The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior

Ricky W. Griffin and Anne M. O’Leary-Kelly Editors

Foreword by Robert D. Pritchard

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The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior

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Editors

Foreword by Robert D. Pritchard
The Organizational Frontiers Series

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Foreword

This is the twenty-first book in the Organizational Frontiers series of books initiated by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). The overall purpose of the series is to promote the scientific status of the field. Ray Katzell first edited the series, followed by Irwin Goldstein, Sheldon Zedeck, and Neal Schmitt. The editors and topics for the volumes are chosen by the editorial board, or individuals propose topics for the volumes to the editorial board. The series editor and the editorial board then work with the volume editor(s) in planning the volume. During the writing of the volume, the series editor often works with the volume editor and the publisher to bring the book to completion.

The success of the series is evident in the high number of sales (now over forty-five thousand). Volumes have received excellent reviews, and individual chapters as well as entire volumes have been cited very frequently. A recent symposium at the SIOP annual meeting examined the impact of the series on research and theory in industrial and organizational psychology. Although such influence is difficult to track and volumes are varied in intent and perceived centrality to the discipline, the conclusion of most participants was that the volumes have exerted a significant impact on research and theory in the field and are regarded as being representative of the best the field has to offer.

This volume, edited by Ricky Griffin and Anne O’Leary-Kelly, reflects new thinking and research on a series of issues that reflect negative behaviors in organizations, hence the name *The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior*. There is a clear need for attention to these topics. Most research in industrial and organizational psychology and organizational behavior has focused on the positive contributions people make to organizations. Although the positive side is clearly important, there is a growing awareness of the impact of
more negative aspects of behavior, such as theft, harassment, alcohol and drug abuse, and retaliatory behavior. This volume pulls together the research and thinking of some of the strongest scholars in these areas. We all hope this volume will energize researchers in this important topic of our discipline and stimulate new ideas about how to understand and deal with negative behaviors.

The volume has a number of important strengths. First, it covers a broad range of topics, including workplace aggression and violence; injustice, stress and aggression; intimate partner violence and the workplace; discrimination; sexual harassment; sexual orientation discrimination; the dark side of organizational politics; under-the-table deals; extreme careerism; psychological contract breach violations; alcohol and drug abuse; organizational retaliatory behavior; incivility; and employee theft.

The volume also focuses on the antecedents, processes, and consequences of behaviors in organizations that have a negative impact on the organization, the people in them, or the people in their environments. It also considers all levels of analysis from the individual to the organizational to, in some cases, the societal level as well. It considers the practical issues of how organizations do or could deal with such negative behaviors.

Another major strength of the volume is how it identifies the research needs and agenda for each area, including the appropriate research methodologies. This strength is particularly important because we want the volume to stimulate research. The more the questions and methodologies are presented by these experts, the better other researchers can use the information to do new research. Future research ideas are presented in each chapter and covered extensively in the concluding chapter, where the editors present a valuable summary of the conceptual issues and research needs in this area. For scholars who are interested in the dark side topics, this concluding chapter presents an excellent summary of the important issues and a road map for guiding future research.

An interesting point the editors make in the concluding chapter is that each of these dark side behaviors is actually quite distinct from the others. The editors argue the importance of this issue in noting that earlier work in this area tended to combine negative behaviors into categories such as “workplace aggression” or “organizational deviance.” Such grouping offered little discriminant validity
between the behaviors, and the concern was that identifying antecedents and consequences for separate behaviors was not really feasible. By breaking down these general behaviors more specifically, the editors show that studying them separately is not only possible but also highly desirable.

The target audiences for the Organizational Frontiers Series include graduate students in industrial and organizational psychology and organizational behavior, as well as doctoral-level researchers and practitioners who want to gain knowledge on the most up-to-date data and theory regarding these dark side behaviors. I believe that this book represents a significant advance in our thinking about such negative behaviors. It broadens our perspective on important dark side behaviors, combines current theory and empirical work, and integrates these in a way that should have a major impact on the scholarship and practice in our field for years to come.

The editors and chapter authors deserve our gratitude for pursuing the goal of clearly communicating the nature, application, and implications of the theory and research described in this book. Production of a volume such as this involves the hard work and cooperative effort of many individuals. The editors, the chapter authors, and the editorial board all played important roles in this endeavor. Because all royalties from the series are used to help support SIOP financially, none of the participants received any remuneration. They deserve our appreciation for engaging in a difficult task for the sole purpose of furthering our understanding of organizational science. We also express our sincere gratitude to Cedric Crocker, Matt Davis, Nina Kreiden, and the entire staff at Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Over many years and several volumes, they have provided support during the planning, development, and production of the series.

January 2004

Robert D. Pritchard
University of Central Florida
Series Editor, 2003–2008
Preface

George Lucas has made numerous contributions to American popular culture, none more ubiquitous than the concept of “the dark side.” Indeed, there are not many people today who cannot readily see or hear Darth Vader beckoning young Luke Skywalker to “give in and turn to the dark side of the force.” And more than a few no doubt secretly think that perhaps once, just once, the noble hero should consider using his adversary’s own methods against him. After all, wouldn’t it be just the sweetest justice of all to see Luke embrace the dark side but then use it to smite down both Lord Vader and the evil emperor and his minions before returning to the light and again becoming the noble hero?

But when the concept of the dark side is taken off the movie screen and applied to a real world context such as an organization it quickly loses its allure. Indeed, there is nothing lighthearted about the real dark side—situations in which people hurt other people, injustices are perpetuated and magnified, and the pursuits of wealth, power, or revenge lead people to behaviors that others can only see as unethical, illegal, despicable, or reprehensible.

This book represents a collective effort by an array of organizational scholars to explore and reveal the true nature of the dark side as applied to organizational behavior. The contributors were selected because of their past and current work in areas that reflect the dark side. Each was invited to tackle a specific part of the dark side of organizational behavior, charged with reviewing existing theory and research about that behavior, and challenged to outline and propose avenues for future research.

We would like to thank these contributors for agreeing to join us and for working diligently to achieve the goals set out before them. We would also like to thank Robert Pritchard. It was Bob who first proposed this volume to us and who then provided encouragement and support in many different ways as we moved
through the process of creating this book. We would also like to acknowledge numerous reviewers who helped us and the other authors sharpen our thinking and refine our ideas. These reviewers include Vikas Anand, University of Arkansas; Allen Bluedorn, University of Missouri; Wendy Boswell, Texas A&M University; Lynn Bowes-Sperry, Western New England College; Dan Ganster, University of Arkansas; David Glew, Tulsa; Michelle Duffy, University of Kentucky; Deborah Knapp, Kent State University; Ramona Paetzold, Texas A&M University; Christine Pearson, Thunderbird; Robert Pritchard, University of Central Florida; Daniel Skarlicki, University of British Columbia; Bennett Tepper, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Lois Tetrick, University of Houston; Bill Turnley, Kansas State University; Michael Wesson, Texas A&M University; Richard Woodman, Texas A&M University; Stuart Youngblood, Texas Christian University; and Jing Zhou, Rice University.

January 2004

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The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior