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Civility and Respect at Work

In Chapter 2 we noted that, as part of their expectations of reasonable behaviour in the workplace, people wanted recognition for their work. We now widen the focus to include not just recognition but also civility and respect. Whereas, outside the workplace, antisocial behaviour may go unchecked and incivility passes without comment, there is an expectation that the workplace should be different. Here, at least, it could be thought that there should be higher standards for the way people treat each other, standards which employers can enforce with sanctions and rewards. Much of this chapter will be concerned with these expectations being routinely unfulfilled but, as before, we are particularly interested in pinpointing the characteristics of the workplaces which have the most problems.

As with unreasonable treatment, the key predictor of the troubled workplace is that individuals feel they do not matter. In Chapter 2 we mentioned the literature on dignity at work, which suggested that dignity requires respect, self-respect and autonomy. While respect might more frequently be understood in terms of recognition than civility, this literature clearly spans the subjects of both the chapters. Other sociological work, which draws inspiration from the work of Durkheim, and particularly Goffman's interpretation (1956, 1968, 1972), has more relevance to this one. Thus Pearson *et al.* (2001) argue that norms of respect between workers underpin their cooperation and that workplaces are communities with shared sentiments and moral understandings. Incivilities flout those norms of respect and undermine the elements of community in the workplace.

In total 40 per cent of the British workforce experienced incivility or disrespect in the two years leading up to the survey, and nearly a quarter experienced three or more types of this behaviour. A little over 10 per cent endured five or more varieties of incivility or disrespect. It might be widespread but, as with unreasonable treatment, incivility and disrespect was not a very frequent experience for most people who experienced it, though a minority experienced it very frequently. Most people who told us they had experienced each type of incivility and disrespect said it had been less frequent than once a month, but, for all but two types, the proportion who experienced it once a week, or even daily, was at least 20 per cent.

We already know that it was not incivility and disrespect that people said had the biggest impact on them. In Chapter 2, we suggested that, when they

answered the question about impact, people were thinking about the impact of ill-treatment on how they spent their time and on what they learnt about themselves and their workplace. It may be that incivility and disrespect is simply less of a surprise than unreasonable treatment. This certainly does not mean that employees were able to shrug it off. Of the various kinds of incivility and disrespect, people were more likely to admit that being shouted at or someone losing their temper had upset them most. This was not one of the three kinds of incivility or disrespect that were covered in the FTWS, but the three that were asked about certainly had worse effects on people's health and well-being than other kinds of ill-treatment. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with one's work had drastic consequences with 30 per cent experiencing moderate or severe effects on their finances, 40 per cent suffering moderate or severe deterioration of their physical health, 46 per cent seeing moderate or severe changes to their psychological health and the relationships of 30 per cent undergoing moderate or severe changes. The proportions for being insulted or having offensive remarks made were almost as large, and it is worth repeating that all of these effects (and those for being treated in a disrespectful or rude way) were more extreme than for actual physical violence.

As with unreasonable treatment, the type and severity of the effects of ill-treatment varied between different types of employee. Three of the categories of employees protected by equalities legislation suffered the more extreme effects of incivility and disrespect. Of particular interest were those who were significantly more likely to report effects on physical health (women, university-educated employees, permanent workers, union members, older workers) and effects on psychological health and well-being (lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), black and minority ethnic (BME), and university-educated employees, permanent workers, union members, and older workers). This is only bivariate analysis, of course, but it is still interesting that the people who were less likely to shrug off incivility and disrespect seemed to be older and better educated and those with little prospect of escaping the situation that was upsetting them anytime soon because they were permanent workers. Becoming a union member may be a response to ill-treatment.

Researchers rarely, if ever, have similar data to go on, but there is much scholarly literature that owes its existence to the debate over the alleged decline of civility and respect in the United Kingdom and, particularly, the United States. Most media outlets have made this the focus of their news and comment output at one time or another. Politicians of all hues have latched onto the idea that public concern about these issues is something they cannot afford to ignore. From antisocial behaviour and the 'respect agenda' to 'the broken society', politicians in the United Kingdom have experimented with the idea that promising to do something about the perceived decline in civility and respect may be a vote-winner. We do not want to intervene in this debate by saying whether we think there is more incivility and disrespect than there used to be.

For one thing, we do not have the resources to address this question as the data we draw on are cross-sectional. But we can say something about the state of common incivility and disrespect in the workplace, and how real the effects are on employees' health and well-being, and this has to be helpful because there is so little reliable information around.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, there is in fact very little sociological literature on incivility and disrespect between managers and employees or between co-workers in the workplace. There is, however, a large sociological literature which assumes that incivility and disrespect is an external intrusion into the workplace – probably brought in by clients and customers – but inside civility is in charge. When the outside intrudes in this way, employees will, as their employers demand, actually intensify the civility of their behaviour to compensate. This is what some of the studies in the literature on 'emotional labour' literature claim, for example, that workers who provide services in person are subject to varieties of abuse but are expected to endure it all with a smile (Hochschild 1983).

We need to know whether civility and respect in the workplace are always undermined from outside, by the actions of clients and customers, or whether some problems arise between employees or between employees and managers. As we would expect, the share of incivility and disrespect for which managers were responsible was far lower than the share of unreasonable treatment that originated with them. They remained, however, the single most important group of troublemakers. This is important and perhaps surprising. We might have imagined from the discussion at the start of this chapter that co-workers and customers (or clients) would be the main source of incivility and disrespect, but our survey suggests that this is not true at all. We reach this conclusion, once again, from analysis of over 2,600 incidents of incivility and disrespect from those we call the troubled minority who blamed 40 per cent of them on managers. Co-workers and customers/clients were each responsible for roughly a quarter of the incidents. It was only hints to quit one's job (and, perhaps, intimidating behaviour) that managers were more likely to be responsible for than co-workers or clients. Co-workers were more likely to be responsible for gossiping, excluding people, teasing and ridicule (as we might expect). Moreover, it is perhaps not surprising that customers or clients were more likely to be responsible for insults, rudeness, shouting and threatening behaviour.

Most of this analysis from the troubled minority was confirmed by the analysis of the characteristics of the self-reported troublemakers in the sample. Customers or clients were *much* more likely to go in for incivility and disrespect than unreasonable treatment. A troublemaker who was a manager was a bit more likely to adopt unreasonable treatment, but co-workers/colleagues who were responsible for ill-treatment were fairly evenly distributed between unreasonable treatment and incivility and disrespect.

Subordinates turned out to be fairly small players for any of the factors but were more likely to display incivility and disrespect than unreasonable treatment. We did, however, find incidents of ill-treatment by mixed groups – including managers, co-workers and subordinates – in our case studies. For example, a Strand project officer told us she had suffered long-term bullying from her manager when we interviewed her. This was a classic case: the manager may have seen her as a threat so brought her down a peg by promoting two people, who had reported to her, to a job she expected to get. He then gave our interviewee the poisoned chalice of a role in the teams identifying areas, and people, for redundancy and then encouraged her colleagues to ostracise her because of her new role. He was ‘drip feeding them bits of information, enough for them to go off and gossip about ... and people just used to revel in it, and a couple of people would just purposely say things out loud knowing that I was within the vicinity’. Her performance deteriorated and

I began to shut down so I just became like in a bubble, that’s how I felt. And it was terrible because it really affected my home life as well because I would take it home and, although you would try not to take it home with you, it happened and I did. And it affected my marriage, because I’d go home and I’d cry and get angry and take it out on my husband, and it was all because of what was happening here.

We asked if she considered taking sick leave and she admitted ironically, ‘No, because, again, with the current redundancy programme they look at sickness.’

Although this was not true of this woman’s experience at Strand, more survey results from the troubled minority showed that incidents of incivility and disrespect were not dominated by repeat troublemakers in the same way that we found for unreasonable treatment. It was equally likely to be the same perpetrator or a different one across the three incidents we asked about. This makes sense because customers and clients were more important in this part of the story and were obviously a little less likely to come in contact with the employee on regular basis. We need to bear in mind that we are not talking about bullying here but trouble at work. A lot of the bullying literature concentrates on repeated ill-treatment, but one does not need to be abused by the same person over and over again to think one is ill-treated. Being treated without civility or respect by a variety of customers and/or several different co-workers is no less worthy of social-scientific attention.

Most of the people responsible for unreasonable treatment turned out to be men and, because this was partly a result of the prevalence of male managers, it might be thought that there would be more female perpetrators of incivility and disrespect because clients and co-workers had more of a presence in this type of ill-treatment. All the same, female troublemakers were never in the majority and only got close to being responsible for half of the ill-treatment for a couple of types of behaviour, in particular unfair criticism.

If we use the replies of self-identified troublemakers to examine gender, we find women troublemakers were sometimes in the majority but, in fact, only for gossip, excluding and intimidation. As in Chapter 2, the vast majority of troublemakers were white.

Witnessing incivility and disrespect in the workplace was almost as common an experience as suffering it. This kind of ill-treatment is therefore much more visible than unreasonable treatment. Indeed, the proportions witnessing someone spreading gossip or rumours, and excluding others from a social group, were higher than the proportions saying they had experienced this kind of thing. As we might reasonably expect, then, some employees who were the focus of gossip or exclusion were not aware of their ill-treatment. There was little evidence, except perhaps for shouting and losing one's temper, that people were any more likely to own up to causing this kind of trouble than they were to being responsible for unfair treatment. As in Chapter 2, this reluctance to identify oneself as a troublemaker underlines the inference we make that the vast majority of employees do not find any of this behaviour acceptable and, when they encounter it, they certainly consider it to be trouble. Given what we have already learnt about the effects of incivility and disrespect at the start of the chapter, we think it would be foolish to disagree with them.

