

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR A MULTI-FACTOR, MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE ORIGINS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Violence is an issue that is often chronicled throughout the world, with media stories depicting violence in the home, streets, schools and workplace. Although no sector of society is immune from violence, “stories about workplace violence have inundated the media . . . shock has supplemented hysteria about crime in the streets.”¹ A report issued in 2000 by the Third European Survey on Working Conditions notes that over fifteen million people reported violence, sexual harassment or bullying in the European workplace, with large numbers of workers complaining of stress and burnout.² Of the fifteen million incidents reported, thirteen million were reports of intimidation and bullying and two million were reports of workers subjected to physical

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1. AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *VIOLENCE ON THE JOB: IDENTIFYING RISKS AND DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS* (Gary R. VandenBos & Elizabeth Q. Bulata, eds., 1996).

2. Press Release, Working Conditions in Europe Not Improving, According to Survey, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dec. 14, 2000) available at <http://www.eurofound.ie/newsroom/press3.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

violence from people belonging to their workplace.³ Data from the 1993 Northwestern National Life Insurance Company (NWNL)⁴ notes that violence and harassment in the United States workplace are also pervasive, with more than two million Americans victims of physical attack at the workplace, six million threatened, sixteen million harassed. The issue of workplace violence is clearly global, “crossing borders, work settings and occupational groups.”⁵ The 1999 United States Department of Labor (DOL) *Futurework Report* notes that 50,000 United States workers die every year from occupational diseases. These numbers are staggering, but relay only part of the problem. Clearly, direct violence affects worker morale, productivity and ultimately, the organization’s economic resources and profitability. However, indirect structural violence must also be considered when one looks at the origin of workplace violence.

The origin of violence can be described along a continuum that often begins as latent dissatisfaction and escalates to open conflict and ultimately violence. Violence along a continuum might span “competitive pressures, loss of personal autonomy, surveillance, cumulative physical and mental reactions, fatigue and changing workplace demographics.”⁶ These organizational issues create a cultural milieu that permeates the workplace and in turn, socializes the workforce into a given paradigm of thinking and behaving that can lead to escalation within the continuum of violence.

In analyzing the wide range of actions that encompass violence, one can begin by defining the factors that contribute to violent actions. Byrne and Carter⁷ identified six social forces, described as social cubism that interact to create a climate of violence. Although the Byrne and Carter social cubism model was applied to ethno-political conflict, the multi-factor, inter-relational model can also be utilized to develop a conceptual framework to analyze social forces that create workplace conflict. These social forces that inter-relate in the workplace can be analyzed from the following six perspectives: demographics, historical, psycho-cultural, balance of power, political and economic (Fig.1). In order to ultimately apply these causative forces to conflict interventions, one must also consider the micro-macro link across multiple levels of analysis as

3. *Harassment & Violence*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, at <http://www.eurofound.ie/working/harassment.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

4. NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL LIFE, *FEAR AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE* 6 (1993).

5. Duncan Chappell & Vittorio Di Martino, *The Real Image of Violence at work* (Asian-Pacific Newsletter), Jan. 1999, available at <http://www.occuphealth.fi/e/info/asian/ap199/violence04.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

6. Mary Carroll, *The Violence-Prone Workplace: A New Approach to Dealing with Hostile, Threatening, and Uncivil Behavior*, BOOKLIST, Dec. 15, 1999, at 743.

7. Seán Byrne & Neal Carter, *Social Cubism: Social Forces of Ethnoterritorial Politics in Northern Ireland and Quebec*, J. Peace & Conflict Studies, 3 (2), at 52 (1996).

used by Byrne and Keashly,⁸ which in this analysis will consider the individual, the organization and society at large.

II. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE DEFINED

There is "no agreement on what constitutes workplace violence."⁹ Violence within the workplace can be viewed from multiple perspectives, with the broadest definition including all acts of aggression against an individual within the workplace environment. This definition would include "any form of behavior by individuals that is intended to harm current or previous coworkers or their organization."¹⁰ This definition includes all forms of aggression, including both violent and non-violent acts such as thefts, incivility or spreading of rumors. Additionally, one might consider violence from the perspective of acts that are generated directly from within the work environment as well as those which are incidental to the organization i.e. family disputes that might occur at the workplace but are not related to the work environment itself.

For the purposes of this analysis, workplace violence will be viewed as a continuum of behaviors that arise directly out of the work environment. The multi-factor analysis will be based on Galtung's description of violence as a conflict triangle that is comprised of direct, structural (indirect) and cultural violence. According to Galtung, direct violence would include injury inflicted or directed from one individual towards another, such as physical injury, sanctions and/or detention.¹¹ Structural violence is that which comes from the structure itself and includes those actions that attempt to harm the worker or organization through non-physical methods, i.e. exploitation, marginalization, emotional duress/harm. The use of organizational power over its workforce to elicit worker compliance is commonly manifested through gender inequality within traditionally patriarchal organizational settings. A third form of violence, cultural violence, includes "those aspects of culture . . . that can be utilized to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence."¹² According to Galtung, cultural violence allows acts of violence to be accepted as the norm, which rationalizes latent or manifest approval of either direct or structural violence. These forms of violence have differing time relations; "direct violence is an

8. Seán Byrne & Loreleigh Keashly, *Working with Ethno-political Conflict: A Multi-modal Approach*, in INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING 97 (Michael Pugh ed., 2000).

9. VIOLENCE ON THE JOB, *supra* note 1, at 1.

10. *Id.* at 2.

11. JOHAN GALTUNG, *PEACE BY PEACEFUL MEANS: PEACE AND CONFLICT, DEVELOPMENT AND CIVILIZATION* (1996).

12. *Id.* at 197.

event, structural violence is a *process* with ups and downs and cultural violence is an *invariant*, remaining essentially the same for long periods.”¹³

Violence in its various forms can be seen as a dynamic process that needs to be analyzed from various perspectives and levels of analysis. Such multi-level analysis provides a framework to develop appropriate interventions that are needed to effectuate a workplace climate of positive peace, defined by Galtung¹⁴ as the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds.

III. VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE-TRENDS AND OCCURRENCE

Violence in the workplace is not a phenomenon unique to any particular country or culture. Reports of workplace violence and harassment emanate from all quarters of the globe, with violence becoming an everyday reality for many workers according to the recent International Labor Organization (ILO) *SafeWork* report.¹⁵ According to the ILO report, “understanding has grown that violence at work is not just an episodic, individual problem, but a structural, strategic issue rooted in wider social economic, organizational and cultural factors.”¹⁶ Although perceptions and susceptibility to violence may vary greatly from country to country, it can nevertheless be found in both developing and industrialized nations.¹⁷

Workplace violence was described in 1984 by then United States Surgeon General C. Everett Kropp as a public health problem of significant proportion, which has “indeed assumed the proportion of an epidemic.”¹⁸ Since then there has been considerable data generated concerning direct violence in the workplace, with trends showing increases and decreases over the years. Although recent trends show a decrease in workplace homicides in the United States, there is an increase in reporting of intimidation and bullying within the European community, albeit variations are noted among work sectors and individual nations. Increases in workplace violence and harassment may also be a reflection of greater public awareness and concern throughout the world about the real and potential hazards of workplace violence. Whether real or a

13. *Id.* at 199.

14. *Id.*

15. See Vittorio Di Martino, *Violence at the Workplace: the Global Challenge* (International Labour Organization), Nov. 2000, available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/violence/violwk/violwk.htm>.

16. *Id.* at 8.

17. *Harassment & Violence* (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living Working Conditions), at <http://www.eurofound.ie/working/harassment.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

18. MITTIE D. SOUTHERLAND ET AL., *WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: A CONTINUUM FROM THREAT TO DEATH I* (1997).

factor of increased reporting, this heightened awareness has increased efforts to identify the origins and possible strategies to address organizational conflict.

According to the ILO *SafeWork* report, there are a number of examples that illustrate the "scope, dimensions and types of violence associated with workplaces in many parts of the world"¹⁹ including:

In South Africa, some surveys report that as many as four out of five workers have experienced hostile behavior at the workplace.

