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GRADUATE COLLEGE

ORGANIZATIONAL CIVILITY: ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TO CREATING ENVIRONMENTS OF CIVIILTY IN THE WORKPLACE

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

DAVID CHARLES KIMMEL

Norman, Oklahoma

2001

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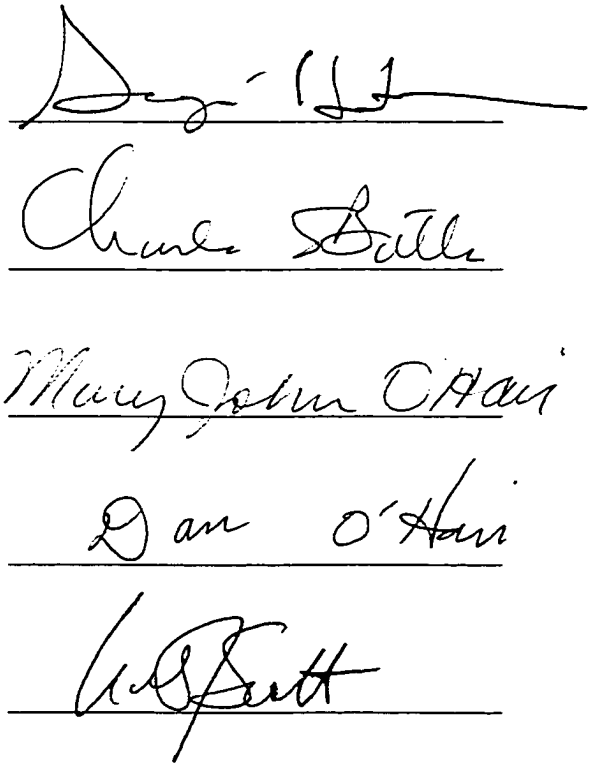
ORGANIZATIONAL CIVILITY: ISSUES, PROBLEMS, AND SOLUTIONS TO CREATING CIVIL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

By:



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ABSTRACT

Scholars have just begun to research the issue of incivility in the workplace. The research focusing on a proactive approach of creating civility is even more sparse. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine if employees view incivility as a problem. If so, what do they think their role is in developing a more civil environment? Also, what do they think the organization's responsibilities are for establishing civil environments? This study utilized focus group research techniques as a qualitative research effort. The participants were from large bureaucratic companies in a moderate-sized southwestern city.

The research findings indicate that employees do recognize incivility to be a problem. The terms most often used to discuss incivility were disrespect, violence and rudeness. The participants believed that the differences between people were the single most important cause of incivility followed by lack of training, lack of good people skills, differences in perception, and ego.

The term respect was most often used to discuss civility followed by the golden rule, responsibility, communication and politeness. The participants' statements indicate that the solutions to reducing incivility and creating civil environments involved issues of personal responsibility, leadership responsibility, and organizational guidance and policies consisting of: defining acceptable

behavior, establishing policy, and enforcing rules, and communication and training.

As a result of the literature review and the data collected, a definition of Organizational civility (OC) was developed to help direct future organizational attempts at creating civil environments. Organizational Civility is defined as: that aspect of the an organization's culture that embraces a norm of mutual respect and responsibility and enhances a person's ability to recognize their own behavior and its impact on the organization.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In this new millennium, organizations throughout America continue to address a multitude of human relation issues. Some of these issues include racism, sexism, agism, workplace violence, and interpersonal conflict. There are many academic fields of interest and theorists who have studied these problems. One of the most recent organizational issues that has yet to receive much attention is incivility in the workplace. Civility in the workplace has received even less attention.

Research examining incivility has focused on the impact of such behaviors on the organization. Those studies revealed a significant negative impact on employee morale, effectiveness, lost time, and reduced productivity (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). Despite the increased level of research demonstrating that incivility is a problem in organizations, to date, there has been little research done to investigate how organizations can be more civil. Ironically, civility is not a new concept in literature. Authors have been writing about America's boorish and uncivil behavior since our revolutionary days. The discussions concerning civility date back even further to early Europe.

Erasmus first discussed civility in the mid-1500s. He was concerned about the Europeans inability to limit their behavior. Most people at the time

acted on impulse based on unrestricted desires. Erasmus wrote, according to Stephen Carter, that self-discipline was the hallmark of a civilization (1998). It is from those days that civility has come to be defined by its most common understanding of politeness and manners. That definition is still commonly found in most dictionaries. Webster's Second New Collegiate Dictionary defines civility as "courtesy; a courteous act" (1999). The American Heritage Dictionary adds "politeness" to their version of a definition of civility (1994). In current organizational literature, however, there is a movement to redefine civility, to move it from a simple matter of manners to an organizational imperative. This organizational imperative incorporates a view of civility as a guide for how employees should interact with each other (Carter, 1998). Within this perspective, civility is defined in terms of respect, dignity, equal treatment, shared experience and common responsibility (Carter, 1998; Hanson, 1995; Lee, 1999; & Peck, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

With incivility apparently on the increase in the workplace, as well as research efforts that have clearly delineated related problems, it is surprising that few research efforts have been directed toward finding ways for people to be more civil. If incivility is indeed a major problem within organizations as some researchers have proven it to be, a relevant question is: what can organizations do

to prevent or abate it? Therefore, the purpose of this research is to ascertain whether or not employees regard incivility as a problem. If so, what do they believe their role is in developing a more civil organization? Also, what do they believe the organization's responsibilities are for establishing civil environments in the organization?

Significance of the Problem

Research has shown that behaviors in many workplace environments are becoming more uncivil (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Asforth, 1994, Fix & Kleiner, 1997 and Lee, 1999). Understanding the employees' view of the problem is an important first step as organizations attempt to eliminate or reduce this problem in their workplace. Furthermore, most research has focused on identifying and defining incivility issues. There is very little research on creating civil environments. There is a substantial difference between identifying uncivil individuals in organizations and changing their behavior and with organizations taking active steps to create more civil cultures. This research will focus on employees' views, as they are oriented toward creating civil environments.

Limitations of the Study

Primarily, there was one limitation to this study. This research used focus group research techniques involving employees from large bureaucratic

organizations. Consequently, it is difficult to assume that this research can be generalized to other organizations such as small businesses or private organizations. The views and relationships of employees may differ across the varying organizational types. However, it would be presumptuous to assume that the views of these employees are necessarily different than the views of other employees as it relates to incivility/civility in the workplace. Whatever is necessary to create a civil culture could be organizationally dependant. It is arguable, however, that interpersonal communication and human relations between employees are very similar regardless of the type of organization. The questions and issues studied in this research are ones associated with how people relate to one another in the workplace. Furthermore, this research focuses on the nature of work or organizational processes, which is where most of the variation between organizations takes place. Consequently, it is likely that interpersonal communication is not significantly different from one organization to the next.

It is important to remember that within one of the large organizations researched there are actually two different companies. One element of the organization is part of the federal government and is unionized. The other major element is a contract organization. Employees from both groups were participants in the focus groups. Therefore, the two different teams within the organization increases the possibility of greater generalizability.

Research Questions

The research questions important to this study are:

1. Do the participants in this study recognize incivility to be a problem? If so, what types of behaviors characterize these acts?
2. Do the employees recognize that they have a responsibility to help create civil environments in organizations? If so, what do they see as their responsibility?
3. What do the respondents believe is the organization's role in establishing civil environments for employees to work in?
4. What are the necessary components of a definition of organizational civility?

Definitions

Incivility – "low intensity deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of work place norms for mutual respect" (Anderson & Pearson, 1999).

Civility – Civility has come to represent many different concepts over the years. Hence, a common definition is not easily reached. It could be that the term changes as it is placed contextually. A basic dictionary definition is "courtesy; a courteous act or utterance" (Webster's II New Collegiate Dictionary, 1999). When civility is placed in a workplace setting the term changes in its overall purpose. One definition of workplace civility is "a behavior that helps to preserve

the norms for mutual respect in the workplace" (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Another definition by Stephen Carter, 1993 is "consciously motivated organizational behavior that is ethical in submission to a Higher power."

Higher Power – This term was introduced in the previous definition of civility. Peck (1993) uses the term specifically in his definition and other writers use it in a general sense when discussing civility issues related to religious beliefs. It is a generic term used to describe the concept of transcendence in religion or some other person or element that the religion holds to be its proper authority. These elements or persons that incorporate the concept of transcendence can be gods, spirits, personal gods or impersonal gods.

CHAPTER TWO

SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Organizational civility can be examined from a number of perspectives. This section will review relevant literature related to (1) civility, (2) incivility, (3) common moral understanding, and (3) organizational culture. Each area of literature will be examined to determine its theoretical application to the concept of organizational civility.

Civility

Civility in the 21st century is being redefined. It is much different than the thoughts on civility that grew out of the renaissance period. Modern day ideas on the subject attend more to how people get along rather than it does with manners. That is not to say, however, that manners do not matter. Proper manners are and should be a part of all organizations. Generally, the review of literature reveals that civility is a concept of respect that everyone owes each other as communal members on this planet. Carter (1998) discusses the new civility as a shared sense of morality. He argues that many of our problems stem from the fact that we as a people no longer have a common moral compass.

There is a scarcity of information written about the new or redefined concept of civility. The information that is available, however, is fairly consistent. I selected two theorists to highlight current and differing thoughts on

civility. Stephen Carter and M. Scott Peck have both recently written and published books that focus on outlining the precepts for a new look at civility. Carter approaches civility from a democratic perspective while Peck approaches it from a community perspective. After an examination of the individual perspectives, applicable elements from both perspectives will be combined to form a view of organizational civility. The purpose is to consolidate the ideas and apply them to an organizational context before examining the views of employees in the workplace.

A review of contrasting definitions of civility will be studied as a point of departure for the analysis of the two differing and yet common views of democratic and community civility. It was shown earlier that civility has as its historical definition the theme of manners. This is highlighted in Webster's II New Collegiate Dictionary (1999) where civility is defined as: "Courtesy; a courteous act or utterance." Another definition explains it as "a way of signaling self-control (Wilson, 1993). Lynne Andersson and Christine Pearson (1999) primarily analyzed workplace incivility but in doing so they also defined workplace civility as "a behavior that helps to preserve the norms for mutual respect in the workplace. Civility reflects concern for others"(p. 455). Yet, another definition exposes civility as a balance of animal desires:

> "An individual person can attain the optimal balance between his imperative drives claiming satisfaction and fulfillment and the constraints imposed upon them (and without which man would remain a brutish

> animal and a danger as much to himself as to others). [It is a] balance between the overall demands of man's social existence on the one hand, and his personal needs and inclinations on the other." (Elias, 1994).

Stephen Carter (1998), whose work on democratic civility will be reviewed shortly, defines civility as the "sum of the many sacrifices we are called to make for the sake of living together" (p. 11). He considers it "morally proper to treat our follow citizens with respect, and morally improper not to. [It] is what enables us to live together." Finally, M. Scott Peck (1993) defines his concept of community civility as "consciously motivated organizational behavior that is ethical in submission to a higher power" (p.91).

The underlying commonality contained within these definitions are: (1) sacrifice and/or balance between our individual desires and the need for them to be constrained for the sake of others, (2) moral/ethical behavior, (3) respect or concern for others. These common aspects form the basis of civility. With these definitions as a starting point, this analysis will review the two perspectives on civility mentioned previously.

Stephen Carter's (1998) thoughts on civility are highlighted in his book, Civility: Manners, morals, and the etiquette of democracy, it identifies fifteen rules of civility for a democratic society. Only those rules that are relevant to organizational civility will be addressed:

1. "Our duty to be civil toward others does not depend on whether we like them or not" (p. 35).

This rule might be more aptly stated in the reverse, people have a duty to be civil to those they do not like and a duty to love those that they do. Civility should be the lowest common denominator in our social relationships with each other. While Carter expresses that people should love everyone equally there are obviously different dimensions or levels to love. I clearly love my wife more than my coworkers. Yet, I should treat my coworkers with respect regardless of whether or not I like them.

2. "Civility requires that we sacrifice for strangers, not just for people we happen to know" (p. 58).

Sacrifice as was stated is an important element of civility. In this case, Carter is emphasizing that civility and hence sacrifice is about how people behave with strangers.

3. "Civility has two parts: generosity, even when it is costly, and trust, even when there is risk" (p. 62).

If people are to be civil, they must be generous with acts of civility not only when it feels good but also when it may be costly. The example that Stephen Carter uses occurred in 1969 when, as child, his family moved into a white neighborhood (1998). He knew his family would not be welcome and regretted their decision to move. No one had come to welcome the new family to the neighborhood. To his surprise, later that evening, a woman, from across the street, arriving home from work, saw him sitting on the front porch. She called out a welcome to him and rushed into the house emerging minutes later with food,

that she brought over to the new neighbors as a sign of welcome to the community. Obviously, Stephen Carter never forgot his neighbor but he uses the story to bring out the larger issue of cost. At what cost did this neighbor extend her generosity? No one else in the neighborhood apparently wanted the Carter's there. That attitude in no way influenced or pressured this kind woman from being generous when she knew it was right. It may have cost her other friends, no one really knows, but she did what she knew to be the civil thing.

Carter (1998) also uses this same example to explain trust when there is risk. The woman who befriended them did not know what was going to happen when she first went to Carter's house. She could not know what reception she might receive. She could not know if she was welcome. Yet, according to Carter, she trusted that her generosity would be repaid as it was intended: as a simple act of civility, that would be met with a similar act of generosity and trust.

4. "Civility creates not merely a negative duty not to do harm, but an affirmative duty to do good" (p. 71).

This is a significant point. Often people think their behavior is appropriate as long as they do not hurt someone. Many times hurtful behavior is associated only with physical suffering. Carter reminds us, however, that if members of a community are trying to behave civilly their responsibility is to do good, not just avoid suffering. The approach is significant because civility is not about avoiding or negating but affirming.

5. "Civility requires a commitment to live a common moral life, so we should try to follow the norms of the community if the norms are not actually immoral" (p. 87).

This is another rule with important implications for organizational civility and deserves clarification. Organizations are communities of rules. Proper civil behavior normally implies that organizational members must follow the rules. To break the rules is to be uncivil. Of course, on the other hand, civil disobedience in American society is commonplace. Civility in its newer rediscovered form obligates members of society to challenge and change immoral rules. This rediscovered civility also requires members to challenge those rules civilly. Sacrifice for the common good of society or the organization is central to civility but only for those rules that treat people with respect and treat them as equals.

6. "We must come into the presence of our fellow human beings with a sense of awe and gratitude" (p. 102).

In the sense that people consider themselves to be interesting or important so should they consider those that they meet. Human beings are unlike any other animal on the planet. There should be a sense among us that human beings are special. One human, however, is no less or no more special than the next. It should not matter whether a person approaches life from a religious or secular perspective. The color of a person's skin should not matter. A person's age or gender should not be a condition upon which respect is granted or withheld. The only issue that matters is that a person deserves equal respect and dignity as

members of the human race.

7. "Civility assumes that we will disagree: it requires us not to mask our differences but to resolve them respectfully" (p. 132).

This is one of those precepts that can be easily misunderstood. Being civil does not mean that a person sets aside their emotions nor does it mean that people can go through life without disagreement. In fact, civility, according to Carter, requires that people do disagree with the things that they do not believe are morally right. The important difference is in the process of disagreement. It must remain civil. Personal attacks are unnecessary and usually are the result of a person who cannot reason through an argument.

8. "Civility requires that we listen to others with knowledge of the possibility that they are right and we are wrong" (p. 139).

When people approach situations with the possibility that their thoughts or opinions might be wrong, it changes how they react in situations of disagreement. It allows for better listening and better reasoning. It is often the case, that when someone believes he or she is right, that they cut off any potential discussion of contrary opinions.

9. "Civility requires that we express ourselves in ways that demonstrate our respect for others" (p. 162).

This rule concerns the way people communicate. Stephen Carter is referring to the vulgar, mean, nasty, hate-filled and violent language that permeates practically every aspect of society. This type of language, when used

is not intended to help encourage conversation or debate. It is often used to demean, belittle, or anger other people. Recognizing that the American legal or political systems will never regulate or outlaw hateful words or language, it is necessary for the sake of civility to encourage the use of language that demonstrates our respect of others. In this new millennium in America, the words we use and accept continues toward the violent and hateful. There must be a counter-balance to this tendency before people forget how to speak respectfully toward one another.

10. "Civility allows criticism of others, and sometimes even requires it, but the criticism should always be civil" (p.217).

The problem with many arguments and disagreements is that few people know how to conduct them in a civil fashion. Part of the problem is our inability to communicate with one another. When the words or the logic escapes us, people tend to fall into the trap of attacking the person rather than the issue. American society has few examples of civil disagreement. Politicians, TV, entertainers, and people from sports provide a constant bombardment of examples of incivility. It is easy to forget about men like Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Ghandi who were the exemplary examples of persons who could engage in civil disagreement. They maintained that people can disagree, should disagree, but they can do it civilly.

While Carter approaches civility from a democratic perspective, Peck

approaches it from the view of civil communities. M. Scott Peck, (1993) wrote a book entitled, A World Waiting to be Born: Civility Rediscovered. While Peck is not an organizational theorist, his views on community civility are intended to directly apply to organizations. Peck elucidates his thoughts as cornerstones of civil communities. Listed below are his six cornerstones of civility:

1. "The capacity, on both an individual and corporate level, to distinguish between necessary, legitimate (healthy) suffering (including the inherent in ambiguity) and that which is unnecessary or excessively convoluted" (p.13).

Every person and every organization experiences pain and suffering. According to Peck, pain is actually an important part of the healing process. He believe's, however, that society needs to have the ability at both the individual and organizational level to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary suffering. It is important to recognize the difference between pain and suffering that can help in the workplace and pain or suffering that is counterproductive to healthy organizations.

2. "Willingness to bear – to meet head-on and work through-that suffering which is a proper portion in both our individual and collective lives" (p. 13).

Peck's emphasis in these first two cornerstones is on the necessary healing nature of organizations. He describes an analogy of human pain to organizational pain. Pain is a preventive indicator. It signals something harmful is happening and allows a person to react to prevent it. For example, if a person's hand is

getting to close to the flame of a candle the pain from the early burn signals the person to pull their hand back before the burn becomes a serious injury. Peck wants people and organizations to know pain is a requisite part of being healthy. In this sense. Peck sees civility as a healing behavior. The objective should not be to remain free of pain but to know what action to take to relieve the pain and therefore become healthier and happier. For civility, the pain may be honesty and candor.

3. "To become more civil. humans must become ever more conscious of themselves. of others. and of the organizations that relate them together" (p. 26).

Consciousness is a third cornerstone of civility. Peck uses a number of illustrations to describe his thoughts on the three levels of consciousness. To become civil, a person must be aware of all three simultaneously. The fact is that a civil person does not hurt another unintentionally. If a person is aware of self. other. and organization. when they hurt someone they do it intentionally as a means or an attempt to actually help someone. Peck states that there must be awareness to create consciously motivated behavior. which is part of his definition of civility.

4. "An attitude of humanism, which may be defined as the ethical consciousness of other people, individually and collectively, as precious beings" (p. 53).

Conscious behavior alone is not enough. The behavior must also be ethical. People and organizations can act consciously. aware of the outcome of

their acts, but in the context of civil behavior those actions must be ethical. For example, white supremacist groups are certainly conscious of their behavior when they burn a cross on an African American's or Jewish person's lawn, yet, few people would consider the behavior to be anything but abhorrent. The behavior is consciously executed and it certainly is not civil, according to Peck, because it is not ethical.

5. "A foundation for humanism in theology, in a belief that humans are so precious because they are created by a divine and Higher power, reflecting in themselves some of the divinity of the Creator" (p. 53).
6. "The civil individual must be in a relationship of willing submission to that Higher power" (p. 53).

Civility requires submission to a higher power (consciousness with). Peck specifically uses the term 'higher power' in an attempt to avoid any particular religious intolerance. This is his term meant to include all religions (Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, etc).

The cornerstone of civility is the need that people, organizations, or society have to form a common understanding of what is ethical or moral and that every human being granted equal respect and dignity. Clearly, both Carter and Peck believe that civility requires a common moral understanding that is guided by a religious underpinning. This concept of a common morality whether it is based on religious or secular principles seems to be a theme through most of the published works on civility.

What is the outcome of combining these two approaches of democratic

and communal civility into a concept of organizational civility? What are the critical components of each that need to be brought together to create this organizational hybrid?

In many ways, Carter's work is about a common bond of rules of behavior involved between two strangers. Many organizational relationships are about strangers but many are not. In this context the discussion is about a minimum level of interpersonal behavior in organizations. The critical and synthesized versions of Carter's thoughts that directly apply to organizations are:

- That those relationships must be moral.
- They must be based on doing good.
- That people demonstrate their respect for one another.
- That civil relationships are built on generosity and trust.
- Civility values diversity.
- Civil disagreement and even resistance is a critical component of civility

Peck would agree with most of what Carter has developed. Peck would add that conscious, ethical behavior, based on a higher authority is key to having a civil organizations.

If looked at in the most literal sense, Carter and Peck's reliance on religious precepts as the basis for civility could present a problem for some organizational leaders. However, both authors do acknowledge that a person can

be civil without being religious. Therefore, it would seem, that the important element for organizational leadership is how to establish a common moral understanding for those who have religious beliefs and for those who rely on some other secular theory or element in establishing their own morality. This important element of organizational civility will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Combining the two different approaches from Carter and Peck allows clarification of civil behavior in organizations.

Carter and Peck's ideas represent the key concepts of civility and when combined it is possible to anticipate and develop a concept of organizational civility. It is an organizational culture based on honesty, fairness, and open communication. It is inclusionary rather than exclusionary. A civil organization creates an atmosphere where employees are able to understand how the impact of their own behavior effects the people or the community of people around them. Additionally, it is an atmosphere that promotes mutual respect as an organizational norm. Are there factors at work that have not been taken into account that are necessary to have a complete and more effective definition? A good definition must be able to apply to the workplace. One way to achieve this definition is to ask employees their views and gaining a better understanding from their perspective.

Incivility

The first section of this literature review examined civility in the context of organizations. This section will review the problem of incivility in more detail and will outline its impact on organizations. Incivility in the workplace has recently been defined as: "low intensity deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" (Anderson & Pearson, 1999).

Scholars are just now beginning to take notice of incivility in the workplace. Some of the literature establishes workplace incivility as a serious organizational issue. According to an article in Tech News, 80% of workers say that incivility has increased over the last decade (Tech News, 2000). The article also reported that at least twenty-five percent of workers generally felt angry at work. In another article by Michael Hartnett (1998), he speculates that there is a perception that the quality of life has declined in relation to feelings or perceptions of anger, hostility, rudeness, and violence. An article published by U.S. News and World Report states that 88% of Americans think that incivility is a serious problem. The people surveyed claimed that the results of incivility behaviors were increased violence, divided communities, and eroding moral values (Lee, 1999).

A sizable number of workplace violence incidents are caused by

personality conflicts. Forty-seven percent of employees responding to a survey conducted by John Fix and Brian Kleiner (1997) reported that they were involved in at least one violent act in the workplace during 1994. Only one percent of those acts were categorized as "major" or "seriously violent." The overwhelming majority of workplace incidents were verbal threats. The effects that these types of altercations have on the organization include personal injury, property damage, increased stress, absenteeism, turnover, decreased productivity, lower morale, and stifled creativity (Caudle &Balamonte, 1996; Goulet, 1997; Harper, 1990; Howard & Voss, 1996, & Yandrick, 1999). The estimated cost of these disruptions ranges from $6 billion to $200 billion annually (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Christine Pearson (2000) from the University of North Carolina recently completed a survey that clearly indicates incivility negatively impacts the organization. Her results report that 52% of the people responding said they lost time at work due to uncivil behaviors. 37% said they felt less committed to their jobs. 22% claimed to have reduced their work effort because of it. 46% contemplated changing jobs to avoid the instigator, and 12% accepted jobs in other workplaces just to avoid the instigator. Pearson also states that from the perceptions of those who were the recipients of uncivil behavior only ¼ of the respondents felt the organization handled the problem effectively. Additionally, 94% of the respondents who had experienced uncivil behavior at work stated that

they had told other people about the incident, which has further implications for organizations. Incivility is obviously not restricted to just the instigator or the target. These types of behavior impact that entire organization. Incivility effects a large percentage of workers and the consequences of those behaviors may be unexpected and far-reaching.

In a more recent study published in the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology researchers attempted to extend Pearson's study. Lilia Cortina, Vicki Magley, Jill Hunter Williams, and Regina Day Langout (2001) conducted a study concerning "interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace by examining the incidence, targets, instigators, and impact of incivility" (p. 64). The researchers examined surveys from 1180 employees of the Eighth Circuit Court. Of those responding, 71% reported an incivility experience within the past five years. The authors further report that gender does explain some of the variance of workplace incivility. Women were more often the targets of incivility compared to men. Furthermore, 50% of the instigators of uncivil acts were determined to be courts personnel acting alone. Judges accounted for 15%, attorneys 7%, and security officials only 1%.

Interestingly, these authors found that women, rather than men, were more often the instigators of incivility. Women were reported as instigators 49% of the time compared to 42% of the time for the men. The other 9% were combined acts of incivility. These findings contradict Pearson's early finding that men were the

primary instigators of incivility. Pearson's (2000) research showed that 70% of instigators were men. The contradictory findings implies that there is some other variable involved in determining when men or women may be the primary instigator of incivility in a workplace setting.

Pearson and Andersson (1999) also describe the spiraling nature of deviant workplace behaviors. Nonviolent acts of incivility can rapidly spiral into acts of violence. I witnessed an example of such behavior. It occurred following a basketball game between college teams that were long-standing rivals. A woman who supported the visiting team verbally chided a woman who supported the home team as they were both leaving the arena. The instigator and her friends laughed about the chiding remarks. The overweight woman however was extremely offended and decided to react to the comment. She ran back and confronted the visiting fans. What transpired was a classic example of how a simple yet hurtful statement can easily spiral into a more serious incident. The actions of both people continued to escalate into a shoving match and eventually into punches being thrown by both women. If it were not for intervention from bystanders who observed the activity, it is difficult to speculate how the incident may have ended. Of course, all of those involved will never forget the event and most will think the other person was at fault. This one uncivil act will cause each of them and those who observed the incident to view the fans of the opposing team differently every time the two teams play each other. This also means that

the incivil act will not simply effect the small group of people involved in the immediate act of incivility but a much larger community. If Pearson is correct, all of those involved will involve others in their story.

Peck (1993) states that incivility stems from a lack of consciousness. Incivility is usually unintentional. He states that we as humans are born as unconscious beings. Humans are not born civil. It is only through development and learning that humans become civil. Peck's argument is that people must learn to be civil. The debate as to when a human becomes conscious can be left to another discussion. The emphasis for this dissertation is that civility is a learned behavior. People are not born with it but do immediately begin to learn about it. As human beings, we learn from our parents and other community members what behavior is appropriate. Being civil is a matter of choice. People can choose to be conscious and more civil but only if a person has been taught how to be civil.

This discussion of incivility concerns those things that allow humans to remain unconscious about how they impact others. To some extent this is because of the differences between people. Those differences are as likely to be within the same ethnic group as they are to be between different ethnic groups. It is an issue that has more to do with how people group themselves into communities of people and include or exclude people from that community and the rules of behavior within that community, than it does with issues of diversity.

Common Moral Understanding

A central theme to both Peck and Carter's works on civility are the ideas related to a common moral authority. Civility, for both of them, has its basis or roots in connection with a Higher power. As stated earlier, however, they both also acknowledge that having a belief in a Higher power does not guarantee civility. Also, they agree that there are many people who do not believe in a Higher power who can and do act civilly.

The issue for how organizations build or develop this humanistic concern is critical to organizational civility. Carter (1998) states that "civility is possible only if members of a community bind themselves to obey a set of rules of behavior not because the law requires it but because they understand the virtue of sacrificing their own desires-their freedom to choose-for the good of the larger community of which they are apart" (p. 77). For organizational civility to be successful, leaders must choose a rule or ethic that will guide the behavior of all members in the organization. That means it must be a rule that applies and can be accepted by all people regardless of religion or whether or not they are religious.

The Golden Rule is a concept, which is found in almost all the world's religions (Swidler, 1999; Boyd, 2000). It is not a rule that is only found in Christianity. Examples of the common nature of the Golden Rule are (Swidler, 1999, p19-21; Boyd, 2000):

- Zoroastrianism:

- Zoroaster (621-551 B.C.E): That which is good for all and any one. for whomsoever-that is good for me...what I hold good for self. I should for all.
- Dadistan-I-dinik 94:5: That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself.

- Confucianism:
  - Confuciuis (551-479 B.C.E.): Do not to others what you do not want done to yourself.
  - Analects 15:23: Surely it is the maxim of loving-kindness: do not unto others what you would not have done unto you.
- Founder of Jainism, Mahavira (540-468 B.C.E): A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated.
- Buddhism:
  - Enlightened One 563-483 B.C.E: "Comparing oneself to others in such terms as 'Just as I am so are they, just as they are so am I,' he should neither kill not cause other to kill"
  - Udana-Varga 5:18: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
- Hinduism:
  - Hindu epic poem states that the Golden rule is the summary of all Hindu teaching. Vyasa: Do not to others what you do not wish

done to yourself; and wish for others too what you desire and long for for yourself- this is the whole of Dharma; heed it well."

- Mahabharata 5:1517: This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you.

- Islam:
  - Mohammed: "Noblest religion is this-that you should like for others what you like for yourself; and what you feel painful for yourself, hold that as painful for all others too."
  - Sunnah: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.
- Jewish tradition:
  - "Do for others just what you want them to do for you. (Luke 6:31)"
  - Talmud, Shabbat 31a: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.
- Taoism: (T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien): Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.
- Christianity:
  - Matthew 7:12 (King James Version): All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.
  - Matthew 7:12 (New Revised Standard Version): In everything do

to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

It is evident that most of the world's religions have adopted some form of the Golden Rule. In fact the Parliament of the World Religions has selected both a positive and negative version of the Golden Rule as part of its call for a Global Ethic. "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others. Or positively: What you wish done to yourself, do to others!" (Swidler, 1999, pg 43). This same concept has been reaffirmed in The Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, which was signed by 24 former heads of state in 1997.

The majority of people in any organization can, because of its commonality, be united behind an ethic promoted by an organization that adopts, in some form, the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule is a theme that can be used to galvanize people in the organization to act in a respectful manner toward each other. The purpose of showing how common the Golden Rule is throughout the world is to legitimize its use by organizational leadership. Leadership should not hesitate to advance the Golden Rule as the rule that guide's interpersonal behavior in their organization. If the GR is adopted in organizations as part of its culture, it can help create the environment necessary to develop organization civility.

It must be acknowledged, however, that not every person in an organization considers himself or herself to belong to any religion. Furthermore, some people obviously do not believe that there is a Higher power that guides our

lives. How does the Golden Rule apply to those people? Obviously, these individuals are guided by other precepts. From an organizational standpoint, it is possible to promote the Golden Rule as an organizational precept without promoting its basis in religion. Organizational leadership simply adopts or establishes a position on how organizational members will treat each other, based on the Golden Rule, and then they expect commitment from its members to organizational policy. The purpose of discussing the common nature of the GR is to know that if it is adopted it will not violate the precepts of any religion nor should it violate any secularists rules.

Organizational Culture

A discussion of organizational culture is important for this analysis because embedded in culture and formed from culture are the social norms and rules that guide behavior in organizations. Having a better grasp of culture may provide a better understanding for how civility or incivility is embedded in the organization. Culture and organizational culture has come to be defined in a variety of ways. Webster's II New Collegiate Dictionary (1995) states that it is "the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought typical of a population or community at a given time." Wiersma (1995) states that, "Culture refers to what humans have learned that impacts upon behavior." Denison's (1990) views are

similar. He views the organizational culture as the "underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for the organization's management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those principles." Schein (1997) is most noted for his work on organizational culture. He has come to define culture in organizations as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12). Bower's (1966) definition is a contrast to the complex in parsimony compared to the more complex definition provided by Schein. Bower's definition states simplistically that culture is "the way we do things around here." The definition provided by Bolman & Deal (1991) in their book entitled Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership is not dissimilar from the others. They propose that culture is "the pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for its members who they are and how they do things. It is both product and process" (p. 250). Harris (1993) also agrees that culture concerns the shared nature of beliefs and values. Culture, he states, "is an organization's shared beliefs and values - Its distinct identity" (p. 64). The concept of the common sharing of ideas is reaffirmed by Key's definition (1999), which reads, culture is the "shared beliefs of an organization's members" (p.217). Hofstede (1991) changes the ideas of sharing to one of programming. Obviously,

his thought is that sharing implies choice. Culture, in Hofstede's view, does not allow for choice. He believes that culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one organization from another" (p. 262).

The common aspects of these definitions are that members of an organization commonly hold similar beliefs and values. They are deeply embedded. These views are important enough that both formal and informal processes have been established to ensure propagation throughout the organization. A critical aspect is that these views/opinions, if they are truly cultural aspects of the organization, must be passed on to the new members of the organization. Culture cannot be separated from other elements of the organization. It is intertwined with the structure, purpose, and systems of the organization.

Organizational cultures are not easily adapted or changed. This is an important consideration for the concept of organizational civility. Organizations that do not already incorporate aspects of civility will have to make a very conscious and concerted effort to do so. It takes vision and commitment on the part of the organization to change. The single most important character in this change effort is the organizational leader. The organizational culture stems from the leader (Bass, 1990). It is through the leader's vision and commitment that cultures are built and when necessary changed.

Schein (1997), as mentioned earlier, is best known for his work on organizational culture. He has identified evolutionary stages of culture. These are important because the evolutionary stage does impact the process of change. In general the change process involves three primary steps: (1) unfreezing, (2) cognitive restructuring, and (3) refreezing. Schein also identifies three separate processes contained within the unfreezing stage. They are disconfirming data, connecting disconfirming data to organizational goals resulting in anxiety from organizational members, and providing sufficient psychological safety that organizational members can see solutions to problems without getting concerned for their own sense of potential loss of identity within the organization. The information below outlines Schein's thoughts on cultural change and its dependence to some extent on the evolutionary stage of the organization. The route to cultural change depends to some extent on the stage level of the organization. An organization at the founding or early growth level is just beginning to form its culture. Therefore, an organization at this stage requires only subtle shifts to orchestrate change in the culture. Those organizations that are at the mid-life stage of development may be able to create a cultural shift through new systems or through promoting people who fit with the new cultural concept. An organization, however, that is at the maturity or declining stages will require drastic modifications to enable cultural changes. Cultural transition may require an infusion of outsiders into the organization. The change may only take

place through coercion and turnovers. At the most drastic level, cultural change may only take place through the destruction and rebirth of the organization.

This analysis of organizational culture is critical to the discussion of organizational civility because the entire process is an attempt to change the culture of the organization. Depending on the organization it could be simply a restatement of the company's vision and goals because the culture already supports most aspects of civility. In other cases, it may call for unfreezing, cognitive restructuring, and refreezing. Obviously an analysis of the organization on different levels will be necessary before change can be implemented. The two key elements are how does their value system currently align with the concept of organizational civility and at what stage is the organization within Schein's concept of evolutionary stages of cultural development.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the concept of organizational civility. The major components of this review dealt first with the notions of civility, incivility, common moral understanding, and organizational culture. In the first section, civility was analyzed by two of the current researchers in the field. The key concepts of their work were combined to form a concept of organizational civility.

