Introduction

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There are many ways in which the workplace can be dysfunctional; and many ways in which workplace dysfunction can affect the well-being of organization members. In this book, we look at two broad aspects of the dysfunctional organization: counterproductive work behavior (CWB) in its many forms, and the effects of job stress and dysfunction on organization members' mental health and well-being.

Gender can play many roles in the dynamics of workplace dysfunction. Gender has been studied extensively in the workplace literature. It has been examined in relation to success, promotion, salary, job satisfaction, and occupational mental health (Schein et al. 1996; Baba et al., 1999a, 1999b; Lituchy et al., 2006; Punnett et al., 2007, 2008). Women communicate differently than men (Lituchy and Wiswall, 1991). This has been seen as affecting workplace issues such as organizational effectiveness. Women have different views of success than men (Punnett et al., 2007, 2008) and different issues of work–life balance (Lirio et al., 2007), as well as causes for absenteeism.

The authors in this book have focused on the intersection of gender with several specific types of CWB, such as aggression, bullying, incivility, sexual harassment, sexual orientation harassment, as well as gendered effects of absenteeism and stressful work environments. In addition we examine national culture on occupational mental health.

The first three chapters of this book hone in on relationships between gender and specific aspects of aggression in work organizations. Chapters 4–7 look at bullying and incivility. Sexual harassment and sexual orientation harassment are discussed in Chapters 8 and 9. The relationship between gender and an organizational form of counterproductive work behavior, absenteeism, is proposed in Chapter 10. Finally, Chapters 11 and 12 move toward an understanding of gender factors in organization members' responses to job stress, and overall relationships of gender, culture, and occupational mental health. Each topic and chapter is summarized briefly below.

AGGRESSION

Early research in the area of counterproductive work behavior focused on aggression as a response to frustration at work (Spector, 1975; Fox and Spector, 1999). Much of this early work was based on the frustration-aggression theory of Dollard et al. (1939), which viewed aggression as a likely response when a goal (such as achieving effective work performance) is interrupted or interdicted. Linkages between the actual situation, perceived goal interruption, experienced frustration, emotional reactions, and aggressive behavioral responses depend on many situational and individual factors.

One of these factors is gender. Similarly, gender has been a major concern in the study of the psychology of aggression in general. Pioneers in the study of aggression, such as Arnold Buss (1961) and Alfred Bandura (Bandura et al., 1961), found that boys were more likely than girls to respond to environmental stimuli with physical aggression. While subsequent decades of gender-and-aggression research present a somewhat mixed bag of results, leading researchers such as Alice Eagly (Eagly and Steffen, 1986) and Eleanor Maccoby (2004) continued to find support for linkages between sex, gender development, socialization, and aggression in general.

Chapter 1: Gender and Sex Differences in the Forms of Workplace Aggression

Joel H. Neuman considers “efforts by individuals to harm others in work-related settings.” He draws upon a number of typologies and classification schemes (e.g., physical versus verbal; instrumental versus hostile), underscoring the complex and varied nature of aggressive behaviors, and discusses possible relationships of sex and gender with the different forms aggression may take. He discusses linkages of biological, sociological, and psychological factors on an individual level with sociocultural factors, such as Hofstede’s masculinity/femininity dimension of culture (1991). Finally, he applies these concepts to workplace aggression, harassment, and violence.

Chapter 2: Gender Differences in Aggression and Counterproductive Work Behavior

In Chapter 2, Paul E. Spector expands on the concept of work aggression to the broader set of counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), behaviors that harm the organization and its members (Spector and Fox, 2005).

Spector looks at gender role theory and gender stereotypes, posing the question of whether there are substantial gender differences in the commission of CWB, particularly aggressive forms of interpersonal CWB. He traces the research literature on gender differences in aggression from studies of children to studies of adults in non-work settings, to workplace aggression. The end results of his review are that it would be a mistake to assume robust and significant gender differences in aggressive CWB, and that further empirical study is very much needed.

Chapter 3: The Role of Gender and Attributional Style in Counterproductive Aggressive Work Behaviors

Jeremy Mackey and Mark J. Martinko take a cognitive appraisal approach to understanding *why* gender differences might exist in commission of CWB. Attributions are causal explanations people make for their outcomes – particularly when important, surprising, unexpected or negative outcomes occur. Martinko and Mackey consider how gender may affect the cognitive structure of people's attributions, as well as dispositional attributional styles. In turn, they consider how gender may intersect with attributional processes to affect people's commission of different types of CWB, such as blatant aggression, revenge, retaliation, conflict, harassment, bullying, and abusive supervision, as well as learned helplessness and victimization in response to organizational dysfunction.

WORKPLACE BULLYING

Workplace bullying is gaining attention as a concern among human resource management (Daniel, 2006), legal, mental health, healthcare, and education professionals. After over a decade of research and policy enactment in Europe and more recently, Australia and Canada, today US, academicians, practitioners, and anti-bullying activists are also challenging organizations, public policy-makers, and healthcare and education communities to enact solutions to this problem.

We typically define workplace bullying (WB) as:

repeated actions and practices that are directed against one or more workers, that are unwanted by the victim, that may be carried out deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence and distress, and that may interfere with job performance and/or cause an unpleasant working environment. (Einarsen et al., 2003, p. 6)

WB is behavior that threatens, intimidates, humiliates, or isolates people at work, or undermines their reputation or job performance, and includes a wide range of behaviors, from subtle or unconscious incivilities to blatant, intentional emotional abuse. Even the most seemingly innocent incidents of incivility can spiral into serious conflict, which can lead to a hostile work environment, including the potential for psychological and physical violence (Fox and Stallworth, 2005).

Survey-based studies generally measure the prevalence of WB using one of two approaches: direct self-identification by respondents as targets of bullying (e.g., Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996; Rayner, 1997), or checklists of specific behaviors (e.g., Leymann, 1996; Keashly, 1998; Namie and Namie, 2000; Fox and Stallworth, 2005). Different researchers specify and measure bullying behaviors in different ways. Fox and Stallworth (2010) have developed the Workplace Bullying Checklist (WB-C), which covers six conceptual domains: threatening or intimidating behavior, demeaning behavior, isolation, work sabotage, harm to reputation, and abusive supervision. Table I.1 presents examples of these categories of bullying behaviors.

There has been an explosion of concern over the past couple of years among the popular media, businesswomen's associations, and more recently, researchers, regarding the phenomenon of women bullying women at work. In a *New York Times* (2009) piece Peggy Klaus, an executive coach in Berkeley, California, coined the term "the pink elephant" in the room to refer to the prevalence of woman-on-woman bullying, and the reluctance of the business and research communities to acknowledge or discuss it: "In the name of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, what is going on here?" (p. 1). What accounts for these widespread perceptions that women are mistreating other women? A national survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (2011) with Zogby International found that men who bully tend to bully men and women about equally, but when women are the bullies, they target other women 80 per cent of the time.

"Pink elephant" discussions raise a number of questions about gender and bullying behavior. Are people's perceptions of women bullies confounded with issues of gendered communication and leadership styles and role expectations? Chapters 4 and 5 grapple with relationships among gender, identity, and bullying when the bully is a woman, as well as gendered experiences of bullying targets and bystanders.

Chapter 4: Priming, Painting, Peeling, and Polishing: Constructing and Deconstructing the Woman-Bullying-Woman Identity at Work

Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik, Elizabeth Dickinson and Karen Foss theorize about the phenomenon of women bullying other women (WBW) through a

Table I.1 Examples from the Workplace Bullying Checklist (WB-C)

Category of Bullying	Behavioral Examples
Threatening or intimidating behavior	Non-verbal (e.g., eye contact, gestures) Verbal (e.g., yelling, cursing) Threatening physical violence or job loss Uses e-mail or other online media to harass, threaten, or intimidate you ("cyber-bullying")
Demeaning behavior	Insults and put-downs Excessively harsh criticism of job performance
Isolation	Silent treatment Exclusion from work meetings Intentionally leaves room when you enter Fails to return your phone calls, e-mails
Abusive supervision	Threatens with job loss or demotion Excessively harsh criticism of job performance Blames you for errors for which you were not responsible Applies rules and punishments inconsistently Makes unreasonable work demands
Work sabotage	Attacks or fails to defend your plans Intentionally destroys, steals, or sabotages your work materials
Harm to reputation	Spreads rumors (personal or work-related) Takes credit for your work Used e-mail or other online media to attack your reputation or degrade you to others ("cyber-bullying")

Source: Fox and Stallworth (2010).

metaphor of priming, painting, peeling, and polishing in the construction of women's self-identities at work. Some of the fundamental issues they discuss are the underlying gendered nature of organizing, gender differences in approaches and meanings of social networking, women's relationships to power and masculine values in organizations, and gender differences in life experience and responses to violence, harassment, and exclusion. Front and center are their insights into women's professional identity work, that is, the narratives women continue to develop throughout

their working lives, and how this identity work informs both their own bullying behavior and their responses to bullying by others.

Chapter 5: Workplace Bullying and Gender: It's Complicated

Loraleigh Keashly, one of the pioneers in the study of workplace bullying in the United States and Canada, notes the dearth of research on gender and workplace bullying. Simply put, she poses the question of whether workplace bullying is “gender-blind” (the term “status-blind” denotes lack of recognized association of bullying with the target’s membership in a protected class), or whether bullying is inherently gendered, that is, linked with masculine attributes of power and control in organizations. She seeks to understand the disparate treatment aspect of bullying, that is, to disentangle gender and power effects on prevalence and perception, exposure and experience of bullying.

Another hotly debated issue that increasingly accompanies our growing awareness of the prevalence and consequences of workplace bullying is the extent to which bullying can or should become a matter dealt with in public policy, the law, and the courts. “Harassment” has been a central concern of human resource management, employment law, and industrial/organizational psychology practitioners and researchers, since the passage of Title VII of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent anti-discrimination legislation. Until recently, anti-harassment policy and legislation assumed membership of the target in a protected group (e.g., gender, race, age). In that context, employment law theorists and practitioners now refer to workplace bullying as “status-blind harassment,” that is, bullying not demonstrably linked to the target’s membership in a protected class.

Chapter 6: The So-called “Equal Opportunity Bully”’s Effect on Women in the Workplace

Kerri Lynn Stone argues that even “status-blind” harassment in the workplace, although legal in the United States, disproportionately affects women’s well-being, productivity, and advancement. To date, in the USA no federal or state legislation has been enacted that protects workers against status-blind harassment, or bullying, although “Healthy Workplace” bills have been introduced in 21 states, under the leadership of anti-bullying activists of the Workplace Bullying Institute (Healthy Workplace Bill, 2011; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2011).

Stone looks at the complex definitional and legal relationships among gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. She summarizes the body of employment law that makes gender discrimination and sexual

harassment illegal. In contrast, legal mechanisms for recourse against workplace bullying, a “perfectly lawful practice,” are absent. Stone argues that, perhaps in part due to differential socialization of boys and girls regarding criticism, anger, conflict resolution, and confrontation, workplace bullying may affect women in an entirely different manner and intensity than it affects men – that is, have a gendered disparate impact. She suggests a possible resolution of this situation in the campaign to pass “Healthy Workplace” legislation.

INCIVILITY

Incivility is a related concept, considered by some researchers to be a subset of bullying, and preferred by others as a broader, perhaps more objective or subtle framing of the same construct. Incivility is rudeness and disregard for others. Pearson et al. (2005) define incivility as: “low intensity deviant (rude, discourteous) behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (p. 179). The conceptual overlap with bullying is clear when one considers some of the specific behaviors that comprise incivility, such as taking credit and failing to acknowledge others’ work, spreading rumors, voicemail rudeness and e-mail “flaming,” and leaving office equipment out of order.

