA procedure was used to test the hypotheses. Significant multivariate effects were probed using univariate analysis of variance procedures.

Results

Results of the MANOVA analysis revealed significant main effects for PDM (Mult. $F = 15.10$, $df = 4,341$, $p < .0001$, $R^2 = .15$) and for Job Autonomy (Mult. $F = 9.91$, $df = 4,341$, $p < .0001$, $R^2 = .10$). Results of the univariate analyses are reported below.

Attitude Toward Attempting Upward Influence

ANOVA results revealed that perceptions of PDM significantly affected employees' attitudes toward the likelihood that they would attempt to influence their supervisors' thinking ($F = 75.71$, $df = 1,358$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .17$). An examination of the means for each group indicated that employees with higher perceptions of PDM were significantly more likely to attempt upward influence than were employees who reported lower perceptions of PDM (see Table 1). Results also revealed that perceptions of Autonomy significantly affected the likelihood that employees would attempt upward influence ($F = 37.80$, $df = 1,357$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .10$). An examination of the group means revealed that those employees with higher perceptions of Autonomy were significantly more likely to attempt upward influence than were those with lower perceptions of Autonomy (see Table 2).

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Communicative and Relational Dependent Measures by Levels of Participation in Decision Making*

	Low PDM			High PDM		
	Mean	SD	(n)	Mean	SD	(n)
Likelihood of Attempting Upward Influence	8.67	2.68	199	10.99	2.27	161
Likelihood of Success	2.48	.96	193	3.26	.91	160
Trust	10.53	2.66	195	11.72	2.22	159
LMX	13.52	3.23	194	15.36	2.55	157

*n's vary slightly due to missing data

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Communicative and Relational Dependent Measures by Levels of Job Autonomy*

	Low Autonomy			High Autonomy		
	Mean	SD	(n)	Mean	SD	(n)
Likelihood of Attempting Upward Influence	8.80	2.67	168	10.51	2.59	191
Likelihood of Success	2.52	1.01	168	3.11	.93	189
Trust	10.27	2.77	163	11.75	2.10	190
LMX	13.17	3.01	162	15.34	2.79	188

*n's vary slightly due to missing data

Likelihood of Success

ANOVA results revealed that perceptions of PDM significantly affected subordinates' perceptions of the likelihood that their influence attempts would be successful ($F = 60.98$, $df = 1,356$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .15$). An examination of the means indicated that those employees in the higher participation group perceived a significantly greater likelihood that their influence attempts would be successful than did those in the lower PDM group (see Table 1). Results also revealed that perceptions of Autonomy significantly affected subordinates' perceptions that their upward influence attempts would be successful ($F = 32.69$, $df = 1,355$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .08$). Those employees in the higher autonomy group perceived a significantly greater likelihood that their upward influence attempts would be successful than did those in the lower group (see Table 2).

Subordinates' Trust in Supervisors

ANOVA results revealed that perceptions of PDM significantly affected employees' perceptions of trust in their supervisors ($F = 20.34$, $df = 1,352$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .05$). An inspection of the means indicates that those employees in the higher PDM group reported significantly higher levels of trust than did those in the lower group (see Table 1). Perceptions of Autonomy also significantly affected employees' perceptions of trust in their supervisors ($F = 32.35$, $df = 1,351$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .08$). Employees in the higher autonomy group perceived higher levels of trust in their supervisors than did those in the lower group (see Table 2).

Subordinates' Perceptions of Leader-Member Exchange

ANOVA results revealed that perceptions of PDM also significantly affected employees' perceptions of leader-member exchange with their supervisors ($F = 33.83$, $df = 1,349$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .09$). Employees with higher perceptions of PDM also reported a significantly higher quality of leader-member exchange than did employees with lower levels of participation (see Table 1). In addition, perceptions of Job Autonomy significantly affected employees' perceptions of LMX ($F = 48.97$, $df = 1,348$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .12$). Those in the higher autonomy group reported a significantly higher quality leader-member exchange than did employees in the lower group (see Table 2).