In the next section incivility and its negative impact on the organization

was reviewed to further highlight the problems created by this type of behavior. It is a problem that is costing American business billions of dollars each year. It would seem likely that organizations facing such a pervasive problem would want and need to find solutions to the predicament.

I then reviewed the idea of respect for human beings as stemming from either a secular or higher moral authority position. It was argued that the Golden Rule could become an organizational ethic that would lay the foundation for organizations wanting to build a culture of civility. The chapter then looked at the organizational cultural aspects of organizational civility.

Following the explanation of the Golden Rule, this analysis placed the theme of organizational civility within the context of organizational culture. It was explained that the social contexts of the organization, both the formal and informal rules that guide behavior are all part of the organizational culture. It would seem necessary, therefore, for leaders in organizations desiring to create civil organizations to address their efforts through changing the organizational culture.

The central purpose of this dissertation is to discover how employees view incivility and civility in the workplace. Do they see it as a problem or is this an exercise in theory building that has no application? Do these authors accurately represent the problem as it is viewed from the employee's perspective? If incivility is a problem, as perceived by employees, what do they think can be

done about it and how would they do it?

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

As stated in Chapter One, civility in organizations appears to be a little known and little researched phenomenon in organizational or human relations literature. Yet, research is beginning to show that incivility in the workplace presents significant organizational problems. It appears that incivility may be widespread with, according to one study, as much as 70% of the employees experiencing uncivil acts. The survey results from both Pearson's and Cortina's studies clearly reveal the negative impact incivility has on organizational members and the organization's bottom line. Cortina (2001) showed that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and incivility. Satisfaction always declined as incidents of incivility increased. The impact of increased incivility effected the way people felt about all aspects of their employment with the organization.

If incivility is a problem in organizations what can or should be done to address it? Do organizations and their members recognize that incivility is a problem? The purpose of this research effort is to gather data to more accurately develop a theory and definition of organizational civility. Because there is very little research conducted on civility, this research endeavor will utilize focus group interviews as the data collection technique.

Focus group interviews have relevance across the spectrum of descriptive and action research. It is used for many different purposes. One common use is to "explore the adequacy of theoretical models" (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, p. 126). In this research, a theoretical model for organizational civility was built through current readings and research. However, of the current theories on civility there is none that have been applied to the organization. Theory without application is useless for practitioners. Therefore, this research effort will utilize focus group interviews to further analyze the model, generate new ideas, and evaluate employee attitudes to the potential of such a program.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small group discussions of a specific issue or set of issues (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; & Berg, 1995). The group discussion is controlled or orchestrated by a facilitator (often the researcher) (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; Berg, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; & Morgan & Krueger, 1998). The group discussion is recorded either through audio or video recorder (Berg, 1995; Greenbaum, 1998; & Morgan & Krueger, 1998). The audio tape-recorded data is transcribed into a written document and then is analyzed by the researcher (Morgan & Krueger, 1998). It is generally considered important to analyze that data from each focus group before moving on to the next group. The number of groups necessary is situationally dependent. However, the generally accepted answer is that a researcher must continue focus group research until he

or she no longer learns anything new about the topic in questions from one group to the next. Data shows that a researcher will often reach the point of saturation between the fourth or fifth group (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; & Morgan & Krueger. 1998).

Focus group research differs from other group research efforts in that it utilizes the interaction of the group to generate data (Barbour & Kitzinger. 1999; Berg 1995; & Denzin & Lincloln. 1994). Most group techniques involve having each person respond to the questions posed to them. In this case, the question is posed to the group and the group responds according to its own purpose and agenda. The participants react to the questions and answers of other people. The ideas are subsequently changed. modified and refined through the group interaction. This type of group discussion generates more ideas and discussion than other types of interview techniques (Berg, 1995). The key element that sets focus groups apart from other data collection methods is the interaction of the group and it is the primary issue of importance for the researcher.

There are at least three issues a researcher must address when recruiting groups for focus group research: (1) group size, (2) homogeneity v. heterogeneity. and (3) working with strangers or pre-existing groups. The literature differs greatly on the appropriate group size for focus groups. The purpose of the research does seem to be one important factor in deciding the appropriate group size. Generally, marketing research believes in using larger groups. Where as.

most members of the academic community desire using somewhat smaller groups. According to Sociologists Rosaline Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, (1999), 5-6 person groups are ideal. Most market researchers prefer groups of 8-12 people. Yet, there are those who say that a group can be as small as four and as large as twelve people (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; Berg, 1995; & Marshall and Rossman, 1994). David Morgan (1998) considers six person groups to be a small focus group and a ten-person group to be large one. In his view the range of 6-10 provides enough members to spark good interaction while small enough to allow each person time to interact with the group. Thomas Greenbaum (1998) discusses the requisite size in different terms referring to groups as either mini-groups or full groups. He considers full groups to be 8-10 people and mini-groups to be 4-6 people. The important distinction in his view is the length of time for the interview and the amount of time a researcher would like to allow each person to have to express ideas during the discussion. If a researcher only has one hour to commit to the interview and has a ten-person group, the time only allows any one person a few minutes to provide their views of the discussion. Therefore an important consideration in determining the group size is how much time the researcher has set aside for each group interview and how much interaction he or she would like to allow for each participant. Based on this information, the appropriate group size for this research is 5-8 people. This is small enough to allow ample time for each person interact and still large enough to create good

group data.

Another issue a researcher must address is that of the need for diversity in the group. Does the subject that is being addressed require a focus on the differences between people or is it a subject that is more fitted to a group that has some shared experience? The issue in this case is how or should a culture of civility fit within the organization context. Therefore, it would seem necessary that the discussion take place in an organizational context. The workgroup should be the primary distinctive feature of the focus group. Consequently, this current research effort will focus on groups that are joined by the shared experience of working in the same organization.

The third issue is whether or not it is important for the research data that the participants be strangers or people that currently know each other. Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, highlight the fact that there is much is to be gained from the use of pre-existing groups. The gain comes from utilizing the social network of pre-existing groups. These groups after all are the ones that form both the formal and informal norms of the organization. They also form the networks from which ideas are shared and decisions are made. Therefore, when possible, pre-existing workgroups will be used.

Focus group interviewing can be used for a variety of research purposes. It is a technique that stands alone or can be used in conjunction with other qualitative or quantitative research efforts. Thomas Greenbaum (1998) identifies

nine different uses for focus group research. He uses marketing research techniques but these are easily translated into social research terminology. Of the nine uses that Greenbaum provides, four can be adapted with this research project: (1) new theory development, (2) attitude studies, (3) idea generation, and (4) employee attitude and motivational studies. These four uses for focus group interviews all combine into the concepts needed to explore the adequacy of the theoretical model proposed by this dissertation.

A study of what organizations can do to promote civility in the workplace is an important first step in better understanding today's workplace environment. Research has clearly shown and most people recognize that behavior in the workplace is becoming more uncivil. Understanding where organizations are in recognizing and dealing with the problem is the first logical step in addressing future intervention strategies.

Rationale

The rationale for this study is based on the limited research efforts focused on a proactive approach toward eliminating or reducing the amount of incivility in the workplace. Logic and deduction would dictate that some organizations are taking proactive steps to create civil environments.

Deduction concerns forming propositions about what has been seen, against what has not been seen but can be expected (Monette, Sullivan, & Dejong

1986, & Sanders & Pinhey, 1974). It is one of the two forms of scientific reasoning with induction being the other form (Monette, Sullivan, & Dejong, 1986). The primary problem with deductive reasoning is the incorrect or improper use of logic (Sanders & Pinhey, 1974). In the case of this dissertation the deduction is that there is an organizational human relation problem. The problem has been shown to cause a negative impact on people in the organization as well as the organization itself. The deduction reasons that if incivility is a problem people will have begun to deduce ways to intervene in the problem and modify it.

This logical deduction forms the basis for the rationale of this study, which is to conduct group interviews with employees and leaders in organizations in an attempt to determine what processes, if any, organizations can or have undertaken to create civil environments. Since there does not appear to have been any previous research efforts conducted on this subject, it would seem most prudent to begin with a focus group interview process utilizing simple open-ended questionnaire designed to allow the respondents the greatest flexibility in response. A limitation with open-ended questionnaires is the tendency for some inconsistency, which may allow some misinterpretation (Wiersma, 1995). The group interview process helps counter this problem because interviewees vocalize their thoughts, which allow others to agree, disagree, or modify the message. Consequently, the message is clarified through the group process and reduces the possibility of misinterpretation. It would be presumptive to think, at this early

point of research in this field, that a researcher could provide a selected response questionnaire that would uncover all the issues needed to fully understand the scope of the problem of creating civil organizations. Furthermore, the group interview process is important because it allows for ideas to be discussed, evaluated, reevaluated, and changed within the social context of the group process. After the process, the researcher is not left with 10 different ideas on civility but one thought that has been evaluated, reevaluated, and perhaps restated by the group.

Reliability and Validity

According to William Wiersma (1995) the concepts of reliability and validity present more difficulties for qualitative researchers than they do for quantitative researchers. External reliability is concerned with the ability to replicate the study. For a qualitative researcher this means that the research must be well organized, complete, and presented in a persuasive format (Wiersma, 1995). In the case of this dissertation, another researcher will be able to replicate the population and the questions used in this project with very little effort.

Internal reliability for qualitative research refers to consistency in observation (Wiersam, 1995). Consistency was not an issue for this study because multiple observers were not used. I determined the coding and how each focus group's data fit into that coding system.

The issues of validity as it relates to qualitative research must be established through a logical basis (Wiersam, 1995). This again requires well-documented research and logical comprehensive description of the data collected. Internal validity is an issue that allows for the results of the research to be interpreted. Because of this it is imperative that the research design and data collection is written and organized in a logical and comprehensive fashion. External validity is concerned with the generalizability of the findings. As was mentioned earlier, these results can certainly be generalized to large bureaucracies. Even still, generalizing the data in qualitative research can only be done if the data has been extensively researched, described and intensely analyzed.

Research Method

This research effort grew out of an interest in another topic I was involved in. That project involved the Consideration of Others program that the U.S. Army had initiated following some public cases of sexual harassment and hate group incidents.

After some soul searching and speaking with members of my committee, I decided to change my topic to "Organizational Civility". It appeared as though there was an increase in the discussion about incivility in organizations and the problem it was creating. Yet, there was very little research about how to be more

civil. My goal was to clarify the issues and problems. What were the major themes? How did people assign meaning to these issues in their everyday work life?

I began with a thorough search of the literature. This was both web-based as well as the more traditional library process. I would not consider the research in this area abundant, however, there certainly was much more data on the problems of incivility than there was on the data available on creating civil institutions.

After completing the literature review, I had initially considered using a survey instrument as my data collection method. However, ultimately I decided that it would be more appropriate to conduct focus group interviews. I then researched the purpose, process and data analysis methods of focus group interviews. After deciding how to conduct focus group interviews, I turned my thoughts to the type and number of questions I would need for the interview. I again relied heavily on the available literature to provide some answers. When I completed the first draft of questions I consulted with my peers about the questions and received their assistance in modifying the questions.

The next step was to contact local organizations to present my proposal. I found a point of contact (POC) in a large local organization. I met with the POC to discuss my research proposal and the intent of the research project. After assurances that the name of the organization would not be used, she agreed to

approach her supervisor with my proposal. He agreed to allow me to conduct the focus group interviews with members of their organization.

The next step was to determine all of the logistic needs for the interview. I did the first interview using a standard tape recorder. I used two tape recorders during the first interview "just in case". The questions and the conversation went well. Overall, I was pleased with the first interview and found that I had collected meaningful data. I determined, however, that the standard tape recorder was inadequate for my purposes. I did not want to risk losing valuable information due to poor taping equipment.