In the United Kingdom, a 1994/95 survey found that over 11,000 retail staff had been the victims of physical violence and over 350,000 had been subject to threats and verbal abuse.

In France, over 2,000 attacks were reported on the personnel of the Paris transport system in 1998.

In Japan, a bullying hotline received more than 1,700 requests for consultation during two short periods in June and October, 1996.

In Germany, a 1991 survey found that 93% of women questioned had been sexually harassed at the workplace.²⁰

A recent United States Department of Justice report notes that; "approximately one thousand employees are murdered (in the United States) yearly while performing their work duties...there are two million incidences of workplace violence reported, including one million simple assaults and 400,000 aggravated assaults...the vast majority go unreported."²¹ The numbers are clearly staggering and call out for a response.

A conspiracy of silence surrounds workplace violence, with workers often denying the risks and accepting the violence as part of the job.²² A study by the Society for Human Resources Management found that "48 percent of employees surveyed experienced a violent incident in the workplace...including verbal threats (39 percent), pushing and shoving (22 percent) and fist fights (14 percent)."²³ Women appear particularly vulnerable to workplace violence, with women thirty-nine percent more likely than men to be the victims of workplace homicide.²⁴ The International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS),²⁵ which first

19. See Di Martino, *supra* note 15.

20. See Pascal Paoli, *Safework, Violence at Work in the European Recent Finds*, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/violence/eusurvey/eusurvey.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

21. William Atkinson, *The Everyday Face of Workplace Violence*, 21/00 RISK MGMT. 12 (2000).

22. See Frema Engle, *Violence, Crime and Trauma at Work: An Overlooked Problem*, EAP DIGEST, July/Aug. 1987.

23. Atkinson, *supra* note 21.

24. SOUTHERLAND, *supra* note 18.

25. See *Safework, Introduction to Violence at Work*, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/>

reported victimization at the workplace in 1996, notes that women across all continents report a higher incidence of assault directed against them in comparison to those reported by men, with women in the United States reporting a higher incidence of harassment than men by twenty-three percent to sixteen percent.²⁶ With an estimated 16 million instances of harassment just in the United States workplace,²⁷ the depth and breadth of the situation is evident. One must wonder whether the vast majority of violence that goes unreported is a consequence of latent structural violence, which suppresses victims who fear loss of their jobs if sexual harassment is reported.

The impact of workplace incidents beyond direct physical harm cannot be ignored. The effect on worker health, manifested through stress-related complaints and the costs associated with absenteeism must also be considered. The Third European Survey on Working Conditions reported in 2000²⁸ that forty percent of European workers exposed to physical violence experienced stress, forty-seven percent exposed to bullying experienced stress and forty-six percent exposed to sexual harassment experienced stress. Additionally, thirty-five percent of workers exposed to physical violence, bullying and sexual harassment reported absenteeism of thirty-five percent, thirty-four percent and thirty-one percent respectively during the prior twelve months period.²⁹ The costs of such incidents have been estimated through various studies among countries throughout the world, with wage-loss claims from acts of violence by hospital workers in Canada increased by eighty-eight percent since 1985 and direct costs of psychological violence in one German company estimated at \$112,00 (US) and indirect costs of \$56,000.³⁰

Indeed, the problem may be greatest in newly developing nations, where reporting of workplace conditions are first beginning to emerge and the voice of the emerging working class has not been consistently heard. According to He Qinglian, author of *The Pitfalls of China's Development*, the working class of China have been marginalized and "for now, inequality is growing fast, and in the years ahead, as China further opens its markets under World Trade Organization rules, labor strife-and questions from abroad about fair labor practices-are likely to increase."³¹

protection/safework/violence/intro.htm (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

26. NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL LIFE, *supra* note 4, at 12.

27. Atkinson, *supra* note 21.

28. See Paoli, *supra* note 20.

29. *Id.*

30. See Di Martino, *supra* note 15.

31. Erik Eckholm, *Workers' Rights Suffering as China Goes Capitalist*, NY TIMES, Aug. 24, 2001, available at <http://www.freeseerbia.net/articles/2001/workers2.html>.

The United States marketplace is no stranger to the costs of workplace violence. The NWNL report notes that United States victims of violence or harassment "experienced twice the rate of stress-related conditions, including depression, anger, insomnia, headaches and ulcers...and were twenty times more likely to say their productivity was reduced."³² It has been estimated that United States workplace violence has resulted in \$55 million in lost wages annually, not including days covered by sick and annual leave.³³ The costs related to lost productivity, liability settlements and security costs are not as readily quantifiable, but nonetheless, need to be considered a result of workplace violence.

Data related to the incidence of structural violence in the workplace is primarily qualitative in nature, particularly from the perspective of workplace equality issues, unfair or unsafe employment practices, exploitation and/or cultural organizational behaviors, many of which are based in gender and minority issues. Although some gains in workplace equality have been realized for women and minorities as the wage gap has narrowed, there is considerable evidence that discrimination persists. A comprehensive global analysis of occupational segregation by sex notes that occupational segregation is extensive throughout the world, with male-dominated occupations surpassing female dominated occupations. This is particularly troublesome, as female occupations tend to be lower paying, have lower status and fewer opportunities for advancement. Based on the survey, it has been concluded that the current labor market situation is not ideal for women.³⁴ According to the DOL *Futurework* report,³⁵ United States women and minorities continue to earn less than their white male counterparts. The DOL report also notes earnings of African-American and Hispanic women are sixty-five and fifty-five percent, respectively. White women earn about seventy-five percent for every dollar earned by white men.

Although some wage inequities can be explained by differences in education, experience or skills, the differences "appear to be largely the product of stubborn discrimination."³⁶ The changing labor force, comprised of more minorities and women, has changed workplace dynamics and created conflict, as psycho-cultural needs of workers have changed and power balances have

32. NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL LIFE, *supra* note 4.

33. VIOLENCE ON THE JOB, *supra* note 1, at 14.

34. Jennifer Tikka, *Women and Jobs*, MONTHLY LABOR REV., Oct. 1998, at 38 (reviewing RICHARD ANKER, *GENDER AND JOBS: SEX SEGREGATION OF OCCUPATIONS IN THE WORLD*).

35. See U.S. DEP'T OF LABOR, *FUTUREWORK*, CH. 5—WORKPLACE CONDITIONS, available at <http://www.dol.gov/asp/futurework/report/chapter5/main.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002). [hereinafter *FUTUREWORK*].

36. *Id.*

shifted. How an organization responds to the individual and collective needs of its workforce can be considered a precursor to the development of conflict within the organizational environment. It is this organizational behavior (culture) displayed over time that will ultimately determine the level of cultural violence within the organization. In order to link the micro and macro factors that create direct, structural and cultural violence, it is necessary to explore the origin and nature of conflict producing forces and to examine their inter-relations across multiple levels of analysis more specifically.

Although the following analysis is primarily directed towards a case story based on data compiled within the United States, the application of the analysis transcends the geographic boundaries of the United States, with application of the analysis global in nature as reflected by the universality of the origins of workplace violence.

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC FORCES

Organizational populations tend to be a microcosm of society, often reflecting the mix of racial, ethnic, gender and cultural diversity evident within the society at large. Population trends, particularly in the United States, estimate increased diversity within the workforce compatible with an increasingly diverse population. Although this assumption is somewhat industry specific, with education, skills and experience often creating job opportunities within specific work environments, one cannot deny that the global workforce is changing. Organizations that are essentially a reflection of their societal environment must respond to those changes. "One of the more crucial aspects of any organization regardless of size or design is the interconnectedness of all its parts . . . it's human parts."³⁷

In order to understand the dynamics of organizational behavior, both functional and dysfunctional, one must begin by looking at the composition of an organization's workforce. According to the 1999 DOL report,³⁸ recent United States workforce trends reflect the following:

3 out of 4 women with children and 6 out of 10 women are now in the workforce.

The proportion of single-parent families has more than doubled over the last 30 years, up from 11% in 1970 to 27% of family households with children today.