To summarize, subordinates' attitudes toward the likelihood of attempting upward influence, and their perceptions of the likelihood that their influence attempts would be successful, both are significantly affected by subordinates' perceptions of participation in decision making and job autonomy in their organizations. Subordinates' trust in their supervisors and perceptions of leader-member exchange also are significantly affected by both types of centralization structuring processes.

Discussion

The results of this research further support the claim that centralization acts as a structuring process in organizations in that it systematically relates to subordinates' perceptions of the likelihood that they will attempt upward influence, the likelihood that their attempts will be successful as well as their perceptions of relationship quality with supervisors. The results reveal that differences in attitudes toward attempting upward influence and perceptions of relationship exist among subordinates who perceive different degrees of job autonomy and participation in decision making in their organizations. Employees who experience both a high level of participation in decision making and a high level of job autonomy are more likely to attempt upward influence. Similarly, dispersing organizational authority in the forms of work-related autonomy and participation in decision making appears to foster more optimistic expectations among subordinates that their upward influence attempts will be successful. In contrast, perceiving lower levels of job autonomy and participation in decision making appear to suppress positive attitudes toward both attempting upward influence and the likelihood of success.

This research also suggests that supervisory relationship quality is at least partially shaped and constrained by the extent to which authority is dispersed throughout an organization. Superior-subordinate relationships do not exist in a vacuum. Instead they are embedded in and inevitably intersect with ongoing organizational practices that specify an acceptable range of participation in decision making and job autonomy that employees may be granted. According to the present data, subordinates are more likely to perceive trusting, in-group supervisory relationships when they also perceive higher levels of job autonomy and participation in decision making. While previous research had already demonstrated at least a tentative relationship between participation in decision making and supervisory trust, the present research also demonstrates a relationship between subordinates' perceptions of centralization and leader-member exchange. While additional,

longitudinal research is necessary to confirm a clear causal relationship, the present results justify a more specific examination of how organizational centralization and control processes relate to the emergence and maintenance of in-group vs. out-group leader-member relationships.

Because perceptions of autonomy and participation significantly affected attitudes toward attempting upward influence as well as perceptions of supervisory relationship quality, these results could be used to support the argument that shared control and increased opportunities for participation in decision making result in more substantial interaction influence systems between managers and employees (Likert, 1961). As a result, the total amount of control in the overall system increases (Tannenbaum, 1962). Thus, despite the fact that increased perceptions of participation and control also are associated with reduced feelings of frustration and strain among employees (e.g., Karasek, 1979), what appears to be individual freedom and personal control in these relationships is nothing more than an unobtrusive form of organizational control. Upward influence under these circumstances, while psychologically comforting, is constrained and driven by internalized organizational values (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

In the event that organizational practices conflict with publicly stated and widely shared goals and values, the highly integrated employee may be well-positioned to challenge these violations (see Weinstein, 1979). Indeed, in-group employees appear to select open upward influence tactics more often than do out-group employees (Krone, 1992), and supervisors appear to accept and respond to challenging remarks of in-group employees more favorably than they do to those of out-group employees (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989). Conversely, when the amount of total control is attenuated within less integrated manager-employee relationships, more self-protective forms of upward influence or passive resistance (e.g., psychological withdrawal) might occur. Available research in fact, suggests that out-group employees are more inclined to select political or deceptive upward influence tactics (Krone, 1992). Thus, employees who perceive lower levels of job autonomy, participation in decision making, and lower quality supervisory relationships may have resisted internalizing pivotal organizational values and may be more free to passively or actively challenge organizationally preferred practices. However, the results of this research suggest that a less integrated employee will not be well positioned communicatively or relationally within the existing social order to modify those practices, should he or she so choose.

Because job autonomy implies some measure of freedom from external organizational constraints and participation in decision making implies permitting oneself to be engaged by the organization and its concerns (see Sennett, 1981), their consequences for superior-subordinate relationships and upward influence attitudes might be expected to differ somewhat. While both types of centralization of authority significantly affected employees' attitudes toward *attempting upward influence*, the effect sizes for participation in decision making were generally larger (15% and 17%) than they were for job autonomy (8% and 10%). On the other hand, while both types of centralization also significantly affected employees' perceptions of their *supervisory relationships*, the effect sizes were a little larger for job autonomy (8% and 12%) than they were for participation in decision making (5% and 9%). While the differences are subtle, perceptions of participation in decision making