I made a copy of the tape and sent the original to a transcriptionist for typing. While the tape was being transcribed, I reviewed the back up tape to determine what themes or codes had emerged from the session.

I decided that I did not want to do the traditional qualitative cut and paste coding process. I conducted a web search on qualitative data analysis software. I decided on the latest NUD*IST product called NVivo.

The first transcribed interview was returned within a week. I had already reviewed the tape and had some idea what codes (or nodes as the software package named them) I was going to use. It took me two days to code the first transcript.

With the first group of data, I ended up with 22 different codes. My next task was to model Group 1's codes. Modeling refers to categorizing the codes

into major themes. This was a complicated process. The software program did simplify the task of manipulating the codes, which meant I could spend my time on analysis. After a number of changes, I ended up with five major themes from the first transcript. The five themes were: (1) civility, (2) defining civility, (3) incivility, (4) organizational issues, and (5) future research.

I conducted the second interview on Feb 20, 2001. Because I was not pleased with the quality of the first tape, I went to a professional Audio store and discussed my research task and needs with them. After some discussion, we decided I needed two PCM or flat mikes for the recording and an audio mixer so that the sound from both microphones could be recorded on the same tape. This proved sufficient for my research needs.

The second interview was scheduled for 1 p.m. I arrived at the building at noon allowing myself an appropriate amount of time to set up the equipment and prepare for the interview. I was ready by 12:30 p.m. I did not change the questions from Group 1 to Group 2. The session started promptly at 1:00 and lasted until 2:45. I was concerned initially because the responses to the questions were very short and direct. However, the respondents started to elaborate and my problem changed to being concerned if the tape was long enough. The session was productive and generated the necessary data. The quality of the tape was excellent. In my opinion it was well worth the professional help and money.

As with the first interview. I made a copy of the second tape and sent the original to the transciptionist. I then went back to the previous coded document and continued to refine my model. I also spent time considering how I might ultimately present this data the dissertation document.

I began to review the second tape to establish how the data agreed or disagreed with the first transcript. While I did not necessarily see any surprises. I did begin to acknowledge some similarities between the first two tapes. I imported the second transcript into NVivo and began the coding process. When coding transcript two, I began with the same 22 codes I had decided on after the first transcript. The data from the second transcript generated 6 additional codes. After completing the second tape. I went back to the first coded transcript to see if any of the 6 new codes should or code be applied to that set of data.

I reviewed the information I had gathered to this point in preparation for the next focus group interview. I decided that I would add two questions: (1) With all of our differences. i.e.. personalities, races, cultures, how does an organization find a common ground on how we treat each other? and (2) a theme that has develop from previous focus groups is necessary process of rules. enforcement. and consequences for improper behavior. Yet. when these same people were asked what groups they considered to be the most civil they used examples of churches and fraternal organizations. Are churches and fraternal

organizations examples of organizations with rules, enforcement and consequence, if so, how, and if not, why are they examples of civil organizations?

I conducted the third focus group interview on Tuesday, Mar. 2, 2001. There were 6 people in this group. The process went well but my first impression is that there was not as much debate or disagreement as the first two groups. Yet, the length of the taping session was about the same.

While the third tape was being transcribed, I went back to the first two to combine the data together and further model the major themes. Through this process I began to develop thoughts and questions concerning where the data appeared to be heading. Another new question for the fourth focus group arose out of this process: "What kind of work environment should you expect and employer to provide for you when you agree to work for them?"

After the third transcript was completed, I began the coding process. I also began researching the literature to help define the information I was collecting. There were a number of different terms used for how people were able to recognize behavior in themselves and in other people. I discovered literature on 'emotional intelligence.' This term seems to be the most appropriate combination of tasks and attitudes that fit with the idea that people can learn to recognize their own and other people's behavior. As I continued coding the third transcript, I developed one additional code 'levels of civility.' Therefore, I did go back and recode both the first and second transcripts. I conducted my fourth

focus group on Mar. 20. 2001. The process was very similar to the first three. This focus group consisted of 8 employees.

The next step was to model the first three transcripts to further develop the themes I wanted to use to write up the finding and analysis sections of the data. When the fourth transcript arrived by email, I again coded it similarly to the first three. No new codes emerged from the fourth transcript. It was at this point that I decided I had arrived at data saturation and would not conduct any further focus groups.

The purpose of this research project was to study and examine workplace civility by conducting four focus group interviews with employees in the work place. Each group was asked the same basic questions but new questions arose as the process unfolded. Each subsequent group was asked the additional questions. A total of twenty questions were asked about civility and incivility in the workplace. The answers to these questions generated 406 pages of transcripts.

After the coding was completed and the information from the codes printed there were 766 pages of data for analysis. Yet, after the constant comparative process of coding, axial coding, and developing a series of mental maps, the data clustered around four issues: (1) descriptions and causes of incivility, (2) incivility in the workplace, (3) solutions to incivility, and (4) defining civility. Each of these points will be addressed in the following chapters.

Focus Group Questions

The following are all of the questions developed throughout the focus group process. The first sets of questions are the 17 original ones:

1. Tell us your name, where you live and what was your favorite memory last summer?
2. We are here today to talk about organizational civility. By that I mean leadership taking steps to try and create environments of civility in their organizations.
3. When you hear the term civility what first comes to your mind?
4. Many people believe that incivility in the workplace is a serious problem. What behaviors would you label as being uncivil?
5. What are you hearing people say about incivility in the workplace?
6. Think back to an incivility experience you had at work or in an organization. Describe it?
7. What causes people to be uncivil?
8. Assume incivility is a problem. What should be done about it?
9. Is it possible to create a civil environment at the workplace?
10. What would be your definition of organizational civility?
11. Jot down on a piece of paper one phrase or one sentence that best describes your position on civility in the workplace.
12. When you think of civil organizations which ones come to mind?

13. If you could do one thing to reduce incivility in an organization, what would it be?
14. If you were the moderator, what would be the next question you would ask the focus group?
15. Of all the things we talked about today, what would you consider to be the most important aspect?
16. If you were in charge, what steps would you take to try and establish a civil environment in your organization?
17. Have I missed any question that you think I should have asked?

The following questions were added at different points of the data collection process:

1. With all of our differences, i.e., personalities, races, culture, how does an organization find a common ground on how we treat each other?
2. A theme that has developed from previous focus groups is necessary process of rules, enforcement, and consequences for improper behavior. Yet, when these same people were asked what groups they considered to be the most civil they used examples of churches and fraternal organizations. Are churches and fraternal organizations examples of organizations with rules, enforcement and consequence, if so, how, and if not, why are they examples of civil organizations?

3. What kind of work environment should you expect an employer to provide for you when you agree to work for them?"

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This dissertation is really a story told by focus groups of employees about their workplace. Their story is complex and emotional. It occurs in a small Southwestern community and it involves many characters. As reported by the respondents, descriptions of an uncivil workplace and its causes begin to emerge. Moreover, the reader discovers the type of environment the majority of participants prefer to work in and how they believed the organization might create it. There are four primary themes that emerge from this data: (1) descriptions and causes of incivility, (2) incivility in the workplace, (3) creating civility, and (4) describing organizational civility. Each theme, as it is presented, will have two major sub categories of information: (1) the data as it fits around the central tendency or modal responses, and (2) the data that emerged as outliers, which is information that either contradicts or disconfirms the primary findings.

Descriptions and Causes of Incivility

> "If you have a problem and you don't confront the person with the problem, then your frustration is your problem, not mine." (Group 4, Mar 20, 2001)

Each focus group answered two questions associated with identifying the roots of incivility: (1) How would you describe incivility? and. (2) What causes people to be uncivil?

Modal Descriptions of Incivility

Conducting a content analysis provided a general overview of the participants' beliefs concerning incivility and its causes. A simple listing of those terms and their frequency, however, would not provide adequate knowledge of the conversations. The participants' discussions provide contextual meaning to what they considered to be the root causes of incivility. Therefore, verbatim excerpts provide much greater meanings and insights. The following passage occurred between three males in the second group interviewed. M5 is a male Arab American who grew up in Jordan. M3 is a Puerto Rican male who grew up in New York City. M1 is a European American whose childhood was spent in New Jersey. The excerpts are taken from their discussion describing incivility:

> M5: "A disregard for your fellow worker, just generally a disregard for his well-being his total-
> Q: What –kind of things fit into that – that – group, because I - - I thing that's a very interesting part of it. What kind of things might fit into that - - disregard for your fellow worker.
> M5: His feelings or her feelings about – that may be different from mine. That's – I think that – the main thing, not giving them the courtesy of even having a feeling different than mine; and that's the biggest area where we abuse that.
> Q: Okay.

M3. "Differences in opinions; and I know we're not just throwing out one line or two, but everybody's got their own opinion. Everybody has their own way of doing a particular job. Somebody's way may be a little more efficient than other's, but it doesn't make it right or wrong.
Q. Right
M3. –and people have a hard time accepting that, at times; and I think that's what factors into that, respecting somebody else's opinion or feelings; and when you disrespect that, then you run into conflict or anything else; and that – that's widespread, I think.
Q: Okay. Anything else?
M1: What stands out in my mind is students or team people that I've worked with in the past – blowups, just throwing tantrum, that very childish behavior. They'll throw something down or they'll make a lot of noise, very disruptive, so that they get all the attention; and, to me, that's very uncivil." (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001)

While disrespect is mentioned within this passage, it is clearly just a small part of the overall context and importance of the message. The significance lies in the clear message that people are different, they have dissimilar opinions, and they want disparate things. According to these respondents, those views are not given credence nor are they often respected. Another important aspect of their dialog is the way in which the third respondent entered into the conversation. First, notice he did not disagree with the first two men. He does not lead off with either a contradictory or disconfirming message. His message is on a completely different level from the one dealing with differences. He addresses the issue of the childish, loud, disruptive behaviors of some office workers.

Another transcript provides very similar messages. This conversation occurred between five participants within Group 3. This part of the discussion

transpired as a result of being asked what behaviors they would consider to be uncivil:

> M4: "Violence –
> F1: Yelling
> M4: --basically.
> M3: Disrespect
> Q: Disrespect?
> F1: Disrespect, yelling, temper tantrums.
> M2: Shouting.
> Q: Do you – you have lots of temper tantrum around here –
> F1: I'm prone to them, occasionally.
> Q: All right, okay.
> M1: Insulting
> Q: Insulting? Okay. XXX what do you think?
> M1: Arguing.
> Q: Arguing in and of itself or the - - method and mode, the—
> M1: The method and mode. With – arguing with a locked mind, a single-minded purpose....
> Q: XXX, what do you think?
> M2: ...for me, being incivil or uncivil is – I see a lot here lately that is confrontation. You know, it always seems to be very confrontational. They got to be, you know, either hard left or hard right; and it's – it's getting back to the middle" (Group 3, Mar 6, 2001).

Once again disrespect is mentioned as a descriptor of incivility. Yet, the majority of this conversation does not deal with disrespect but with uncontrolled emotion; i.e., those behaviors such as yelling, temper tantrums, arguing or confronting.

A final example from Group 4's transcript will further highlight the discussion of incivility. This conversation arose from a question about describing civility:

> M7: "Hostility.

Q: Hostility? In what way?

M7: Well, if –if you- it's two sides to the coin right? You can be respectful; you can be disrespectful.

Q: Right. Okay.

M7: You can be hostile, and you can be not hostile, so, you know –

Q: All right.

M7: Violence in the workplace is getting to be almost epidemic proportions, so—

Q: Okay…is incivility something other than violence in the workplace, also, or what – term of what level do you believe incivility or what type of behaviors might incivility show – and show itself? How might it show itself?

M3: Well, I think violence is an extreme part of it; but I feel like it's there clear down to favoritism. I mean, when you got two people doing a similar job but you can see that there's favoritism over one person to the other, they're picking their jobs and – all these types of stuff up there that falls all into that category.