In 1996, 20% of the population provided informal care to a relative or friend age 50 or over. This is expected to rise as baby boomers reach age 65.

37. CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY 140 (Claire Damken Brown et al., eds., 1997).

38. *Id.*

Immigration trends project 2 out of 3 of the projected 820,000 immigrants entering the United States annually will enter the workforce upon their arrival.

By 2006, nearly half of all United States workers will be employed in industries that produce or intensely use information technology, products, and services.

Whites will have a declining share of the total population and minorities are projected to rise from one in every four Americans to almost one in every two. By 2010, Hispanics will be the largest minority group.

There will be an increased incidence for "homework," creating the potential for abuse of normal working hours, duties and benefits.

Baby boomers currently make up 47% of the work force, which will increase the 55+ age group in the workforce over the next 20 years.

1 in 5 Americans work 49 hours/week (or more) and $\frac{3}{4}$ of workers report more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.

The DOL report³⁹ demonstrates a national population that will be increasingly diverse with a concomitant need to provide equal educational and job training opportunities for women and minorities as they gain a corresponding increased presence in the workforce. Data from the DOL report notes that educational attainment varies across racial and ethnic lines, with high school completion rates lower for foreign born as compared to native born Americans (65% to 84%). To meet the demands of an increasingly less industrial and more service, technologically oriented economy, these new workers will need equal access and opportunities for training and education.

Provisions for child and elder care will also be needed to meet family care needs related to the increasing numbers of women in the workforce. Given the changing face of American workers, organizations need to reconcile the increasing diversity and associated needs of its workforce with job expectations. Increased demands on workers to respond to home/family and work obligations create the potential for increased stress and dissatisfaction. The impact of an increasing number of women in the workforce is not unique to the United States. According to a British study, "working mothers were the most dissatisfied group of people in society, thanks to the pressure of running a modern family."⁴⁰

According to a National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health study in the United States, "job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and

39. *Id.*

40. Finola Lynch, *Can Mothers really have a career? If you think things have improved for working mothers, think again. As Finola Lynch discovers, many employers still believe women should choose between work or children*, THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER, Jan. 24, 2000 (Manchester, U.K.)

emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury."⁴¹ There is considerable documentation on the linkage between perceived job stress and counterproductive behavior and worker dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction has ultimately has been linked to job performance and thus to the macro effect on organizational outcomes and relationships.⁴²

Conflict also arises from demographic differences related to social, ethnic and cultural identities with customs, values, language and beliefs creating us and them in-groups and out-groups, described by Simmel⁴³ as a source of conflict. "Demands from minority action groups, government mandates, and immigration (both legal and illegal) mean that those available and trained for employment come from a myriad of linguistic and cultural backgrounds."⁴⁴ These differences have the potential to create socio-cultural communication barriers,⁴⁵ which can "adversely affect the quality and quantity of worker output."⁴⁶

V. BALANCE OF POWER FORCES: GENDER AND MINORITIES

The issue of power, both real and perceived, must also be given consideration when looking at potential conflict i.e. the individual's socio-cultural identity influences how they will interpret, conceive and utilize power in relation to the organization and society at large.⁴⁷ For minorities and workers in newly emerging economies where the "supply of labor vastly exceeds the demand,"⁴⁸ the workplace often mirrors societal perspectives and stereotypes, which places limits and encourages feelings of low self-esteem, powerlessness, and alienation. As the individual is excluded and kept outside the established power structure, the opportunity for others to exploit, exclude, and suppress their inclusion is re-enforced. Bennett proposes that the perceived powerlessness and lack of control over one's environment acts as an agent of direct violence that is manifested as employee deviance and results in "attempts to regain control (corrective function) and in hostile aggression (retributive

41. See Janice Marra, *Profile: Profiling Employees and Assessing the Potential for Violence*, PUBLIC MGMT., Feb. 1, 2000, at 25.

42. ROBERT A. GIACALONE & JERALD GREENBERG, *ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS* (1997).

43. Georg Simmel, *The Stranger*, in *SOCIAL THEORY* 184 (Charles Lemert, ed., 2d ed. 1999).

44. *CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY*, *supra* note 37, at 139.

45. See RAYMOND COHEN, *NEGOTIATING ACROSS CULTURES: COMMUNICATION OBSTACLES IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY* (1991).

46. *CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY*, *supra* note 37.

47. COHEN, *supra* note 45.

48. See Chappell & Di Martino, *supra* note 5.

function).⁴⁹ Volkan notes that the perception of power imbalances increases the likelihood of primitive ways of behaving, which promotes organizational conflict.⁵⁰

Behaviors that result in workplace deviance including behaviors such as lateness, tardiness, incivility and undermining of the company, as well as more physically harmful acts, is a costly and pervasive problem.⁵¹ Considerable attention, particularly in the United Kingdom, has been given to the issue of workplace bullying, which has been defined by the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union as “persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behavior, abuse of power . . . which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated, or vulnerable (and) . . . which may cause them to suffer stress.”⁵² A 1994 study conducted by the Staffordshire University Business School noted that 1 in 2 UK employees had been bullied at work during their working life, which causes distress to the individual as well as to the organization.⁵³ Secondary related stress related disorders have been linked to heart disease, alcoholism, as well as mental and emotional disturbances, with twenty-five percent of accidents at work in the UK involving workers under the influence of alcohol. Although workplace bullying may take many forms such as sexual harassment, bullying in the workplace remains a clear example of the abuse of power stemming from an imbalance of power between two individuals.⁵⁴

Demographic changes emphasize the need to address workplace inequality specifically in relation to the changing face of the worker, which reflects a growth particularly in the number of women, minorities and persons over 55 in the United States workforce.⁵⁵ As the workforce continues to mirror the general population, and women and minorities increase their visibility, issues of gender and racial conflicts can be expected to escalate. In their effort to seek recognition, women have become both agents and recipients of hostile and dysfunctional behavior. The advent of the men’s movement has reflected a need

49. Rebecca J. Bennett, *Perceived Powerlessness as a Cause of Employee Deviance*, in *DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS: VIOLENT AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOR* 221 (Ricky W. Griffin et al. eds., 1998).

50. See VAMIK VOLKAN, *BLOOD LINES, FROM ETHNIC PRIDE TO ETHNIC TERRORISM* (1997).

51. BENNETT, *supra* note 49.

52. See Andy Ellis, *Workplace Bullying*, STRESS UK (1997) at <http://www.stress.org.uk/bullying.htm>.

53. *Id.*

54. *Id.*

55. See FUTUREWORK, *supra* note 35.

by men to deal with perceived changes in a patriarchal society in response to the increased visibility of women and minorities throughout society.⁵⁶

As the number of women in the workplace increase, the potential for gender related conflict also increases. Reports of sexual incidents in the workplace by women span all continents; noted as 5.4% in Western Europe, 7.5% in the New World, 5.2% in Latin America, and 3.7% in Africa.⁵⁷ A report on the increased vulnerability of women in the United States workforce conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management, notes that forty-five percent of workplace victims were women in 1999 compared to forty-one percent in 1996.⁵⁸ Race and ethnicity increase an individual's vulnerability to harassment, with minority women perhaps most vulnerable. The impact of cultural perceptions and willingness to report assault and/or harassment may be reflected by the low reporting of such incidents by Asian workers with four percent of men and one percent of women reporting assaults, and only 1.3% of Asian women reporting sexual incidents.⁵⁹ Clearly, the effect of real or perceived changes in power and control resulting from changing workplace demographics can be a source of conflict as the dynamics of the established system is challenged.

The incidence of job segregation according to gender reflects continuing patriarchal limitations established by societal beliefs and stereotypes. Occupational segregation by sex on a global basis is extensive according Richard Anker, who notes gains in the world as a whole have not been observed in East Asian, most Middle Eastern and North African countries, and some transition economy countries.⁶⁰ According to a British study, equal pay and opportunity has primarily been realized by an elite of well-educated women, with those in low wage occupations, having had little impact from gender wage equality initiatives.⁶¹ Similarly United States women may have increased their visibility and numbers in the workplace, albeit they have not increased their equality.⁶² Regardless of gains made in their workplace presence, women continue to be described in terms of what they wear, rather than what they

56. MICHAEL A. MESSNER, *POLITICS OF MASCULINITIES: MEN IN MOVEMENTS* (1998).

57. See *Safework*, *supra* note 25.

58. Alisa Tang, *The Workplace Can Be Threatening, Especially for Woman*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 15, 1999.