Chapter 7: Selective Incivility: Gender, Race, and the Discriminatory Workplace

In Chapter 7, Dana Kabat-Farr and Lilia Cortina draw powerful connections between contemporary work on modern sexism, modern racism, and workplace incivility. They link the subtle, unintentional characteristic of incivility with the similarly subtle, perhaps even unintentional nature of “modern” or “contemporary” racism/sexism, which they define as “covert biases, held even by people who value egalitarianism and avoid discriminating (intentionally) on the basis of gender or race.” They synthesize these two notions as selective incivility, a “veiled expression of bias that ostracizes women and people of color.”

In addition to linking these two forms of organizational dysfunction, this chapter contributes one of the rare considerations of “intersectionality” to be found in the OB or I/O literatures: the double jeopardy experienced by organization members with multiple stigmatized identities, in particular women of color.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION HARASSMENT

It would be impossible to consider dysfunctional behavior in organizations without including what is arguably the most gendered form of abuse: sexual harassment. Only recently have human resource and employment law practitioners, as well as the popular media and academic researchers, extended the concept beyond male-on-female harassment, to include female-on-male and same-sex harassment, as well as discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation.

Chapter 8: Observing Sexual Harassment at Work: A Gendered Extension of a Gendered Construct

Tara C. Reich and M. Sandy Hershcovis present a triadic gendered conceptualization of sexual harassment, looking at the actor, the target, and witnesses or observers. They emphasize the gendered nature of sexual harassment, that is, gender differences in the prevalence of sexual harassment, and in perceptions and responses to similar behaviors.

They extend this consideration of gender differences to perceptions and responses (including intervention) of observers, building a theoretical basis for understanding the responses of observers to ambiguous, that is, not obvious, incidents of sexual harassment. Key factors include gender (of all three parties), workplace norms regarding intervention, and the observers' relative power and attraction to actor and target. The model developed in this chapter can be extended to apply to a growing concern among researchers and practitioners: the response (or lack thereof) of observers to a broader spectrum of counterproductive and dysfunctional work behavior.

Chapter 9: Sexual Orientation Harassment: An Integrative Review with Directions for Future Research

Shaun Pichler breaks down organizational "heterosexism" into formal sexual orientation discrimination (e.g., quid pro quo same-sex sexual harassment) and informal sexual orientation discrimination (e.g., hostile work environment and sexual orientation harassment). Whereas quid pro quo and hostile work environment parallel the legal and scholarly delineations of sexual harassment that have evolved over the past decades, sexual orientation harassment explicitly targets an individual due to his or her actual or perceived sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender).

Currently no federal legislation bans sexual orientation harassment; only 16 states (plus individual municipalities) have legislation that, in effect, includes sexual orientation as a protected class. Pichler makes the point that, while sexual orientation harassment is not actionable under Title VII, same-sex sexual harassment has been found by the courts to be covered, when the harassment is based on the target's sex. Given the prevalence and consequences of sexual orientation harassment in organizations, Pichler argues for the need for organizational policies to extend protection against discrimination and harassment to all organization members.

ABSENTEEISM

Returning to our umbrella term for dysfunctional organizational behaviors, counterproductive work behavior (CWB), we recall that researchers typically distinguish behaviors that harm other people in organizations (CWB-P) from behaviors that harm the organization itself (CWB-O) (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Fox et al., 2001). The chapters up to this point have dealt with forms of CWB-P (e.g., aggression, bullying, incivility, and harassment). Gender also informs many aspects of withdrawal and production sabotage behaviors, which are considered CWB targeting the organization. Clearly absenteeism is an example of CWB-O; ample research attests to the negative impact of absenteeism on organizational functioning and profitability.