Q: Okay.

M7: Indifference can be a form of it, too.

Q: Okay.

M7: You don't do anymore, and you don't do any less. You don't do anything different, just a – just a – it's a form of rebellion. It's a form of hostility.

Q: Okay. XXX what do you think?

M5: Well, I see a lot of mismanagement, period, causes some of that reaction that – that XXX was just bringing up.

M7: You're right.

M5: I've seen it many times, that individuals come into the workforce, excellent workers; and within a three year period, you'll see one that's doing exactly what the supervisor or and individual to do because, if you do any more, it's no respect. So you get to the point that, I will do only what they say do, and that'll be enough. I do my eight hours, and perhaps my reward will come away from my job, instead of being rewarded for the good job I do.

Q: Okay, XXX what about you?

M4: It seems to me that incivility breeds incivility. If you walk into a place that people just don't care whether you're there or not, that colors your attitude about everybody and everything that you do" (Group 4, March 20, 2001).

This is yet one more example of how disrespect was mentioned as a key descriptor of incivility. Often when disrespect was mentioned there was very little discussion to go along with it. It was as if everyone knew and agreed on the definition of respect. This clip quickly moves on to many other issues that this group considered important to incivility. Again, note that there are seldom any disconfirming messages within the groups. In this case, there is some affirmation. These participants do bring other issues into the debate over incivility. Words such as hostility, violence, indifference, favoritism, and mismanagement are used often. The group also reflected that incivility itself breeds further incivility.

Modal Causes of Incivility

The three examples above encapsulate the issues related to describing incivility. This review of findings still must address the issue of the causes incivility. The two most reported causes were: (1) diversity between people, and (2) a lack of training. Some highlights from the data collected reveal how these two causes emerged from the data. This first example is from Group 2. It is an example of how culture created by geography reduced what was once considered a civil environment to an uncivil environment:

> M1: "Let me give you an example of what happened in XXX City. Probably in the early '80s, we pulled some people from big cities -- and I'm not going to mention any particular, but you'll figure them out -- and their personality was developed from those big cities, and they were very intimidating people, and they pushed everybody around when they came

in to XXX City, and they actually changed the whole atmosphere there to an -- incivil. It was very civil until they came, and then they started causing lots of problems, and nobody would take care of it, and so you have everybody in fear and oppression constantly 'cause of these few people that came in, and that's -- that's the type of situation I'm talking about.

M4: So you're saying it was geographically induced, then?

M1: Well, yeah, well—

M4: It was a factor?

M1: Yes....

M3: But people let that happen?

M1: Right.

M3: You – you saying the passiveness of –

M1: The people of—

M3: --[Name of State omitted]....

M1: Well, then – then this – lets (laughter) we're talking about the Big Apple. You got a different level of civility there than you do in XXX City—

M5: That's true.

M1: -- or some other conservative states.

M5: It's cultural difference.

M1: So evidently, civility is relative to where you're at" – (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

This excerpt must first be viewed from the perspective of the respondent. It is obvious that he believes there are perceived differences between people in large cities like New York and people from smaller conservative southwestern cities. He attributes the difference in attitude first to geography and second to cultural nuances. While there may be other reasons for the differences, these respondents associated the event with the behaviors. Regardless, this discussion provides some causes the subjects associate with incivility.

Reviewing a portion of Group 1's transcript a second example of the cause of incivility as a result of the heterogeneity between people:

F2: I think that we should approach others necessarily every expecting anything in return, except basic respect, just the basic—
M1: Yeah.
F2: -- the very, very basic
M1: Because, you know, even if you treat someone nice, I mean , they could still be grump and hate you or whatever, you know, --but, you know, it's all--
F2: Or they just – you know, they might just be from a different part of the country where they're going to respond to you –
M1: A little differently.
F2: -- different.
M1: Yeah.
F2: Yeah. I mean, that's you know, something that I have definitely found, being in the military and meeting somebody from every single state in the Union is there's a huge difference between somebody that was born and raised in Oklahoma, the way they're going to approach you versus somebody that was born and raised in New York City –
M1: Sure
F2: --and that's something to always – to always take into consideration is –
M1: One – one of those know what grits is and the other one doesn't.
F2: Yeah.
M1: You know.
F2: But just the – you know, what people might perceive as being –
M1: Regional differences –
F2: Yeah
M1: -- in communication
F2: -- or –
M1: --and interpersonal –
F2: Yeah.
M1: -- relationships.
F2: Definitely.
F5: And culture has something to do with it—
M1: Yes. Yes.
F5: Because I remember when I first came to this country, you know, because – being back there in Nigeria, we respect our elders, anybody older – even if it is one year you have to give respect. So when I came to

this country and I meet an older person. I feel reluctant to call them by their first name. 'cause we don't do that back there" (Group 1. Feb. 2. 2001).

The first two conversations are from different groups yet surprisingly the dialog is very similar. Obviously regional and cultural differences do have an impact on how we relate to one another. If an organization has a very diverse population. taking regional differences into consideration and helping organizational members understand regional differences may be a key component in resolving incivility. One final example from Group 4 will further highlight the problem of diversity as it relates to the cause of incivility.

Q: " Is there a - - is there a minimum level? I mean, is there – are – are there behaviors you will not accept, regardless of where you're at?
M7: Yeah. Yeah. I guess, all of us have our tolerances, sure. Sure.
Q: What's yours?
M7: Well, if anybody that lays a hand on me, they're going to be in trouble.
Q: Okay.
M5: But he is from New York, now—
M7: (Indiscernible) a lot. Yeah. I would take a lot more verbal criticism with - - 'cause I give it as good as I send. as a rule; and that's true. Where others may get their tolerances—everybody's tolerances are different. so—
Q: Okay.
M1: Regional cultures play a big difference.
M7: Sure it does.
M1: Southern will take probably a punch in the shoulder quicker than they will a bad mouther; whereas XXX won't take mouth or lip off anybody.
M7: Right.
M1: Just a culture. a region.
M5: And that's really something you have to learn. I think this place. this building, is different from a lot of the – probably any of the [omit] other.

except military, at any given day, will have a person from every state. If we have 13 people, we have 13 different states.
Q: Right.
M5: You can definitely determine an East Coast from a West Coast.
M1: Not to mention different countries" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Outlier Responses to Descriptors and Causes of Incivility

The preceding excerpts cite words and phrases most often used to describe and establish the causes of incivility. The following thoughts were those used most infrequently when describing incivility. These comments were mentioned only once within the transcripts: deceitful, militant attitudes, cutthroat actions, mistreating people, backstabbing, and selfishness.

In a similar way, the following responses are terms most infrequently used when discussing the causes of incivility: "mapping is different, sense of entitlement, mismanagement causes incivility, incivility breeds incivility, they were born like that, some people enjoy creating conflict, and it is ingrained behavior in some people."

Incivility in the Workplace

"It was very civil until they came, and then they started causing lots of problems, and nobody would take care of it, and so you have everybody in fear and oppression constantly 'cause of these few people..." (Group 3, Mar 6, 2001)

The second theme arose out of a series of questions dealing with incivility in the workplace and whether people in the workplace considered it to be a

problem. The participants in this study do perceive incivility as a problem in the workplace.

Modal Themes of Workplace Incivility

There is no question that these respondents perceive incivility in the workplace as a problem. In some cases the respondents actually discussed the concept as an "incivility" issue in the workplace. In others cases, they indicated that they did not apply the vocabulary of "civility" or "incivility" but the behaviors described do fit those terms. Trying to quantify the number occasions of a discussion about whether or not incivility was a problem in the workplace was an impossible task. It can confidently be stated that most of the text (766 pages) refers to that discussion. There are moments when the subjects do disagree and those will be highlighted in the section for outliers. A review of several transcript sections will illustrate the problem.

These first examples are excerpts from Focus Group 1. Their response is to a question of whether or not they think people at work talk about incivility as a workplace problem:

F4: Usually they do.
Q: And what are – what kinds of things that – that people usually talk about or from your experience from what they've mentioned to you?
F4: In some way they're mistreated. Usually somebody lets somebody else down.
M1: Yeah. I usually hear about that side of authority—
F4: May not be like a person—

M1: -- the other side-
F4: directly, which is probably more appropriate; but, you know, there's—
Q: Those aren't the kind of things people are keeping to themselves.
F4: Not usually.
M1: Even if they are you can usually tell. You know, if it's somebody you work with, you can usually tell when something's happening, whether they tell you or not.

Second example:

M1: Yeah. I remember one time when xxx was still here, and she was having a problem with xxx, and I was just tempted to just take her in the room and just, "Let's hash this out"—but I'm – I'm not the supervisor. I'm not – so I just probably better just let –
F3: Yeah.
M1: -- it go.
F1: No, but don't you thing that – I mean, if I made you mad, would you get in my face and tell me, rather than go to somebody else? Probably not.

Third example:

F4: You can't continue to let someone blow off at you 'cause of their style or something, then you got to at least set the tone. You know, you've got to at least put a standard there that you won't be walked over cause you know, that's happening in that situation.
F3: Set new behavior?
F4: Yeah, 'cause, I mean, you have to – you know, you can be nice for a while, but if they continue to not being civil toward you, then I think there's a point where you have to say, " Okay".
F2: You have a right to draw a line –
F4: Right.
M1: Yeah.
F2: -- and stick to it. I thing that it's – you know, the workplace violence, a lot of that probably stems from people that went home angry every single night of the week because they were stepped on or treated uncivilly where they work; and rather than –
F4: And took it.
F2: Yes, exactly.

The three preceding conversations were extracted from the first 36 pages of a 96-page transcript. Obviously this first group had many discussions about incivility and its role in the workplace. A similar review of Group 2's transcript will further highlight this phenomenon:

First example:

M1: "What stands out in my mind is students or team people that I've worked with in the past -- blowups, just throwing tantrums, that very childish behavior. They'll throw something down or they'll make lots of noise, very disruptive, so that hey get al the attention; and, to me, that's very uncivil."

Second example:

M1: "Let me give you an example of what happened in XXX City. Probably in the early '80s, we pulled some people from big cities -- and I'm not going to mention any particular, but you'll figure them out -- and their personality was developed from those big cities, and they were very intimidating people, and they pushed everybody around when they came in to XXX City, and they actually changed the whole atmosphere there to an -- incivil. It was very civil until they came, and then they started causing lots of problems, and nobody would take care of it, and so you have everybody in fear and oppression constantly 'cause of these few people that came in, and that's -- that's the type of situation I'm talking about.

Third example:

Q: Think back to maybe an incivility experience you had yourself and describe it. I think we had one here earlier with xxx. [referring to transcript above].
M1: Not just one. I've seen several students act up. I've seen instructors act up and I imagine I've been uncivil....
M4: One thing I've seen and – on different teams. We have a real small team, so we tend to be a little bit more – there's not as many personalities to deal with, so there's a lot of give and take and a lot of – putting aside of egos, as it were, for the group good. I noticed that when – when a person

goes from a small team to a larger team, there's more personalities to deal with; and what happens, I've – I've found out on a larger team – if you want to call it incivility, it seems to increase....
Q: So what causes people to be uncivil?
M4: Selfishness.
F2. Disrespect. I've seen it working with both, you know, on the contract [side] and the [company] career employees, sometimes, I will hear from the contract employees some things that the career employees has said or, rather, treated them. That's – goes all through. I mean, that's not respectful. That's not – you know, we're all in this together.

The last three examples demonstrate how incivility exists within an organization at the individual or one-on-one level. Incivility also exists between the individual and the organization

In this fourth example, the group is talking about how differences lend themselves to creating incivility. The overall discussion centers on a badge system the company instituted. Contract employees are given one badge color while career employees are given a different one. Before the new badge system there was no visible difference between the two employee groups. This organizational decision has created a conflict between employees where previously one did not exist:

M5: Yeah. It's – it's – in my opinion, it's a perceived difference between individuals; and when there is that perception, either rightly or wrongly, then there's a change in attitude; and that's what, you know, XXX was talking about –
M3: Um-hum, right.
M5: -- when he was talking about the difference in the badges; and it creates a difference, whether they intended it to or not; and when people perceive a difference, then they treat one another according to that value they associate with the difference –

M3: Right.
M5: -- and that's the problem that we have here. There is a difference in perceived value, quote/unquote, of our employees.
F1: Right.
M5: That would look – this is the worst thing that could have happened, yeah, in my opinion.

Group 2's transcript, like Group 1's, exemplifies how employees believe incivility was a problem in their workplace. The four excerpts above were extracted from the early pages of each transcript as an illustration of how many examples might be collected. Continuing with the review of data will further develop this correlation. The next example from Group 3 acknowledges that even if the moniker of incivility is not used people recognize the behavior.

Example one Group 3:

Q: Is – is this – is incivility or civility a topic that people talk about in the workplace?
M4: You don't have to talk about it. You see it or you[omit] touch it. You feel it. You don't – you don't go in and label it and –
Q: Right.
M4: -- so what if you – if you get into disagreements or you're uncivil or civil; but you can you can show your feeling that, you know, I'm – you're not welcome, you know, so—
Q: So you would consider it a problem in that sense, it's just not labeled that war or – I mean it is – it is a real workplace –
M4: Oh, yeah.
Q: --problem in you're eyes?
M3: Yeah.
F1: Yeah.
M2: I don't – don't believe – I've never heard it labeled this way before.
F1: I think negativity comes to my mind, in our organization a lot, maybe as far as being uncivil.

Example two from Group 3:

M1: I work in a lot of interorganizational or suborganizational groups that have to come to a consensus and then we vote on a decision. I think one of the most uncivil behaviors that I see that is not infrequent, and I've – thinking of one particular event here, but it – occurs more that that – that the group will hammer out a consensus that we can all say we support and we'll make that the policy, go forward with that, and then you find out that one member of that group is backdooring and trying to undermine that consensus because they really didn't agree with it, they wanted to go another way and through rumors, you hear back, "well, why are you taking that approach? It's wrong."
Q: Right.
M1: "We've heard from this person it should go that way;" and it's amazing. Everyone on the group will recognize that person as a problem and do their best to isolate it, but, quite often, no one will confront that person 'cause no one feels they have the authority to say, "You're undermining the group decision."
F1: And – and I think XXX hit on a real good point, 'cause I think that happens in a – not only in his little area, but I think it happens in all of our areas, a lot....
M1: If I want to say that, I need to say that in the meeting that I'm not going to support it.
F1: Right. See, we have meetings all the time with a counterpart of ours: [contract v. career] and we'll make policy decisions and – and say what we're going to do and how it's going to work; and everybody goes away thinking we're going down this road; and then the next thing we know, we have the other counterpart beating down the door, trying to change the rules—
M1: We have dissension.
F1: -- and it's like, "We've already decided, we've already met on this, it was discussed, why are you bringing this back –
M1: Right
F1: -- up again?" and – and – and that's a constant thing; and it then becomes negative. Makes people feel negative and – and again, to me, that make you then react uncivilly to the situation."

This next conversation stemmed from a discussion about what organizations can do to help create civil environments. The discussion was long

and involved attitudinal issues of employees. The conversation leads to the disclosure that their organization does have a policy against workplace violence. Unfortunately the policy is unequally enforced.

> M5: I hear it all the time, you know, the, "What are they going to do, fire me, you know, if I don't comply to that?" You know, if there's any little way they can get around something like that it's, and they, you know, "I'll be who – I am who I am. I'll be who I'll be; and if they're not going to fire me for it and they can't stop me," you know, whatever; and that's just the way that, you know—
> F1: And the [omit] has a very strong no tolerance of violence in the workplace, but we don't really mean it. We mean it for certain people under certain situations, but certainly no for all situations –
> M5: Oh yeah!
> F1: -- and, you know that's frustrating.
> Q: I – I take it—
> F1: That's frustrating.
> Q: -- you mean, it's not enforced very well?
> M3: No. Think – I don't think [so].
> F1: No. It's – not enforced very well.

Logic would imply that if there is a policy against workplace violence and that policy is not enforced then there must be occasions of violence and that the aggressor is not being punished. This final section will complete the review of the conversations examining workplace incivility. These examples are from the final focus group conducted. The dialog was part of a larger discussion concerning how some people only obey the rules when a supervisor or someone in authority is coming to see them:

> M2: I'm wearing about 10 different hats, but, of course, I'm the one that's going to walk around and – and say, "XXX I'm going to do an inspection [so] take this, this, and this. Of course, I don't have problems with people.

I mean, they're always respond to me. "We can put that back." If they give me hell, I give it back, and we're fine.
M1: Yeah. move on.
M2: But –
M7: You've go the same [attitude as me]
M2: -- I – I have to be the bad guy.
M7: Are you – you trying to say that we are all starting to know you now?
M2: Right.
M5: But it goes to the point that it's not what you say, it's how you say it –
M2: I – yeah.
M5: 'Cause every time I see you, that you have something negative to say, we're going to have a problem because I know I don't do that many bad things. Now, I've – I've walked the line, there is no doubt but – usually ... but I mean we have some supervisors that, if they're saying something to you, you know it's going to be negative."

This second example from Group 4 is from a larger section that included four pages of transcript. It concerned the counseling of an employee. This employee had invited someone to the organization that was not supposed to be in the facility. The employee thought he was doing something that was going to help the organization. The employee's supervisor chose to use email as the method of counseling. According to the story an email message was sent to the employee basically threatening the employee with losing his job. The employee decided to respond to his supervisor through email but chose to send it to the organization-wide intranet account. The reply included the supervisor's original email message. There was some discussion about whether or not this was an incivility issue. The majority thought that it was because of the negative impact on the employee and the tarnished image of the supervisor.

M7: First of all, all right, people skills demand –
M2: Oh, yeah –
M7: -- that before you threaten a guys job – and you don't do it over email; you bring the guy into the office and say, "Do you – do you see what this could look like?"
M2: I'd like to have seen the email after his last email.
M5: No. I want to see the next one. Hey, don't stop now – just leave it open you know.
M7: Well, but – but he wanted – but that's—that's the point I'm trying to make, 'cause normally that person doesn't do that –
M2: But –
M7: -- but he got a knee jerk[reaction] because of other deals that happened hear recently that forced somebody to take an [early retirement], thinking this was the same scenario – if – if – if you look at the background and understand what happened – still these people skills should have stopped him from doing that, should have called him in and said, "This looks bad. What's going on here?"
M3: Okay, but there's a situation and you got to look at the big picture.
M4: We're kind of getting off the civil side.
M3: No –
M5: Look, I'll – well, I think this creates [incivility]"

This final example is the twelfth from the four focus group transcripts. It emanated from a conversation about who is responsible for trying to reduce incivility and also how boundaries between people are established:

M7: ..."Everybody puts ground rules, all right? You can play with me until this point: don't cross that line – those ground rules are laid out, most people don't cross them.
Q: And fortunately, it sounds like most people know you and understand the play; but if I was a new guy and you were like that, I mean, I – I could see where you and I would come to a point real quickly that we'd have to set those boundaries.
M7: That's true, but that's okay, 'cause you're getting those rules up front. That's fine.
Q: It's just that person who may be too timid not to – to set those boundaries ... they have a problem.
M7: But it's their problem.

M2: No. No. No. You made it their problem.
M7: No. I'm being myself, and I told him up front –
M2: But their being their self, too
M7: -- "Let's go lay the ground rules."
M2: So which self is right?
M7: They're the ones that [are] being upset."

The conclusion that can be reached from these twelve transcripts is that the respondents of this research believe incivility is a workplace problem. The analysis, however, is not complete without a discussion of the outlier data. The appropriate questions are: under what conditions did employees feel that work place behaviors were not related to incivility? or What areas fit with incivility but were considered by some to be on the fringes?

Outlier Responses of Workplace Incivilty

Data that corresponds with the outlier category concerns how these respondents tried to limit what behavior was considered civil or uncivil. This first example was part of a conversation about which behaviors are considered uncivil. The conversation began with whether or not someone who did not make the next pot of coffee was being uncivil to the rest of the employees in the office.

F1: But sitting here thinking about all – you know, listening to discussions and everything, you know, I – I – even including the Golden Rule, everybody's expectations are different. If you do that to me, I yell at you and go make another pot. You know –
M2: You – do you consider that uncivil?
F1: Well, no, it wouldn't hurt my feelings. It – you know, I'd probably give him a hard time about it all day, but it would be all in fun. I mean my level of expectation of the way I'm – expecting to be treated by everyone

is probably vastly different than XXX – So as far as civil and uncivil, it is going to be a matter of personal judgment; and I'm not sure there's a way to standardize that across the board. Mutual respect, to me, I don't want XXX to come in and call me Ms. XXX. I don't want to do that. I don't like it. I like a level of familiarity, and it's family versus company....
M1: I think – I – I agree with – I think it is a relative issue.
F2: Yeah.
M1: What one person thinks as – as somebody is being rude to them, another person might not.
F1: Right.
M1: So, you know, I could agree with that. The magnitude appears to have something to do with it.
F3: Yes. There're degrees of civility?
M1: Yeah.
F3: -- degrees of acceptable –
F2: That depends on –
M1: And that could vary –
F2: -- so many different things.
M1: -- from person to person.

This second example is also from Group 1 and continues the discussion of what is civil or uncivil behavior.

M1: Well, there are cultural environments, like XXX was talking about earlier, kind of.
F2: Exactly. For us at XXX, being uncivil would mean forgetting somebody's birthday, or mean – yeah
M1: [Laughter]
F2: -- But I'm serious. Things like that are expected here because, given our size and given our history, I mean, when I came in to this organization, I immediately realized that you're – everybody gets their birthday celebrated and everybody knows if somebody's spouse is – is sick, -- I mean, those kind of things are just expected around here; where, I'm sure, that at a organization 10 times this, size nobody ever expect that.
M1: Yeah.
F2: Maybe in small work groups or teams or in one particular division that might be expected, but, as a whole, I don't think that would be expected.
M1: I guess to me that's like levels of caring and sharing, rather than –

F2: But that – but –
M1: -- civility, per se
F2: But if somebody defines –
M1: But I – I understand what you're
F2: -- whether or not you forget my birthday, as –
M1: Sure
F2: -- being civil.
M1: Sure. Well, I mean, like – like – you know, it's back to that being a relative sort of thing again, not only relative to the person but to the situation that you're in.

Third example:

M3: It's like obscenity. I mean it's subjective. What's obscene to me may not be obscene to you. Well, respect to me may not be respect to you. So what is civility, what is mutual respect? Treat me the way I want to be treated.
M2: Right.
M3: Well, I may want to be treated like a step-child, you know. I don't mind getting cursed out or whatever. I don't – I mean, I do; but you know, that may be my take; and so I'm going to treat you the way I want to get – eh, there are too many holes there, I think.
M5: Well, that – you know, we have to have some perspective from which to operate; and the only thing that we have is our opinion. You know, my wife is always asking me why someone did something. How do I know, you know? ... You know, that's because – that's the way they are made up; and we always want to put our values on someone else's actions. So we start evaluating their behavior, we use our standards; and it's just normal. I mean, that's the way we do it....
M1: ... I was going to bring up one issue that really bothers me that's – I don't think is ever enforced. Have you ever worked with somebody who never takes a bath? Man.
M2: I didn't see that in the rules.
M1: I don't know if that's in – a problem –
M2: ... [Who says] it's a rule you got to take a bath ... I didn't see it [in the rule book]
M1: -- with setting guidelines, but that's disrespect for – your neighbor type thing and they don't even ... I think – they don't even realize it...
M5: Well, we have students that come here –
M1: Oh, man, I know. They stink up the whole classroom.
M5: ... Did you mention it to them?