59. See Chappell & Di Martino, *supra* note 5.

60. Tikka, *supra* note 35.

61. Alexander Kronemer, *Narrowing the Wage Gap*, MONTHLY LABOR REV., Nov. 1, 1999, at 79 (reviewing HEATHER JOSHI & PIERELLA PACI, *UNEQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN AND MEN: EVIDENCE FROM THE BRITISH BIRTH COHORT STUDIES* (1998)).

62. See *FUTUREWORK*, *supra* note 35.

accomplish.⁶³ The influence of societal and organizational patriarchal beliefs are inherent in oppressed group inequality on a global basis and thus need to be factored into the demographic forces that create conflict in the workplace through job segregation, lack of inclusion and opportunity offered based on the individual's demographic classification rather than abilities.

An additional balance of power factor arises from relationship issues inherent in the integration of cultures, languages and religious beliefs that are associated with current and projected growth of immigrants (and minorities) in global workforces. As economies become more inter-related on a global perspective, integration of workforces that may be increasingly more culturally diverse, with differing beliefs concerning group affiliation, respect for authority, norms and customs as well as varying levels of communication skills will continue to challenge work environments. The challenge presented is to create an environment sensitive to these changing dynamics and avoid the potential for conflict to arise from distrust and ignorance of others and their respective cultures.

Class differentiation within a hierarchical organizational structure may create animosity, distrust and an adversarial environment. The ability of the organization to address and recognize the inherent self-worth of the individual and provide opportunities for inclusion in organizational practices has the potential to either mitigate or escalate conflict. Through commitment to a participative, transformational organizational structure, the differences that exist within the organizational community can be utilized to solidify and develop group consensus as opposed to creating group disharmony and alienation.

VI. HISTORICAL FORCES

The historical forces that contribute to organizational conflict need to be analyzed from both the individual and organizational perspective with past experiences creating a climate within which the individual and organization form a relationship and develop a mutual identity. The individual thus brings their individual history to the organization, which is a product of the biological, cultural and societal self.⁶⁴ In turn, individual behaviors become a function of unique individual perspectives that are influenced by the organization's perspectives. The melding of the individual and organizational identity forms the organization's culture which has been defined as "time-tested, adaptive, consciously and unconsciously shared knowledge and values that direct normally developed from the top down, the organization's informal culture is

63. Jill Elikann Barad, *Beleaguered Mattel CEO Resigns as Profit Sinks*, L.A. TIMES, Feb. 9, 2000 at B-6.

64. See generally E. Goffman, *On Face-Work*, in *SOCIAL THEORY: THE MULTICULTURAL AND CLASSIC READINGS* (C. Lemert, ed., 1999).

often a product of practices and beliefs that have developed as norms over time. The organization perception, thinking, and feeling."⁶⁵ Although an organization's formal structure is thus develops a unique history, upon which a corporate culture forms with an established set of organizational behaviors, including norms, values and beliefs.⁶⁶

A values-based paradigm has been proposed which suggests that the structure, norms and culture of an organization will affect the ethical behavior within that organization. The values established by the organizational leadership will influence behavior throughout the organization i.e. adherence to a truthful approach.⁶⁷ One might also propose that an organization's lack of values or adherence to accepted societal norms, i.e. unethical/unsafe practices, would influence the behaviors of its workers towards each other as well as towards the organization in general. The relationship between the various organizational constituencies is thus influenced by the disparity or commonality of the culture within that organization as well as by the individual and societal beliefs that the individual brings to that organization.⁶⁸ Organizational identity thus serves as a framework within which the workforce is expected to function, with the organizational structure placing limits upon the worker through bureaucratic processes that create a rational legal authority over the worker's domain and daily functions.⁶⁹ Robinson and Kraatz note "organizational culture can often serve the same function as formal structure by generating informal pressures for compliance with organizational norms . . . or informally sanctioning deviance."⁷⁰ The formal structure of an organization i.e. how they handle grievances, dysfunctional behavior, and incivility, will accordingly influence the level of conflict and violence within that organization. "Employees who said their employers have grievance, harassment and security programs reported lower rates of workplace violence . . . (as well as) lower levels of dissatisfaction with their jobs and lower levels of stress-related illnesses."⁷¹ Company practices regarding the use of mediation, employee advisory groups, ombudsmen or similar avenues to redress dissatisfaction or

65. SETH ALLCORN, *ANGER IN THE WORKPLACE: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE* 102 (1994).

66. Max Weber, *The Bureaucratic Machine (1909-1920)*, in *SOCIAL THEORY: THE MULTICULTURAL AND CLASSIC READINGS* (C. Lemert, ed., 1999).

67. GIACALONE & GREENBERG, *supra* note 42.

68. See WILLIAM L. URY ET AL., *GETTING DISPUTES RESOLVED, DESIGNING SYSTEMS TO CUT COSTS OF CONFLICT* (1988).

69. WEBER, *supra* note 66.

70. Sandra L. Robinson & Matthew S. Kraatz, *Constructing the Reality of Normative Behavior: The Use of Neutralization Strategies by Organizational Deviants*, in *DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS: VIOLENT AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOR* 204 (Ricky W. Griffin et al. eds., 1998).

71. NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL LIFE, *supra* note 4.

disputes, can be instrumental in preventing small grievances from escalating into larger conflict or violence.⁷²

The historical relationship an organization has with its external environment is often indicative of that shared with its internal constituency. The policies and practices exhibited internally as well as externally serve as a reflection of the organization's beliefs and established culture i.e. social justice and ecological sensitivity. The organization, as well as the individual worker, thus has the potential to accept or reject societal mores and norms as they inter-relate within their own organizational community as well as with the external community. By establishing and maintaining ethical, trustworthy and considerate policies and practices, the organization provides a model by which the individual is encouraged or discouraged from supporting a civil and cooperative work environment. The organization thus has the capacity to serve as a role model for how its internal constituency is expected to behave, with dysfunctional behavior often a reflection of destructive behaviors exhibited by those in power and/or authority.

The historical relationship and cultural beliefs of an organization often mirrors that of society in general, creating an atmosphere within which cultural violence arises. In so doing, the organization condones behavior and/or organizational beliefs that can potentially contribute to structural and/or direct violence. For those organizations that choose, either through ignorance or denial, to ignore the needs of its workforce, the potential exists for disparities and structural inequalities to create organizational conflict. These practices in turn create an environment ripe for both direct and structural violence as workers are denied recognition of their individual worth and unique abilities.

The style and structure of management, common beliefs, myths and rituals as well as organizational commitment to truth, honesty and respect for others creates an environment that encourages or negates conflict. How clear the beliefs are and how strongly they are shared will influence the harmony and stability of the organization.⁷³ Based on work done by Secord and Backman (1964) and Sherif (1969), Robinson and Kraatz propose that in ambiguous environments individuals are less likely to rely on objective standards. As a result, individuals will accept "actions and cues from others . . . with deviant actors more likely to employ defiant strategies."⁷⁴ Non-specific "unacknowledged, undiscussable, but nonetheless powerfully aggressive negative organizational influences lead to employee alienation."⁷⁵ It is clear the

72. See generally CATHY A. CONSTANTINO & CHRISTINA SICKLES MERCHANT, *DESIGNING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: A GUIDE TO CREATING PRODUCTIVE AND HEALTHY ORGANIZATIONS* (1996).

73. Robinson & Kraatz, *supra* note 70.

74. *Id.* at 74 at 213.

75. ALLCORN, *supra* note 65.

individual and the organization cannot ignore the historical past of either, which is ultimately influenced by societal culture as well.

VII. ECONOMIC FORCES

The economic reality of living in a competitive, global economy requires that organizations maintain their financial viability, often relying on worker productivity to maintain a competitive advantage. Regardless of the specific organizational product, ultimately all organizations are held accountable for their efficiency and effectiveness. How an organization obtains and maintains that efficiency and effectiveness is based on acquisition and distribution of its resources. The policies and practices by which economic goals are accomplished can have a profound effect on those affected by acquisition and distribution of resources, namely the workforce. Although the quantitative and qualitative financial impact of violence and conflict on organizations has been previously noted, further exploration of the relationship between the individual, organization and society is warranted in order to establish a broader perspective of how economic forces give rise to workplace conflict.

Direct economic costs related to structural and direct workplace conflict have been documented in numerous studies that quantify decreased productivity, prevention and intervention strategies, litigation, lost wages, health and injury benefits. The DOL report links economic costs of conflict to the health and injury of United States workers i.e. 1 in 5 Americans work 49 hours or more a week with resultant sleep deprivation linked to lost productivity, absenteeism, illness and injury, costs of which range up to \$18 billion annually. The DOL reports goes on to report that 50,000 United States workers die every year from occupational diseases, thirty-eight percent of nurses endure back injuries during their career and healthcare workers suffer 600,000 needle-stick injuries each year, with concomitant debilitating or fatal results for these workers. Coal miners with black lung disease cost the United States economy \$1 billion annually. Lost workdays cost United States employers \$15-20 billion each year in workers' compensation costs.⁷⁶ The National Safe Workplace Institute has estimated annual costs to United States organizations as high as \$42 billion for workplace violence. Buss, (1993) and Camara and Schneider, (1994) note a \$40 to \$120 billion cost for theft and embezzlement and Murphy, (1993) has estimated the costs of a range of delinquent organizational behavior at \$6 to \$200 billion.⁷⁷ The costs in other countries are comparatively as staggering as those in the United States, with the costs of alcohol and drink related diseases estimated to cost the United Kingdom economy approximately

76. See *FUTUREWORK*, *supra* note 35.

77. Robinson & Kraatz, *supra* note 70.

1.7 billion pounds and 8 million lost works days. A United Kingdom study noted that 1 in 8 (around 3 million) had been bullied at work in the prior five years, leading to stress related disorders with the concomitant costs associated with such disorders. One-third to one-half of all stress related illness is directly attributable to bullying at the workplace, which in turn has been linked to the incidence of heart disease, alcoholism, mental breakdowns, job dissatisfaction, accidents, family problems and certain forms of cancer.⁷⁸

The increased reliance on technology to improve efficiency and productivity has also been linked to increased work related stress levels due to loss of privacy and increased isolation from telecommuting that creates potential exploitation and abuse as well as demands for increased productivity.⁷⁹ The influence of technology on worker stress levels is not specific to the United States. The International Labor Organization reports that "Automation, subcontracting, teleworking, networking and the 'new' self employment are leading to an increase around the world in the number of people working alone,"⁸⁰ creating similar potential for worker exploitation and isolation as that identified in the United States by the DOL report.

Although indirect costs associated with worker dissatisfaction, hostility, stress, illness and anger as well as workplace inequality, injustices, illegal practices are less well quantified, qualitative, experiential research has substantiated the economic impact of employee and organizational dysfunctional behaviors. Kacmar and Carlson have noted the relationship between behaviors perceived as dysfunctional (structural violence on the worker) and the outcomes of that behavior on the worker (actor) and the organization. Political behaviors related to inefficient use of resources i.e. hiring, firing, assignments, demotions, and raises were linked to poor morale as well as negative external perceptions of the organizations studied, with inefficiency and low morale responsible for 90% the reported dysfunctional organizational outcomes.⁸¹

How resources are acquired and distributed by an organization needs to be examined closely as a factor in organizational conflict. Organizations are increasingly looking at mergers and acquisitions as a method to increase available resources and ensure financial stability. Although often a benefit to the long-term viability of an organization, the emotional toil taken on all participants, represents "a significant and potentially emotional and stressful life

78. Ellis, *supra* note 52.

79. See FUTUREWORK, *supra* note 35.

80. Chappell & Di Martino, *supra* note 5, at 4.

81. K. Michele Kacmar & Dawn S. Carlson, *A Qualitative Analysis of the Dysfunctional Aspects of Political Behavior in Organizations*, in *DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS: NON-VIOLENT DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR* 195 (Ricky W. Griffin et al. eds., 1998).

event.”⁸² The emotional effect is often portrayed through anger, hostility, and alienation that result in poor morale, dissatisfaction, and decreased productivity. The impact to both the individual and the organization is inextricably linked, with potential for structural inequalities leading to direct violence undermining the economic benefits achieved through merger and acquisition. Issues related to merging of corporate and global cultures, loss of jobs, change of status and work group relationships serve as a source of employee anger and potential violence. The drive for economic advantage also leads to downsizing and worker assimilation of job functions. The association between downsizing and medically certified sick leave has been shown to be significant in a study conducted on workers in Finland, with major downsizing associated with high levels of perceived job insecurity, increased psychological and physical demands of work, decreases in aspects of control over work, and impaired relationships with colleagues.⁸³ How an organization and individual responds to these issues is often a reflection of core beliefs and systems, as well as external pressures exerted through third parties i.e. unions, governmental regulations.

There is considerable documentation on the linkage between perceived job stress and counterproductive behavior and worker dissatisfaction.⁸⁴ Dissatisfaction has ultimately been linked by Gruenberg to job performance⁸⁵ and thus to the macro effect on organizational outcomes and relationships. Indeed, working conditions in Europe are not improving and many workers in Europe are working under difficult circumstances, perhaps a reflection of increased global demands for productivity and competition that reflects the intensification of work that has occurred over the past ten years.⁸⁶

How resources are distributed also influences workplace conflict. Structural violence demonstrated through the inequitable distribution of resources, wages, benefits and opportunities can create a frustrated, hostile, aggressive workforce that display anti-social (dysfunctional) behaviors and latent sabotage of the organization. As workers perceive themselves as victims of the system, with a concurrent loss of power and identity, they may become

82. SUE CARTWRIGHT & CARY L. COOPER, *MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS: THE HUMAN FACTOR* 35 (1992).

83. Jussi Vahtera et al., *Effect of Downsizing on Health of Employees: What are the Moderators?*, in AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, *WORK STRESS AND HEALTH 99 ORGANIZATION OF WORK IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY—ABSTRACTS* (2001), at <http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/niosh/abstract12.html>.

84. GIACALONE & GREENBERG, *supra* note 42.

85. Julia Morrison Chambers, *The Job Satisfaction of Managerial and Executive Women: Revisiting the Assumptions*, J. EDUC. FOR BUS., Nov. 1, 1999, at 69.

86. Working Conditions in Europe Not Improving, *supra* note 2.

increasingly hostile and alienated.⁸⁷ Such behaviors may be demonstrated through theft, property damage, and whistle blowing that are triggered by management practices⁸⁸ and which ultimately will impact the economic resources of the organization. According to Volkan, when an individual is confronted with an inability to withstand conflict, they will experience a sense of hopelessness, fear, and humiliation.⁸⁹ The net effect to the organization is one of disharmony, decreased productivity, and ultimately loss of competitive advantage in the marketplace.

An organization's commitment to the self worth and value of its workers and how it distributes its economic resources has the potential to create conflict through practices related to wage and benefits, hiring and firing, counseling, promotions, and communication practices. As workers vie for limited resources and their own piece of the pie, competition and power imbalances develop and allegiances shift from the group to the individual. Personnel policies are a reflection of how the organization perceives the value of its workforce and as such, can create a dehumanizing, inequitable environment, ripe for employee dissatisfaction and conflict. This conflict can be either manifest or latent, occurring as intra-group or inter-group conflict, as well as between management and workers. Although these conflictual behaviors may be a manifestation of societal behaviors, as well as individual cognitive processes, one cannot ignore the linkage between organizational practices and individual actions and behaviors.