may be of somewhat greater consequence as they relate to upward influence attitudes than to experienced supervisory relationship quality. Similarly, while also subtle, the effects of job autonomy appear to be of somewhat greater consequence as they relate to the quality of superior-subordinate relationships than to upward influence attitudes. The results of this research further support the need to examine separately the effects of both operationalizations of centralization when conducting research on communication-related attitudes and behaviors. The measures of perceptions of job autonomy and participation in decision making are only moderately correlated ($r = .31$), and the concepts represent different forms of power (freedom to act with fewer constraints vs. the ability to maneuver within constraints) that could have varying consequences for additional communication processes and relationships. For instance, levels of employee job autonomy and participation in decision making could have unique and potentially interesting consequences for peer communication and relational processes. Specifically, the quality of peer relationships and the nature of peer influence could vary as the quality of supervisory relationship and upward influence varies with levels of centralization.

One of the most interesting questions concerning organizational structures today is how communication processes relate to their formation and sustenance (McPhee, 1985). While the present research is unable to show precisely *how* organizational structures evolve over time in ways that both constrain and enable certain types of superior-subordinate relationships and communication attitudes and behaviors, it does identify communicative attitudes that provide some sense of what those ongoing, structuring processes must look like. In avoiding the attempt to exercise upward influence under centralized conditions, employees are both responding to and sustaining existing authority structures. Organizational centralization appears to affect communication attitudes and supervisory relationships in ways that can reinforce existing levels of participation in decision making and control over work.

While individual and interpersonal explanations exist for why employees resist voicing work-related thoughts and feelings, the results of this research suggest that there also are structural explanations for superior-subordinate communication and relational processes in organizations. This research does not intend to suggest that organizational designs are monolithic structures to which employees and managers mindlessly adapt. Structuring processes such as centralization are neither complete nor are they invariant over time (see Barley & Kunda, 1992). Nonetheless, they are sufficiently pervasive and subtle to resist casual scrutiny. It would take a highly conscious, highly motivated employee or group of employees to initiate influence under highly centralized conditions. It would take a similarly remarkable and persistent manager to engage employees in occasional but meaningful decision making discussions under typically centralized conditions. All organizational members who desire some measure of work-related control and participation in decision making will be supported by authority structures that sustain mutually influential, trusting leader-member relationships and favorable attitudes toward upward influence.

Author Note – Kathleen J. Krone is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68588. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association in 1992. The author would like to thank several anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on the manuscript.

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Appendix A

Hierarchy of Authority Scale

1. There can be little action taken in this job until a supervisor approves a decision.
2. People who want to make their own decisions about how to do their own work are quickly discouraged here.
3. Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final decision.
4. I have to ask my boss before I do almost anything.

Index of Actual Participation

1. How frequently do you usually participate in decisions to hire new staff in your work unit?
2. How frequently do you usually participate in decisions to promote any of the staff in your work unit?
3. How frequently do you participate in decisions to adopt new policies that affect your work unit?
4. How frequently do you participate in decisions to adopt new projects/programs within your work unit?

Attitude Toward Attempting Upward Influence

1. How likely are you to try to influence your supervisor's thinking about this decision?
2. How likely are you to attempt to influence your supervisor's decision when she or he has not asked for your advice?
3. How likely are you to attempt to influence your supervisor's decision when she or he has asked for your advice?

Trust Scale

1. I feel free to discuss with my immediate supervisor the problems and difficulties I have in my job without having it held against me.
2. When my immediate supervisor makes a decision that seems to be against my interests, I trust that the decision was justified by other considerations.
3. I have trust and confidence in my immediate supervisor regarding his/her general fairness.

Leader-Member Exchange Scale

1. How flexible do you believe your supervisor is about evolving change in your job?
2. Regardless of how much formal organizational authority your supervisor has built into his/her position, what are the chances that he/she would be personally inclined to use his/her power to help you solve problems in your work?
3. To what extent can you count on your supervisor to "bail you out" at his/her expense, when you really need him/her?
4. How often do you take suggestions regarding your work to your supervisor?
5. How would you characterize your working relationship with your supervisor?