Both academic and popular literature take as “a given” that women are absent from work more than men. Is this phenomenon a function of sex (e.g., biological differences in resilience to stress) or gender (e.g. socialization, stereotypes, and differential family roles)? The complexity of relations among sex, gender, and absenteeism is the subject of Chapter 10.

Chapter 10: Sex or Gender? The Enigma of Women's Elevated Absenteeism

Eric Patton and Gary Johns deconstruct the “given” that women's absenteeism exceeds that of men. They summarize statistical evidence of higher rates for women. They disentangle the two sets of causal explanations, sex (i.e., biological) and gender (i.e., socially constructed). They present absenteeism as not merely an individual, but also a group or organizational phenomenon. “Absence cultures” provide the group's expectations of how much absenteeism will be considered appropriable or allowable. Patton and Johns suggest that absence cultures may have higher accepted levels of absenteeism for women than for men (for example, due to actual or

assumed domestic responsibilities), with both positive and negative ramifications for women and their careers. Finally, they question whether or not the higher absenteeism of women is in fact dysfunctional for organizations.

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH

In addition to absenteeism, other aspects of occupational mental health (OMH) include job satisfaction, stress, and depression. There has been substantial research on OMH and gender in the North American contexts, but it is less well known if these theories and models apply in other countries and cultures. In this book, we have examples of international issues of OMH with research conducted in Argentina (Chapter 11) and Barbados (Chapter 12).

Chapter 11: Occupational Mental Health: A Study of Nurses in Argentina

Terri Lituchy, Louise Tourigny, Vishwanath V. Baba, Silvia Inés Monserrat and Xiaoyun Wang look at the impact of role overload on job stress, burnout, and depression with a sample of Argentinean nurses. They examine whether absence from work exacerbates such impact. They find having children makes a difference in the impact of role overload on nurses' mental health. In Argentina, nurses with children report lower levels of stress and less symptoms of depression. In other words, they actually have better OMH. The nurses with children believe that their performance is not affected by their use of absence, nor does having children become a hindrance to their performance.

Chapter 12: Job Attitudes in an Anglophone Caribbean Country: The Case of Barbados

Betty Jane Punnett, Priscilla Glidden, Carol Mulder and Dion Greenidge discuss relations of gender to job attitudes (satisfaction, loyalty, and justice), well-being (health and stress), and job performance (counter-productive work behavior), based on a large-scale study conducted in Barbados. They link their results to the global standing of women in the workplace. A summary of data comparing the labor participation and leadership roles of women across the world sets the stage for this empirical study of women in the workplace in the English-speaking Caribbean. Their findings include lower levels among women (compared to men) of job

satisfaction and justice perceptions, factors that the research literature has associated with increased levels of counterproductive work behavior and job stress.

The authors link gender and very specific national/economic/cultural factors in their understanding of organizational dysfunction. They conclude with a number of recommendations for improving the work situation for women, including mentoring, diversity training, networking opportunities and family-friendly programs and policies.

CONCLUSION

Clearly gender is a factor in many aspects of organizational dysfunction – the gender of the actor, the target, and the observer of abusive interpersonal behaviors; gender-related characteristics of workplace conflict, communication and stress; and socioeconomic factors such as gendered occupational expectations and roles outside the workplace. In some cases, the effects are more subtle than in earlier years of gender studies, informed by legal definitions and protections such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and court rulings on sexual harassment; or the lack thereof in the cases of sexual orientation and status-blind bullying. It remains a challenge to disentangle actual behaviors, socialized perceptions and interpretations of behaviors, and physio-emotional reactions to the behaviors of others. Seemingly obvious constructs take on layers of complexity when informed by sex, gender, sexual preferences, gender–race interactions, family obligations, and traditional occupational roles and expectations.

We, the editors of this volume, hope that the contributions that follow will provoke new questions and new streams of research on gender and dysfunctional organizations, with the ultimate goal of contributing to healthier workplaces for men and women alike.

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