The influence of third party players who have an economic stake in the individual and/or the organization also has the potential to contribute to the conflict experienced within the organization. Union intervention in management/worker conflict can serve to blur the issues and fuel the conflict rather than serve to mediate for a peaceful resolution of issues. Governmental intervention through regulatory bodies may also contribute to creation of an "us" versus "them" orientation within an organization through practices such as a Medicare whistle blower policy in the United States that encourages the workforce to identify organizational misdeeds. For those who seek to create change or address perceived wrongs, the whistle blower who is willing to speak out and break the code of silence is often viewed as disloyal and ostracized from the group. Factions for and against a cause create an environment of hostility and strife. Although established as a protective mechanism, such regulatory interventions often serve as a conduit for conflict and increased organizational dysfunction.

87. PAULO FREIRE, *PEDAGOGY OF HOPE: RELIVING PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED* (Robert R. Barr trans.) (1999).

88. GIACALONE & GREENBERG, *supra* note 42.

89. VOLKAN, *supra* note 50.

VIII. PSYCHO-CULTURAL FORCES

There is myriad of issues encompassed within the context of psycho-cultural forces exerted within an organization. These issues include those that are generated by the social, behavioral, and psychologically constructed milieu within which an individual relates at the inter-group and intra-group organizational level.⁹⁰ How the individual responds to a situation within the context of their particular environment is often a factor of the psycho-cultural forces that determine behavior and impact relationships.⁹¹ Although psycho-cultural factors are often responded to from the individual perspective, the linkage to the organization's historical culture must be considered as a sum of its parts. However, for the purpose of this analysis, the psycho-cultural forces will be viewed primarily at the level of the individual and their relationship to the group. Individual psycho-cultural factors, such as gender, race, ethnicity, cooperation, control, stereotypes, and group processes influence the individual perceptions of reality, which in turn establish the basis for human behavior.

The social construct theory proposes that an individual will respond to a given situation and make decisions about their actions based upon influences exerted by their social environment. Lederach, building on work done by Schulz and Blumer, notes that "social conflict emerges and develops on the basis of the meaning and interpretation people attach to actions and events...conflict is connected to meaning, meaning to knowledge, and knowledge is rooted in cultural."⁹² Examples of low-conflict communities demonstrate "distinctive psycho-cultural [factors that] produce shared interpretations of the world and facilitate the management of differences without resort to violence."⁹³ Who we are is a reflection of our societal experiences, the norms and expectations of society and how we have been conditioned to respond. Our prior experiences influence our present actions, which are similarly influenced by the societal group whom we relate to on an organizational level.

In looking at behavior, one must also consider the unconscious influence of human emotions that arise from the Id, Ego and Superego, over which, according to Freud, man has little control. Freud's theory of psychical

90. See generally IRVING L. JANIS, *GROUPTHINK: PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF POLICY DECISIONS AND FIASCOES* (1982).

91. See generally ROBERT JERVIS, *PERCEPTION AND MISPERCEPTION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS* (1976).

92. JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, *PREPARING FOR PEACE, CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION ACROSS CULTURES* 8 (1995).

93. MARC HOWARD ROSS, *THE MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT, INTERPRETATIONS AND INTERESTS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE* 35-36 (1993).

apparatus describes coping behaviors such as hostility, aggression, withdrawal, and despondency, which are often utilized to deal with internal and external turmoil.⁹⁴ Although "large social forces such as sexism, racism, heterosexism, and class inequality shape our biographies, (but) it is as individuals that we experience and make sense of our lives."⁹⁵ Ultimately, each individual develops relationship(s) from their unique perspective, with commonality of past history and grouping along racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, age influencing a group's solidarity. Thus, the individual and their social environment are inextricably linked, with individual behaviors shaped by societal expectations and classifications as well as by unconscious forces.

An organization's ability to compete in the marketplace, whether on a local or global level, is often a reflection of the organizational commitment and sense of common purpose. Durkheim describes the loss of equilibrium (anomie) that occurs when groups' established beliefs and values are challenged.⁹⁶ Conflict ensues and group solidarity and identity is jeopardized. Recent theorists, such as Vanik Volkan,⁹⁷ propose that group cohesion and stability is bound to a common culture, with group identity based on a shared vision. Volkan has proposed that groups will regress when under stress and fall back on primitive ways of behaving, particularly when a power imbalance is perceived to exist. Given that the organization is a microcosm of society, these societal forces impact group consensus or disharmony within the organization. In-group and out-group designations create power imbalances and competition, which if left unchecked, can lead to escalation of conflict and undermining of organizational goals i.e. structural violence directed towards the organization. Real or imagined perceptions of inequality increase divisions and limit the ability of groups to work in a cooperative, team environment.

Perceptions of powerlessness among oppressed groups may be encouraged by organizational policies and practices that disproportionately affect minorities, the aged and women i.e. unequal pay, opportunities, sexual harassment. Such perceptions of powerlessness often create divisions among work groups with a "worker's perceived lack of control over his/her environment ... proposed as a cause of workplace deviance."⁹⁸ Locus of control (LOC), a person's beliefs about control over life events, has been shown to have a direct relationship to

94. Sigmund Freud, *The Psychological Apparatus and the Theory of Instincts (1900-1939)*, in *SOCIAL THEORY: THE MULTICULTURAL AND CLASSIC READINGS* (C. Lemert ed., 1999).

95. Judith Lorber, "Night to His day:" *The Social Construction of Gender*, in *FEMINIST FRONTIERS IV 33* (L. Richardson et al. eds., 1997).

96. Emile Durkheim, *Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor*, in *SOCIAL THEORY: THE MULTICULTURAL AND CLASSIC READINGS* (C. Lemert ed., 1999).

97. VOLKAN, *supra* note 50.

98. BENNETT, *supra* note 49.

worker satisfaction and prediction of behavior in organizational settings.⁹⁹ People with an internal LOC feel they are responsible for what happens to them, whereas those with external LOC feel that they have no control over what happens. LOC has been reported to be one of three psychological indicators that are most likely to show the potential for angry and/or violent behavior on the job. An individual's lack of control over their circumstances can create high levels of stress, and ultimately lead to irrational or violent action against themselves or others. Job stress and negative affinity (attitude) are identified as the 2 other indicators of dysfunctional behavior on the job. Indeed, "criminal and violent offenders have a much lower need for affiliation than non-offenders (who) don't necessarily view interactions with others as positive experience . . . and are less likely to care that their actions may hurt other people."¹⁰⁰ Thus, for those within the organization that are alienated and hostile to group processes, the potential for dysfunctional and/or violent behavior may be exacerbated by the perception of diminished LOC and/or job stress.

Substance abuse as well as prior aggressive behavior can be considered psycho-cultural factors that have been linked to workplace violence.¹⁰¹ Such workplace behaviors are often manifestations of aggressive behavior exerted outside the work environment, i.e. family violence. Bennett and Lehman¹⁰² report a linkage between drug and alcohol usage on the job and low affinity for group cohesion, higher levels of antagonism and violence in the workplace. "Substance abuse has been linked to poor relationships with supervisors and coworkers . . . that can lead to workplace violence and to unsafe acts that may endanger coworkers."¹⁰³

IX. POLITICAL FORCES

As we move into the twenty-first century, pressure on organizations to remain competitive in an increasingly high tech, global environment continues to escalate. Ultimately, organizations must rely on the nature of the relationships that exist among its various stakeholders, including Board members, workers, customers, regulatory agencies, and the public, to meet

99. Markku Riipinen, *Extrinsic Occupational Needs and the Relationship Between Need for Achievement and Locus of Control*, 128 (5) J. OF PSYCH. 577 (1994).

100. Janice Marra, *Profile: Profiling Employees and Assessing the Potential for Violence*, PUBLIC MGMT., FEB. 1, 2000, AT 25.

101. VIOLENCE ON THE JOB, *supra* note 1.

102. Joel B. Bennett & Wayne E. K. Lehman, *Alcohol, Antagonism, and Witnessing Violence in the Workplace: Drinking Climates and Social Alienation—Integration*, in AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, VIOLENCE ON THE JOB: IDENTIFYING RISKS AND DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS (Gary R. VandenBos & Elizabeth Q. Bulatao eds., 1996).