For example, this technician who had long service at Strand after coming into the company as an apprentice told us how he had made a point of telling his colleagues that they had crossed a line when they carried on teasing him about his moral convictions. He told us in very clear terms the amount of trouble disrespect between co-workers could cause for people.

And sometimes, although there's nothing like the bullying and all the so-called things you used to hear happening on the shop floor, like people getting dragged to the toilets and hung up [with] forklifts and things, right ... [Interviewer: This is what used to happen here or ...?] Apparently, yeah. Right, but a long time ago, and the place was apparently full of bullies on the shop floor and all that, but no different to school, it's just an extension of school. But even though none of those things happen any more, they're still ... that still happens maybe in just a verbal sense. There's still people that do it. My point is that many people think it's funny, but they don't know where to draw the line. And somebody like me, that could say look that hurts, they hear it, they might ignore it, but some people will bottle that up. And because they will say nothing, that will eat away at them. And the consequences are a lot greater than me just walking off for two weeks and not speaking to them.

We already know that, no matter what type of ill-treatment we asked about, people who told us they had experienced it were also more likely to say they had seen it happen to other people and, indeed, had done it themselves. This was a key piece of evidence in the picture we are compiling of the troubled workplace in which all sorts of ill-treatment are more likely. The importance of this concept to our analysis was confirmed by the reasons the troubled

minority offered for the incivility and disrespect they experienced. The position the respondent held in the organisation registered for all of types of incivility and disrespect, confirming the importance of the workplace in any sociological explanation of this type of ill-treatment. As before, the two outstanding reasons were that it was just the way things are and the attitudes or personality of the other person. The attitudes of the other person were probably less important than just the way things are for most types of incivility and disrespect (but particularly exclusion) with the exception of shouting, rudeness (about the same) and intimidation and threats (where attitudes got a bit more of the blame). Choosing just the way things are as the reason for incivility and disrespect was probably most important for humiliation, gossip and teasing. Clearly the troubled workplace is not all about unreasonable treatment by managers.

Having made this point, position in the organisation was more marginal for a few types of incivility and disrespect, for example, teasing and unfair criticism. Performance at work appeared to be less relevant to this kind of ill-treatment than it had been suggested in Chapter 2. The only place it made a substantial appearance was where we might expect it to: unfair criticism. Nor was it much of a surprise that relationships at work were cited more often as a reason than they had been mentioned for unreasonable treatment. Relationships hardly figured as reasons for insults and rudeness but were really quite important, unsurprisingly, for gossip and excluding people.

We hope to persuade many people in this book that quite a lot of trouble at work is not connected with bullies and their victims or the stress endured by individual employees (Walker and Fincham 2011). The book deals with troubled workplaces and the sociological factors which contribute to them. In Chapter 2 we isolated quite a few of these factors – age, disability, ethnicity, income, intense work, managerial responsibilities, organisational change, region, fairness and respect. Did some or all of these same factors carry over to our analysis of the correlates of incivility and disrespect?

Perhaps it is no surprise that we lose those job characteristics (income, managerial responsibilities) that were significant for unreasonable treatment. This might be what would be expected if incivility and disrespect are, unlike unreasonable treatment, not a measure of the troubled workplace at all but all about the attitudes and personalities of individuals. However, our multivariate analysis suggests that less control over work and super-intense work were just as important here as they were for unreasonable treatment. Moreover, employee characteristics associated with incivility and disrespect were not very different from those we found for unreasonable treatment. Employees in our survey were more likely to suffer incivility and disrespect if they were younger. They were more likely to suffer incivility and disrespect if they did not have an Asian background and much more likely to suffer denigration or disrespect if they had disabilities (particularly psychological problems and

learning disabilities). The difference this time is that they were also more likely to suffer incivility and disrespect if they were gay or lesbian employees. As ever, we have to bear in mind that the numbers of such employees who appeared in our sample were small.

Nevertheless, the important correlates of this kind of ill-treatment were much more obviously to do with the type of work people were employed to do. They were particularly likely to work in the public sector – where they were exposed to the antisocial clients and customers, where they had less control over their work and where the pace of their work was too intense. Once more, the FARE questions proved to be important predictors of trouble at work. There were, however, two workplace measures which had been significant in the multivariate analysis of unreasonable treatment but which were not significant for incivility and disrespect: change in the nature of work and region. In fact, the correlation for region is quite close to significance, and this makes us pause for a moment to remember the possible explanation of the significance of region in terms of whether work was customer-focused. We have already seen that, though they only made up a quarter of troublemakers, customers were much more important sources of incivility and disrespect than unreasonable treatment. This may help to explain why region slipped below significant levels in multivariate analysis of incivility and disrespect.