103. FUTUREWORK, *supra* note 35.

desired organizational outcomes and maintain economic viability. The nature of these relationships requires that alliances and group processes be established and nurtured, which in turn dictates how successful the organization will be in meeting the needs of its various stakeholders. The actions taken by the organization's stakeholders to meet these demands can be considered political in nature, referring to those behaviors that might be considered shrewd or prudent.

Organizations rely on political processes to achieve their goals, which can be either functional or dysfunctional. Functional organizational politics are those that support the organization in reaching its goals, serving the organization, not the individual making the decision. Dysfunctional organizational politics are those that are self-serving and non-sanctioned by the organization. The use of power and/or control over another to accomplish one's own goals at the expense of the other(s) is considered to be a negative use of political behavior.¹⁰⁴

The interaction of the various actors and how groups are formed within the workplace environment sets the stage for political behaviors evident within the organization. Often these interactions will be determined by the power and actions of established in-groups and out-groups. The group process ultimately differentiates those with power from those that are less powerful to effect change within the organization, with the ultimate power of the organization more often resting with a defined and select group. How those in power utilize their power and exert political influence will set the agenda for the organization through the actions and behaviors exhibited by the politically powerful. These actions ultimately create or at the least, influence the culture, vision and mission of the organization. The potential for dysfunction arises through alliances and political behaviors exhibited by those who have the power to formulate and enforce policy that may be perceived as unfair or unjust by those less powerful. Unfair and often duplicitous actions by the politically powerful can lead to an environment of distrust, confusion and/or open rebellion among the workforce i.e. strikes, turnover, low morale, hostility.

The pressure to achieve organizational goals may lead to a culture that is steeped in a winner take all warrior mentality, forcing competitive win-lose strategies that promote winning at all costs.¹⁰⁵ Competition is a learned phenomenon and cooperation is at least as integral to human nature as is competition. Competition in its raw state often requires one to lose in order for the other to win.¹⁰⁶ Such competition may be a sign of emerging conflict, particularly "when generated by uncontrolled, aggressive competition between

104. Kacmar & Carlson, *supra* note 81.

105. CONSTANTINO & MERCHANT, *supra* note 72, at 7.

106. See ALFIE KOHN, *NO CONTEST: THE CASE AGAINST COMPETITION* (1986).

or among work units or colleagues.”¹⁰⁷ The political culture of such warrior organizations “is [often] mirrored as well in the methods employed to control and fight the threat of conflict.”¹⁰⁸ Such an environment promotes dissension throughout the organization, leading to conflict between and among management and its workforce. Ultimately, the agenda is controlled by those in power, with power derived by the one who is less dependent on the other.¹⁰⁹

Simmel has argued that group cohesion arises from both harmony and disharmony within a group, with conflict seen as having a duality of purpose and unity achieved when both harmony and disharmony exist. Nevertheless, power imbalances and individual political agendas that interfere with group cohesion ultimately disrupt the stability of the organization. As individuals lose their sense of cohesion, they are more apt to have their reason clouded with emotion, which makes them more prone to irrational acts based on that emotion.¹¹⁰ Kacmar and Carlson have studied the relationship between political behaviors and organizational outcomes, looking at behaviors such as favoritism, nepotism, gender discrimination, use of power and self-serving behavior. The political behaviors identified in the Kacmar and Carlson study demonstrated a forty percent dissatisfaction rate and thirty-one percent turnover rate among those surveyed with organizational outcomes affected through dissatisfaction, turnover, distrust, and low productivity. According to Kacmar and Carlson, these behaviors all directly impact the bottom line of an organization, which is further compounded if unfair treatment is documented and legal action taken.¹¹¹

The responsiveness of the organization to its external environment similarly has the potential to increase conflict between the organization and its external stakeholders i.e. regulatory agencies and consumers. When an organization’s financial goals are placed above that of its environment and/or its workforce, short-term gains may be realized at the expense of achieving long-term strategies. The emphasis on individual self-preservation encourages destructive competitiveness in place of more productive collaboration over the long term.

There is a clear need for organizational behavior that applies fair and equitable political processes and proposes. As Alexis Herman, former United States Secretary of Labor, notes:

In this new economy, we have to think of family-friendly policies in a new way. Not as fringe benefits. Not as perks. But for what they

107. CONSTANTINO & MERCHANT, *supra* note 72, at 6.

108. *Id.* at 7.

109. See URY ET AL., *supra* note 68.

110. Simmel, *supra* note 43.

111. Kacmar & Carlson, *supra* note 81.

really are-good ideas that are good for workers and good for business. Make no mistake. Companies succeed in the global marketplace when workers succeed around the kitchen table.¹¹²

X. CONCLUSIONS, SYNTHESIS & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The global workplace has become an increasingly complex entity, reflecting not only an organization's systems and beliefs, but also those of its workforce and society in general. As a microcosm of society, organizations are exposed to a myriad of forces, which influence its relationships both internally and externally. These forces, which have the potential to create a climate of conflict and subsequently violent behaviors, have been identified as demographic, historical, balance of power, economic, political, and psycho-cultural. Each of these forces inter-relate on a systemic organizational level as well as at the level of the individual worker who is similarly a product of and an agent of the forces identified. Ultimately, as part of the society at large, both the individual and organization are part of the larger societal system that in turn, impacts the organizational environment.

Given the dynamic nature of the inter-relationships established within an organizational environment and the multiple factors that challenge that environment, one must acknowledge and understand how these factors can create the potential for destructive conflict. It is through awareness and acceptance of these factors that the organization can begin to identify and develop strategies to respond to conflict in a positive, non-adversarial manner. A multi-modal, multi-level level approach must be applied to the design of dispute systems that are required for the organization, the worker and society to respond productively to the myriad of conflicts presented.

The approach to designing appropriate dispute systems is predicated on a careful analysis of the organization, identifying both structural and relationship sources of conflict and what factors, if any, are impacting the organization's ability to achieve its stated goals. Sandole recommends a three-pillar approach be used to comprehensively map conflict. In so doing, one can identify whether the conflict is latent or manifest and identify the parties, issues and objectives used to achieve goals as well as the environmental orientation to the conflict. Identifying the actors in the conflict, including both internal and external stakeholders, allows one to determine the forces that are influencing the dynamics of relationships and the source(s) of conflict. Mapping the conflict also allows one to define the level of the conflict, whether individual, organizational and societal in nature and whether conflict is steeped in the

112. U.S. DEP'T OF LABOR, *FUTUREWORK*, CH. 8—FRAMING THE DEBATE, available at <http://www.dol.gov/asp/futurework/report/chapter8/main.htm> (last visited Feb. 8, 2002).

organizational structure or within interpersonal relationships. The overlap between structural and nonstructural issues must be noted, particularly those related to relationship, beliefs, values, and control over resources. The non-structural issues are often manifested within the framework of the organization's culture and balance of power, requiring the system designer to identify which forces are the source of conflict.¹¹³ The complexity of identifying sources of conflict can be seen in such structural issues as ambiguous lines of authority, which may paradoxically be the source, as well as the result, of relationship issues based on hierarchical power imbalances. Once issues have been identified, it is equally important to address all levels of the organization when designing systems. Lederach (1998) proposes that organizational goals and change can best be accomplished by involving actors at all levels, including upper, middle and lower tiers.

The range of potential strategies can be viewed along a continuum, which include preventive, facilitated, fact-finding, advisory and/or imposed methods. Prevention strategies can be applied to conflict such as that steeped in gender and minority issues. Such strategies should be geared towards developing a collaborative, transformative environment built on human resource policies that emphasize processes such as team building and cross cultural training. Employee development can be addressed through workshops that deal with interpersonal relations, assertiveness training, guest relations, stress management, communication skills, anger management, and violence prevention programs, which support the development of positive behaviors and action among those experiencing inequities and loss of voice. Such prevention strategies are useful in increasing the ability of stakeholders to gain control and influence the source(s) of conflict on an internal basis, as individual workers gain skills that enable them to impact on negative forces exerted. These strategies are geared towards building team processes and empowering those who are disenfranchised by power imbalances.¹¹⁴ Zero tolerance for violent and aggressive acts and early warning programs that identify potential violent behavior can be implemented to mediate dysfunctional behavior. Such programs should be a reflection of organizational beliefs and culture and be clearly communicated to all within the organization. Policies enforcing acceptable behavior should be initiated across all levels of the organizations, including upper management and should stipulate the consequences of non-compliant actions.¹¹⁵ Employee assistance programs should be available to assist in handling problems requiring counseling, substance abuse and or family

113. Dennis J.D. Sandole, *A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: A Three Pillar Approach*, 5 (2) *PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES* 1, 1-30 (1998).

114. See CONSTANTINO & MERCHANT, *supra* note 72.

115. Atkinson, *supra* note 23.

conflict. VanDer Wall has suggested a seven step preventive approach to dealing with workplace conflict including; obtaining support from the top, performing a workplace violence audit, developing policies and procedures, conducting training in policies and procedures, arranging for easy access to employee assistance programs, including mental health professionals, and having clear, commonsense policies and procedures for terminations and layoffs.¹¹⁶

Not all forces exerted on an organization can be resolved through preventive strategies. Interventions such as mediation, negotiation, and ombudsperson programs provide opportunities to address many of the conflict that may be embedded deep within societal forces exerted on the organization. The strategies developed by the organization to deal with these forces must be reflective of the sources of conflict identified at all levels through thorough assessment and analysis. These strategies must also be compatible with the organization's resources and philosophy. Designing a comprehensive dispute system that includes both structural and relationship issues will allow application of appropriate strategies to fit the individual needs of the organization.

Considering the complexity of forces that create conflict within an organization, a multi-tier, multi-modal approach is needed to identify sources of conflict and develop appropriate interventions to promote a state of harmony within the organization (Figure 2). Such an approach can create a synergistic organism, capable of responding dynamically to conflict as "a necessary part of life, (creating interventions which) need not be waged destructively,"¹¹⁷ In so doing, an organization has the opportunity and ability to be a positive agent of change, one that can create a transformative environment of positive peace, capable of meeting individual, organizational and societal needs.¹¹⁸

116. Stacy VanDer Wall, *Preventing Workplace Violence: A Guide for Employers and Practitioners*, HR MAGAZINE, FEB. 1, 2000, AT 152.

117. LOUIS KRIESBURG, CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICTS, FROM ESCALATION TO RESOLUTION 1 (1988).

118. See generally ELISE BOULDING, BUILDING A GLOBAL CIVIL CULTURE, EDUCATION FOR AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD (1990).

XI. APPENDIXES

A. Figure 1: *Origins of Violence in the Workplace*

CONFLICT FACTOR	DIRECT VIOLENCE (physical)	STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE	CULTURAL VIOLENCE
DEMOGRAPHIC	Cultural, gender, ethnic diversity, power imbalances, and stress leading to physical abuse/harm.	Cultural, gender, age discrimination and inequalities. Communication barriers, stereotypes based on "identity," home/family pressures.	Institutional policies and practices that ignore cultural, gender, ethnic identities of workforce; exclusionary practices.
HISTORICAL	Individual mores that utilize physical violence as a means to accomplish "ends." Dissatisfaction, stress, power imbalances; uncertainty about behavioral norms lead to physical abuse/harm, aggression.	Individual, organization, society values, beliefs, mores in disharmony or ambiguous that create stress, dissatisfaction, hostility, dysfunctional behavior i.e. theft, absenteeism; grievance procedures; harassment	Institutional policies and practices that condone (enforce) unethical, unsafe, unhealthy, uncivil, dehumanizing conditions; hierarchical, patriarchal organization structure.
ECONOMIC	Unfair/unequal distribution of resources creating dissatisfaction, anger, frustration lead to physical abuse/harm/aggression. Third party intervention fueling conflict. Physical sabotage of organization.	Unfair/unequal acquisition and distribution of resources-unethical, unfair practices leading to decreased productivity, absenteeism, stress, health/injury rates/ Benefits; mergers/ Acquisitions-reduction/changes in workforce; non-physical sabotage of organization.	Institutional practices that enforce inefficient, unequal/unsafe acquisition and distribution of resources. Individual, societal mores, beliefs concerning equality/justice of others.
BALANCE OF POWER	Physical violence, sexual harassment; verbal abuse; job stress; overwork; health issues; high turn-over; strikes	Lack of opportunities; pay inequities based on gender, minority status; discrimination practices.	Policies & practices that ignore and/or punish diversity; exclusionary practices

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CONFLICT FACTOR	DIRECT VIOLENCE (physical)	STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE	CULTURAL VIOLENCE
POLITICAL	Individual agendas; denial of worker needs to meet organizational needs; abuse of environment	Disharmony among stakeholders; lack of clear organizational mission; mixed agendas	Duplicitous behavior of management; disharmony of beliefs, culture between workers & management
PSYCHO-CULTURAL	Power imbalances (LOC), inter/intra-group conflict, dysfunctional behaviors, substance abuse, job stress, negative affinity led to acts of violence/aggression directed towards others.	Demands of technology creates isolation, psych, substance abuse; poor communication; lack of grievance processes, demographic, class, gender, race, ethnicity "distrust"/animosity	Social construct of organization, individual behavior; expectations of behavior, lack of common beliefs, respect for authority, respect for others.

B. Figure 2: Strategies for Violence in the Workplace

CONFLICT FACTOR	INTERVENTIONS		
	PREVENTATIVE	NEGOTIATED ADR	FACILITATED ADR
DEMO-GRAPHIC	Partnering; team building; training communication; guest relations; affirmative action; anger & stress mgmt; assertiveness training; cross cultural training	Union negotiations; human resource processes; hiring practices; wage & hour policies/practices; organ. policies & procedures; family leave policies	Ombudsperson; brainstorming; mediation by 3rd party; strategic planning; consensus building; employee advisory groups; grievance procedures
HISTORICAL	Training and development in org. culture & practices & job requirements; org. commitment to environmental/social justice; support of societal mores/practices; civil workplace	Practices related to cultural/family needs of workforce; fair & equitable work practices; strategic planning inclusion of all levels internal and external to organization.	Worker inclusion in org. mission & practices; grievance procedure, compliance processes
ECONOMIC	Fair & equitable distribution of resources; clearly stated fiscal practices; quantitative & qualitative productivity measurements; fair retention & recruitment practices; tech training, support; stress & anger management; job matching to experience & training; wellness programs; smoking cessation	Union negotiated and/or employee work groups input into fair and equitable HR practices & benefits, outcome measurements; task force input into organizational financial, productivity goals, strategic planning; consumer input into established policies & practices.	Governing body, community, accountability of organization to internal & external consumers, reg's, laws; ombudsperson programs; 3rd party mediation for disputes; mediated cultural merging with acquisitions/mergers
BALANCE OF POWER	Fair & equitable human resources policies & practices; employee development & training programs; team building/ communication programs; open door management policies; guest relations program	Violence prevention programs; peer review; negotiated process for review of grievances & disputed job performance appraisals	Mediated review of org. practices, processes; grievance procedures; support of whistle blower policies; ombudsperson; compliance program

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CONFLICT FACTOR	INTERVENTIONS		
	PREVENTATIVE	NEGOTIATED ADR	FACILITATED ADR
PSYCHO-CULTURAL	Employee assistance programs (EAP) programs; health benefits; team building; assertiveness, anger, stress management training/support; alignment of worker to org. tasks; cross cultural sensitivity training; EAP, substance abuse programs; zero tolerance for weapons/violence	Grievance procedures; union/employee works groups input into work practices	Employee suggestion programs; ombudsperson/work task force input into org. structure and practices
POLITICAL	Alignment of org. goals, practices with internal & external stakeholders beliefs, norms, values; management accountability to constituents	Negotiated human resources practices, advancement opportunities; equal & fair work practices	3rd party mediation for workplace grievance i.e. gender equality; advancement within all levels of org.