While the importance of less control was perhaps not quite as marked as it was in the analysis of unreasonable treatment, the importance of super-intense work was probably even greater in the analysis of incivility and disrespect. The importance of the FARE questions in our analysis differed very little between unreasonable treatment and incivility and disrespect. What is the consequence for theory that these two apparently different aspects of trouble at work should both be determined by the nature of the workplace? This certainly underlines what we have been saying about the importance of the sociological, less individualistic or clinical, contribution.

What kind of employees experienced more incivility and disrespect?

Once again we begin with a discussion of workers with disabilities and long-term health conditions which describes the findings for the sub-categories of this group and makes reference to the FTWS. Figure 8 shows, once more, that it was the psychological/learning disabilities subgroup who were most at risk – not just of unreasonable treatment but also of incivility and disrespect. Indeed, the degree of exposure of this group to incivility and disrespect was substantially greater.

As before, we need multivariate analysis to be sure of what is really going on, and Figure 9 summarises the results of this analysis. It shows that, when

Figure 8 Incivility and disrespect suffered by employees with disabilities

Figure 9 Different types of incivility and disrespect suffered by employees with disabilities

we controlled for all the other likely variables, people with a psychological/learning disability were significantly more likely to experience most forms of incivility and disrespect. Only three questions about incivility and disrespect were asked in the FTWS. Of these, only one type, rudeness, was seen to be correlated with psychological/learning disabilities in multivariate analysis. The correlations revealed in our survey are both wider and more substantial than this.

The increased exposure to incivility and disrespect experienced by employees with psychological/learning disabilities was extreme; for example, they were more than five times more likely to experience gossip, rumours and allegations, nearly five times more likely to experience being excluded from groups and cliques, and eight times more likely to feel threatened. However, it is possible that managers were responsible for comparatively little of this behaviour. Roughly half of the types of incivility and disrespect experienced by people with psychological problems or learning disabilities were those which customers were more likely to be responsible for. The other half were more likely to originate with co-workers. That means that people with psychological/learning disabilities were no more likely than anyone else to experience the kind of incivility and disrespect where managers were the chief troublemakers.

We shall return to what Figure 9 tells us about the other subgroups – physical disability, other disability – shortly, but we first need to consider what might lie behind the patterns we have just described. For example, was there evidence here of health effects? Is a major reason why people with psychological problems were more likely than anyone else to experience incivility and disrespect that the ill-treatment caused their mental illness? To take the most extreme example, feeling threatened might sometimes even be considered tantamount to having emotional/psychological problems.

Certainly, the high correlations we found for some types of incivility and disrespect could indicate the circular process we mentioned in Chapter 2. Ill-treatment might lead to psychological effects, and these might then be exacerbated by further ill-treatment associated with the disability. This was what one Strand engineer described to us: for years he had suffered racial harassment inside and outside the workplace which had led to mental illness and then further stigmatisation and incivility and disrespect from co-workers (Walker and Fincham 2011). However, it is unlikely that health effects played much of a part in the greater exposure of employees with learning disabilities to incivility and disrespect. Moreover, there was no evidence of health effects for the types of incivility and disrespect which managers were especially likely to be responsible for. If health effects were a major part of the explanation of why people with these disabilities reported more incivility and disrespect, we would expect them to be more likely to report the types that were more likely to originate from managers as well as customers and co-workers.

This could well suggest that their disabilities were a part of the cause rather than the effect: the high rates of incivility and disrespect resulted from co-workers and customers behaving in this way (gossiping, insulting, excluding, teasing, shouting and threatening) because someone had psychological problems or learning disabilities.

It is no more plausible that employees with learning disabilities would be more likely to perceive the behaviour of others as ill-treatment because of their condition, than that their ill-treatment was evidence of health effects. It is, however, more plausible that psychological disabilities like depression could lead to a more negative perception of behaviour that other employees might not think of as denigration or disrespect at all.

What about the other types of impairments and health conditions? People with physical impairments – the paradigm of the popular idea of stigmatisation – barely experienced more denigration or disrespect than employees without disabilities. They did not experience more insults, ridicule, humiliation or teasing, only more shouting. This clearly did not suggest the stigmatisation of people with obvious impairments, but nor did it suggest a politically correct society when such people were more likely than those without impairments to experience customers (probably) shouting at them or losing their temper. Again, rather unfortunately, we did not ask about shouting in the FTWS, but the different composition of the disability subgroups in the FTWS allowed us a second bite of the cherry, and the results are interesting. Deafness (but none of the other physical impairments) was significantly correlated with humiliation and rudeness. Physical impairment was significant for rudeness only.

In Chapter 2, we said a considerable amount about people with other health conditions in relation to ill-treatment from managers and supervisors. As Figure 9 shows, within the broad range of incivility and disrespect associated with other health conditions, we find all of those which were specially associated with managers (hints about quitting one's job and intimidation – and also persistent criticism). In addition, those with other disabilities or conditions were more likely to report humiliation, gossip and exclusion – all particularly associated with co-workers (and only rudeness was associated with clients). It seems, then, that those with other disabilities added ill-treatment by co-workers to ill-treatment by managers, which we saw in the analysis of unreasonable treatment in Chapter 2.

We can explore this further in the case study chapters, but suspect that much of this incivility and disrespect is related to managers and co-workers impressing on workers with other disabilities that, if they had different needs from other workers, they did not deserve the same rewards or, perhaps, to hold onto their jobs. We suggest that this is why they were more than three times as likely to be ridiculed in connection with their work, persistently or unfairly criticised, or be in receipt of hints that they should leave. Of course, all of this

ill-treatment could be part of a package of 360° abuse which also included pressure not to claim entitlements, and not following proper procedures, as indicated in Chapter 2.

To conclude the discussion of employees with disabilities and denigration or disrespect, we shall look once more at the FTWS. Multivariate analysis revealed that other disabilities were significant for humiliation and rudeness (but not for insults, so conforming to the results for our survey). These were the only questions about incivility and disrespect which were asked in the FTWS.

The other significant individual characteristics for incivility and disrespect in the BWBS were the same ones as we observed in the multivariate analysis for unreasonable treatment: age and ethnicity – plus a new one, sexual orientation. Younger workers were a little bit more likely to experience gossip, rudeness, hints to quit, persistent criticism, teasing and being shouted at. Analysis of the FTWS confirmed this (though one type of ill-treatment actually failed to reach significance by a hair's breadth). Although, as indicated in Chapter 2, we tend towards concluding that young workers were treated differently because of their age; we should bear in mind that these were small effects which have only become visible because we had such large numbers in our sample (since almost everyone told us their age).

As before, the results for ethnicity were not what we had imagined when we first designed our research project. Employees with Asian backgrounds were much, much *less* likely to report insults, rudeness, persistent criticism, shouting, intimidation and feeling threatened. In line with our previous practice, we note that none of these were particularly associated with co-workers. The kinds of incivility and disrespect which Asian employees were less likely to experience were those particularly associated with managers and, even more obviously, with customers and clients. Might a part of this pattern reflect an anxiety on behalf of customers to avoid appearing prejudiced: if not indiscriminately racist, perhaps Islamophobic? Might they have been more cautious about appearing to disrespect Muslims as a result of post-9/11 and 7/7 political correctness? The results of multivariate analysis did not suggest that any type of religion, or none, was correlated in any way with any of the three types of ill-treatment. However, how many customers would be sure of the religion of an Asian employee?

Data from recent British Social Attitudes Surveys would not lead us to expect people to bend over backwards to avoid appearing racist. These surveys suggest that people's self-reported prejudice fell in the 1990s but rose slightly in the following decade, perhaps because of reactions to 9/11 and 7/7. When asked about perceived level of prejudice in their workplace, people were likely to say it was, if anything, higher against people of Asian origin rather than black people (Creegan and Robinson 2008). However, Ford (2008) finds little difference between prejudice against Asians and black people using the same data. Given the lack of support for the idea that differences in measures of civility and

respect reflect more political correctness, we are left with the suggestion made in Chapter 2 that Asians were less likely to work in troubled workplaces – in this case, workplaces in which they would be subject to incivility and disrespect, particularly from clients or customers. As in Chapter 2, we look to the discussion of the troubled minority (p. 76 below) to shed further light on this.

The risk of incivility and disrespect for GLB employees was almost as great as it was for employees with disabilities. Figure 10 shows the bivariate results for different types of incivility and disrespect. In multivariate analysis, gay and lesbian employees were significantly more likely to experience feeling threatened and, bearing in mind the way in which significant results are hard to achieve with such small numbers, it is well worth pointing out that the results for gay and lesbian respondents were close to significance for humiliation, hints to quit, and shouting. In multivariate analysis of the FTWS, the LGB group as a whole was substantially more likely to report humiliation. In our survey, bisexuals were significantly more likely to experience hints they should quit, and intimidation, and in both cases the effects are massive. We should

Figure 10 Different types of incivility and disrespect suffered by LGB employees

not make too much of this, but it would seem there are grounds for at least investigating whether bisexuals are particularly targeted by managers. Gay and lesbian workers may also suffer from incivility and disrespect from managers and, in addition, from customers or clients.

As in Chapter 2, we are learning that, when it comes to ill-treatment in the workplace, we should be very wary of assuming that members of the various minorities were all in the same boat. Having disabilities persistently landed one in trouble throughout but, even then, the kind of trouble one found oneself in depended on one's disability. We have just seen that the workplace could be threatening for LGB, but neither religion, place of birth nor, most surprisingly, gender provoked incivility and disrespect in the workplace. There will be many people who will have expected that the continuum of sexual harassment would extend into many of the varieties of incivility and disrespect discussed here. Yet we obtained absolutely no significant results for gender, indeed nothing even came close to significance, and this is quite remarkable when analysis of gender, like age, can draw on really big numbers to find out if even comparatively small effects are significant. The one type of incivility and disrespect that was closest to significance, at 0.09 per cent, suggested that women were *less* likely to feel threatened in the workplace. This is, however, not the last word we have to say on this topic in this chapter. We shall return to it on p. 77.

Which jobs were more prone to incivility and disrespect?

If we choose, as before, to treat organisational changes and super-intense work as the characteristics of workplaces rather than jobs, the short answer is that all jobs were equally exposed. Once again, we were struck by the lack of a result of any kind to indicate that ill-treatment was more common amongst vulnerable, or marginalised, workers.

Which workplaces and organisations were more prone to incivility and disrespect?

We saw in Chapter 2 that, when employees told us the nature of their work had changed, or the pace of work had increased, employees were significantly more likely to experience unreasonable treatment. This was not true for incivility and disrespect and this, we believe, rather knocks on the head the simple association between organisational chaos and ill-treatment, in the form of bullying, which Hodson *et al.* propose. Instead, we think this confirms what

we said in Chapter 2 about the association between organisational change and unreasonable treatment being almost a semantic one – change itself can be seen as unreasonable by the people who are affected by it. There is no obvious semantic association between organisational change and any of the questions about incivility and disrespect. This is why we did not find the same association between the two that we did for unreasonable treatment.

While there is no overall association for incivility and disrespect, the individual models produced fairly weak associations for increased pace of work and insults, rudeness and shouting. All of these, as can be recalled, were particularly associated with customers or clients. This is hardly what would be predicted in the Hodson *et al.* model of organisational chaos and bullying in the workplace. Moreover, none of the individual models for the various types of incivility and disrespect produced a significant result for change in the nature of work.

Having less control over work and finding the pace of work too intense were, together, about as strongly associated with incivility and disrespect as they were for unreasonable treatment, as described in Chapter 2. It seemed obvious how these factors might be connected with unreasonable management, but what about incivility and disrespect? Less control was significant for humiliation, disrespect, exclusion, hints to quit, persistent criticism and feeling threatened. Super-intense work was correlated with humiliation, gossip, disrespect, exclusion, persistent criticism, teasing, being shouted at, intimidation and feeling threatened. Although ill-treatment by employers must have been represented in both sets of results, they were also strongly suggestive of ill-treatment by co-workers and customers. While Hodson *et al.* predicted ill-treatment by co-workers when control was lost and speed-up occurred, they (understandably) did not predict ill-treatment by customers.

But perhaps the most remarkable finding of this chapter is that the FARE questions turned out to be as, if not more, important for predicting incivility and disrespect as they were for unreasonable treatment. At least two of the FARE questions proved significant for every type of incivility and disrespect in our individual models. Indeed, so important were they across the board that it is pointless trying to discern particular patterns which might be associated with denigration or disrespect from managers, co-workers or customers. We can simply consider the headline figures: 40 per cent of incivility and disrespect was down to managers and about a quarter each to co-workers and customers. It seems that the FARE questions were equally useful for predicting incivility and disrespect from all of them.

We might pause for a moment to think about the implications of this finding for the discussion of incivility earlier in the chapter. First, respect and civility, like reason and fairness, are tied up in people's minds with recognising individuality, including variations in moral principles between individuals,

and having human ends as ends in themselves. Now this might be thought to make the most radical demands of people in respect of unreasonable treatment (particularly unreasonable management – indeed, it could be argued that people who want individuality recognised in an organisational context are being unreasonable themselves!), but it is hardly straightforward in relation to respect either. If respect was considered to be due to all and sundry, it would be easy to see why people might associate lack of respect with unfairness, and people being a means to an end (and their principles not mattering), but why would they associate it with people not being treated as individuals? However, the public debate about incivility, which was alluded to at the start of this chapter, also has a companion discourse of rights and responsibilities, of *earning* and *deserving* respect. This discourse is also relevant here, and perhaps it is not so far from the fairness and justice, and moral, elements of Chapter 2, as implicit as they were.

We argue that the FARE questions are the best predictors of troubled workplaces. So far, we have argued this in respect of the type of trouble we called unreasonable treatment, but now we are arguing that troubled workplaces had a problem of denigration and respect too. We should not miss the obvious implication of this: troubled workplaces might well have (a) been less able to protect employees from incivility and disrespect and (b) actually generated incivility and disrespect from clients, employees and managers. It is as well to bear in mind, moreover, that we are suggesting that both things would be truly independent of other risk factors. In other words, a troubled workplace puts all of its employees (with or without disabilities, old or young, straight or LGB, Asian or not) at greater risk of incivility and disrespect.

In the troubled workplace people do not know that it is wrong to humiliate or ridicule people in connection with their work, treat them in a disrespectful way, shout at them and intimidate them. They do not get sanctioned for it, and they may even be actually encouraged to behave like this. For example, in many of our case study interviews, we were repeatedly told that no action was taken after ill-treatment was reported and/or that ill-treatment was a part of workplace culture. Obviously, this may not be the same as employers relying on managers and supervisors behaving unreasonably to carry out the management function (e.g. performance management or the management of sick pay). Nevertheless, although there may not be a direct line from the boardroom to disrespect on the shop floor, there can be no doubt that the troubled workplace is the employer's responsibility. HR managers and organisations like the CIPD would do well to take note that treating people as individuals, recognising their principles and their needs, is the key to not putting organisations at risk of becoming troubled.

Troubled workplaces may make all types of ill-treatment discussed thus far more likely, but the multivariate analysis of incivility and disrespect showed

that, for this kind of ill-treatment, things were also made far worse when the workplace was located in the public sector. Why should this association appear here and not for unreasonable treatment? Working in the public sector puts employees at significantly greater risk of humiliation, insults, rudeness, teasing, shouting, intimidation and threats, and the bulk of this ill-treatment was strongly associated with customer or client behaviour. Clients were responsible for very little of the ill-treatment discussed in Chapter 2, and it seems that public sector workers owe their greater exposure to trouble at work to the great British public.

Finally, workplaces outside London were not significant for incivility and disrespect, whereas they were for unreasonable treatment. We speculated in Chapter 2 that it was the relative unimportance of customers and clients to the type of work found outside London that meant unreasonable management appeared to be less common there. When we moved on to incivility and disrespect, customers and clients became much more important, and the association between ill-treatment and region was no longer present in our multivariate analysis. We now have better grounds to claim that any relationship between region and ill-treatment in the workplace was probably a function of variations in the types of workplaces between the regions. These different types were associated with variations in opportunities for direct managerial control and control which was mediated by contact with customers and clients. In this case, any higher risk factor for the non-London-based workplaces is simply a result of the type of workplaces they were.

The troubled minority

From the discussion of this point in Chapter 2 we knew that, once we were dealing with the troubled minority, we were much more likely to be working with data taken from employees who had the misfortune to work in troubled workplaces. There was no point, therefore, in expecting to see the same clear patterns emerging in the analysis done when finding out which variables predicted which employees were in troubled workplaces and which were not. If we had expected to see such patterns in this chapter, we would have been disappointed. There was nothing to suggest that incivility and disrespect within the troubled workplace was related to the sector of the workplace (public or otherwise), organisational change, intense work or the FARE questions.

The most startling feature, and, indeed, the only really remarkable feature, of the analysis of incivility and disrespect in the troubled minority is the very strong, and very substantial, relationships for some equality strands. First, and for once the least remarkable, was the fact that workers with disabilities were four times more likely to receive hints to quit their jobs. Second, LGB employees were 12 times more likely than straight employees to be given hints

to quit and four times more likely to be threatened. Given that we knew that there were some significant results for sexual orientation, this is not a complete surprise, but the degree of difference in the risk of these particular behaviours was breathtaking. It is hard to escape the conclusion that very many of these LGB employees were being eased out of their jobs because of their sexual orientation. This was also true of employees with disabilities of course, but, though we do not know how many LGB employees were open about their sexual orientation at work, it looks as if coming out could be an even surer route to being shown the door than acquiring a disability. But these were not the most surprising findings.

Women were four times as likely as men in the troubled minority to be insulted, and BME employees were four times as likely as non-BME employees in the troubled minority to receive hints to quit their jobs. Now, these are just the kind of results we might have expected when we designed our study. The result for BME employees lends some support to the idea that differences in Asian employees which stand out in analysis of the national sample are, in large part, a result of Asians being less likely to work in troubled workplaces. This may, in turn, be a consequence of Asian employees avoiding workplaces where they think they may be ill-treated, for example, by co-workers or the public. The results for BME employees and women amongst the troubled minority also suggest why our initial expectations turned out to be so far off the mark. That the greater risk of these types of incivility and disrespect should only be observable now shows, first of all, how overwhelming the troubled workplace factor is in all of our analysis. When we are dealing with the whole sample, that factor is given free rein and it obliterates even the slightest hint of these quite substantial relationships.

Second, it is now clear that studies which are limited to one workplace, or a few, are very unlikely to find systematic evidence of the troubled workplace factor simply because of the way they were designed. They just do not have enough cases of employees working in both kinds of workplaces for subsequent analysis to reveal the relationship between workplaces and ill-treatment. If workers in a handful of public sector workplaces in a particular locality are selected for interview, for example, researchers may have inadvertently selected only troubled workplaces, though of course they will not be aware of this. When they find that the important factors in their study are ethnicity or gender, they will understandably, but unfortunately, conclude that these results will be replicable in a nationally representative study. Not only did we read such studies before conducting our own, one of us was responsible for several such studies (Lewis and Gunn 2007, for example). This is, of course, why our initial expectations were so different from the findings which eventually emerged when we were able to conduct our own study with a nationally representative sample rather than a sample drawn from a handful of workplaces.

Conclusions

As in Chapter 2, we conclude with some bivariate analysis which shows where we might expect to find large numbers of troubled workers and, particularly, troubled workplaces. This information is useful for policy-makers and those, like trade unions and interested professional bodies, who are concerned to do something about ill-treatment in the workplace.

Was incivility and disrespect something that went on in modernity's shop window or was it something that happened in the backstreets, or the low-rent corners of unfashionable industrial estates, to vulnerable workers who were intimidated and frightened half to death by bullying managers? Or was it what the emotional labour literature would have us believe, the fate of employees, particularly young women, in customer-facing jobs? Or was it the iceberg underneath the stories of the bullying of minorities, and particularly women, in the allegedly racist and misogynist trading floors of the financial institutions? As before, the answers to these questions show us how the factors we have already discovered through our multivariate analysis played out, for example, how they created a pattern of troubled workplaces and troubled workers in the British employment landscape.

In a couple of respects, the typical denigrated worker was rather like the typical unreasonably treated one: more likely to be a man, less likely to be BME (and particularly Asian), more likely to be Christian and more likely to be born in the United Kingdom. Denigrated workers were also likely to be those in the middle of their careers. Does this mean they were definitely not vulnerable workers hidden away in a sweatshop by some ruthless employer? As before, there is the caveat about more recent employees, and of course we have to bear in mind the incivility and disrespect meted out to workers with disabilities, and particularly learning/psychological disabilities. We also have to bear in mind the results for sexual orientation. Yet, with the possible exception of employees with learning disabilities, these were not the kind of employees policy-makers and researchers usually have in mind when they describe vulnerable workers.

Bivariate analysis of job characteristics revealed exactly the same types of workers being ill-treated as for unreasonable treatment: higher than average income, managers, full-time workers, union members, three to four years in post, associate professional and technical occupations. Again, the typical workplace was in the 50–249 bracket, and incivility and disrespect went up as size increased. It is not a disease of the low-rent unit off the motorway spur but a malaise of highly visible organisations with HR functions, union recognition and highly skilled, well-paid workforces. What is more, incivility and disrespect are particularly virulent in the public sector (and next the third sector, with the private sector, sweatshops and all, the least infected). The particular hotspots of incivility and disrespect were public administration and

defence, followed by health and social work. Here, in contrast to Chapter 2 on unreasonable treatment, ill-treatment by the clients of public services is a more important factor.

We shall now look at industry in more detail. What happened to the city traders and the emotional labourers? When we conducted bivariate analysis for industries where we had more than 10 respondents in each, some of this kind of thing did emerge. Hotels and catering were added to public administration and defence, health and social work (but so were mining and quarrying). When we repeated this analysis for individual items of incivility and disrespect, financial intermediation also made an appearance for humiliation, exclusion, hints to quit and intimidation. There is, therefore, some limited evidence that it is worth looking at finance as well as hotels and catering to target an ill-treatment initiative (or find people who can be helped to take their cases to an employment tribunal). All the same, it might be just as productive to visit the local hospital.

As in Chapter 2, we conclude with the limited information we have on the troublemakers. According to members of the troubled minority, a higher percentage of female than male troublemakers went in for gossip, exclusion, persistent criticism and intimidation, but the male troublemakers outnumbered female troublemakers for all types of incivility and disrespect, including these. These results were, in large part, confirmed by the information given to us by the self-identified perpetrators of incivility and disrespect. Men were significantly more likely for some but not all types (the exceptions were rudeness and intimidation); BME employees were less likely for only two (teasing and shouting). In many ways the troublemakers looked like the victims: they were more likely to be Christian, born in the United Kingdom, aged 16–35, and a couple of items suggested they were more likely to have a degree. Interestingly, most items showed high earners (£50–80K annual income) were more likely to be troublemakers, as were those with managerial duties, permanent jobs and at least 3–4 years' service. Lastly, bivariate analysis of self-identified troublemakers confirmed the importance of hotels and restaurants, a bit of financial intermediation and public administration and defence. There was one more point. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the construction industry makes an appearance at the close of our analysis. Once more, we have to wonder about the spread of control enjoyed by troublemakers in various industries and also about what a brutal, or honest, breed construction workers might be.