M1: I don't know what to tell them ...
M2: This man's body is giving off strange odors; send him to the nurse.
M4: Honestly – honestly, it happened just about a year or so ago, two years ago now; and one of my students had a real – a personal hygiene problem; and – and it got so bad, the other students were talking about it: and so I – I went to this person. I said "Are you having – first of all, I said, " Well, are you having some medical problems?" That's the first thing I asked, and they did have medical problems; and I said, "Well, is there – is there something else you can do about it? "Please do so," but, yeah, it was –...
M3: ...That's just nasty.
M4: But – but – but there was – but it was a problem – and that was – you're right XXX; and it was hard going to somebody and saying, "Jeesum" – you stink.
M5: Right. It is – it is very difficult to do that. You can – you – you – it sounds like it is an easy thing to do. A man smells, and he needs to be told that; but – but actually doing it is another cold story; and getting back to what you – where this thing started – we assume that people, when they are hired, understand how to be civil.
F2: Uh-hum.
M4: Right.
M3: So it's—
M1: Bad – bad assumption.

Fourth Example:

M4: Uncivil is a little more stronger than disagreement or not being on the same line. You know, I think when you looking at uncivil and really you're on the far side of the other option. I mean, 'cause, you know, when you're looking at a harsh argument and when you get into the fight and physically you're getting involved, then, I think, you know, you create an uncivil, hostile environment.
Q: Okay.
M4: Whereas, you know, we sit on a table, I may disagree with [them] and [you], you know, and, at the same time, you know, at the end of the table, okay, well, we put our mind together so [we] can all – let's compromise and – even though we have gone through the arguments, but we're really uncivil.
Q: Right. So we can disagree, but we can do it in a civil way.
M4: Sure.
M3: Right.

F1: Right.
M1: Some people can.

Fifth Example:

F1: I – I – I don't know what – what – what brings this to my mind, but there's an individual here that never says hello, ever, unless that individual needs something or – or whatever. Oftentimes, I have said, "That's it, never again. I'm never saying – going to initiate hello to that individual, ever" and being the person that I am, I find I do that and then I get mad because—
Q: Right.
F1: -- I've done that and I've vowed to myself I wouldn't do that, you know—
F1: -- and, to me, that is uncivil. To see someone in the hallway everyday, pass – you know, I know sometimes we're all in our own little world and – and maybe thinking and you don't recognize someone; but this person consistently can look you right in the eyes and not give you a hello.
Q: ...I would like to hear from the rest of you, do you – not saying hello, is that – is that an uncivil behavior, is that disrespectful or –
F1: It is to me.
M2: Inconsiderate.
Q: Okay, but – and – and what I want to get at is –
M4: To me – to me, if you're living in [Oklahoma], it is; but if you go to New York, uh huh....If you're in [Oklahoma] you're friendly. Now, even if you (indiscernible) "Hi, how are you?" and smile; but if you're in New York, you just walk like that. I'm – I'm not saying New York is bad place. I'm thinking of that as an example.
M3: --true
M4: It's all different behavior and culture.
M3: You go to Puerto Rico, and everybody shakes [hands] – everybody, every day – the first time you see that person for that day, you shake his hand...It's a culture thing.
M4: If – beyond that, well, if you go – if you go Far East, not only do you say hi, you hug and kiss each other, man to man. Down here nope [sic], that's a different rule, now.
M3: Right.
M4. You can't go that far (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

Creating Civility

"I really think it goes back to people waiving their responsibility. If, I'm not responsible for my behavior, then I can do just about anything" (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001)

"The man at the top or woman creates that atmosphere; if you have strong leadership you can create that standard – you know treat someone like you want to be treated, the Golden Rule, of course; and I think - - if we could get that, then it would be, you know, a great workplace" (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001)

This theme emerged from the discussion the groups had concerning organizational issues. The groups discussed many different ways to improve the workplace. The data for this section is divided into the following categories: (1) Personal responsibility, (2) Leadership responsibility, (3) Organizational issues, and (4) Communication.

Modal Themes to Personal Responsibility

This first conversation occurs between two males in Group 2. The first male is Caucasian and the second one is African-American. Their race is significant in this conversation because it emphasizes how differently they perceive the world and yet how each believes that it is an individual's duty or expectation to be civil.

> M1: "I've got a question, Dave. How do we instill civility in our – into people to the point that they can monitor it themselves, instead of being monitored from the outside and slapping people when they don't follow; and I thing that's made American great. You know, we're moving away from that – Americans took their own – took responsibility for what they

did; and they knew they had to work together to get things done; and we've become prosperous; and we're moving away from that; and we're not training our young people those responsibilities and instilling civility.

Q: Okay. [Jim's] shaking his head in a negative fashion quite a bit down there. What—

M1: Well—

Q: --were you thinking when he was saying that, [Jim]?

M3: Well, I – I mean, that – that can be said, to a degree; and that's a whole other issue. I don't even want to go down that street, but he's right that we've gotten away from certain values. We're more microwave-oriented, the instant gratification; and we want all those things right now yesterday; and we don't care how we get it; and we're taught that daily. You just look at a couple minutes of commercials and you'll see, you know, me, me, me, me, me, me, take care of me first; and I don't think any organization can thrive in this dy and age with that. You'll have a lot of individual success, bonuses, promotions, and all of that; but, as whole, you're going to end up being in the hole in a few years; and, I don't know, the [companies] been around for a long time. Is it going to go private one of these years? Maybe, but, you know, until that point in time, people need to wake up and realize that they are responsible adults, supposedly, who agree to work a job and to do what that job requires them to do and to be in a decent work environment" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001)

The next two examples came from Group 1. They are small excerpts from a much larger debate about creating civility and who has responsible for it. In the final analysis it becomes clear that the respondents in this group believe that civility is the responsibility of both the individual and of leadership.

First example Group 1:

M1: "And I don't – and I don't think anybody's trying to say that it – that, you know, you just – that it has to be set from the top down or that's the only requirement because –

F2: But, yeah –

M1: -- certainly, individual responsibility is, well, a major factor in all that.

F2: They may or may not be able to—

F3: Generally speaking, that's the way it is.
F2: --Change the environment...
M1: Well, no, I don't disagree with the – the –
F2: Yeah.
M1: --you know, the example or whatever comes from the top down; but, you know, you have to agree with [Susan] too. There is a lot of individual responsibility there, by everyone" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Second example Group 1:

Q: "So where does the responsibility lie?
M1: I think everyone, pretty much
F2: I would think so.
Q: Within the individual?
M2: I don't know. It's just one of those things. It's kind of like the big question. Can you legislate morals?; and then the question would also be can you legislate civility – and that's an individual thing – it seems to me when you are trying to legislate anything.
F2: To some extent, but – because every organization will set its norms; and I was saying, at a small place like [this company] – the norm is that this happens every day" (Group 1, Feb 2, 2001).

Group 3's discussion did not use the language of responsibility as much as Groups 1 and 2. Yet, they clearly saw the individual as the key factor in creating a civil environment.

M2: "...I think that, if we're going to have change, it's going to have to come from within on these individuals; and I think that's were management got to kick in, find something that's – works and actually push them people through that. You know, if we're going – you're going to find people that are uncivil and want to make a change, they got to see that the change is necessary and then they got to be able to buy in to whatever change you're selling" (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

The following statements were generated at the end of each focus group session. The participants were asked to put into writing what they considered to be the most relevant or most important statement concerning civility. These seven respondents recognized that personal responsibility is a key component of a civil workplace.

1. "Mutual respect from each individual will reflect the civility level of an organization" (Group 1).

2. " During today's discussion on civility what hits home most is a person's individual responsibility to himself to set their own standards of what is expectable behavior" (Group 1).

3. "Being concerned for the feelings of my coworkers, recognizing that they may have different objectives than me, and those objectives have value" (Group 2).

4. "Civility in the workplace depends on each individual accepting responsibility for his/her own actions, understanding there are differences and trying to treat others with dignity, respect, and compassion" (Group 2).

5. "Being concerned for the feelings of my coworkers, recognizing that they may have different objectives than me, and those objectives have value" (Group 2).

6. "Consideration for other people's opinions, ideas, fears. We need to be more tolerant of the diversity in our employees. Management needs to be sure all individuals know the objective and direction of the organization" (Group 3).

7. "Civility is something that each person has to practice with other people. Each one must show respect for the individuals if respect and civility is expected to be returned" (Group 4).

Outlier Responses to Personal Responsibility

According to the people in this study, individual responsibility is certainly a key component of civility. However, there was not total agreement on this point. This next example stemmed from a conversation about both the leader and the individual having responsibility for acting civil and developing civility. The opinion expressed here was contrary to the majority opinion expressed by the group. Yet, it does fit with other examples from other groups:

> F4: "I think that if you have a problem with another individual, it's your problem and you really have to approach the person, I guess. It's – It's and individual thing. If it's with the company, you got a whole new ballgame" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001)

This respondent is saying that she believes a person should take responsibility and let someone know when their behavior is affecting them. The next participant expresses almost the same thought albeit with a completely different tone and direction. The dialog occurs between two of the members of Group 4. Within this organization, management considers these two individuals the most uncivil members of the organization. They were almost proud of the label they had acquired. They participated in the following illustration:

> M7: "But the point is – the point is, again, nobodies a mind reader. If you have a—if you –
> Q: Right.
> M7: --have problem and you don't confront the person with the problem, then your frustration is your problem, not mine, is what I'm saying.
> M1: Yeah. That's a good point.

In the first example the person was taking responsibility for letting someone know that their behavior had a negative impact on them. So, in that case, it was the target of the behavior taking responsibility. In the second example, it was the instigators abdicating their responsibility to behave civilly by putting the responsibility on the target to let instigator know that their behavior is inappropriate. This is a fine distinction but has important implications for the discussion of civility that will be further reviewed in the analysis section.

Modal Themes to Leadership Responsibility

Responsibility in creating a civil environment has two components. The first component is discussed above. The second is the leader's responsibility and contains the data under the rubric of organizational responsibility, management responsibility, and/or leader responsibility. Two distinct themes emerged from the data relating to leadership: (1) The leader's responsibility for modeling desired behavior, and (2) The leader's responsibility for establishing what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. All four groups had lengthy conversations about management's role in setting policy and enforcing it.

This first example of how the focus groups viewed the leader's responsibility comes from Group 2 and relates to establishing appropriate behavior:

M1: "No, they were pushing the envelope. They knew it was wrong where they came. They knew we were – we were conservative and they were not, and they – nobody bothered to push them back, so they just kind of just took over.

M5: Well, that's the way it is in the Big Apple, yeah.

M1: I know; that's what I'm saying.

M5: Well—

M3: That's management's fault.

Q: ...what does an organization to in that case or what should they do?

M5: They should define what – what is acceptable and what's not acceptable

Q: I mean, what's – acceptable behavior for the organization?

M5: Yeah. You know, they – they can't come – I feel that those who are already there have set the tone for that particular organization; and anyone coming in ought to have that defined for them; and you can't – they should – you – you should not be allowed to come in and insert your prior orientations to the policy of – over the policy of what is already currently being used.

Q: Isn't it – isn't that what an organization is, though? Everybody's coming – take this [facility], so you come in from, we just talked about it here, Ohio – and Tennessee and all these other places. You all came together into one facility here. You seem to all get along. How does that happen? Doesn't – it seems to me the organization has to establish something, some guidelines, some rules, something to help –

M5: Exactly, but that's – that – that comes from a mutual – mutual respect that is instilled as you come on board. So the – the policy's already set and you conform; whereas, in that [blank] city incident, they brought their own policies and no one said anything to them, I guess – I don't know.

M2: I believe there's got to be some acceptable norms of – of behavior and being in a, I don't know, civil, if you will; but you – I can't believe that everybody's got to be lockstep to an organization once they walk in the door. If I walk in to the door here and I – you know, as a new guy, I see how the organization works. I see how people interact with each other, but that doesn't mean that I'm going to fall right into line with what – what I – and become an automaton. My personality will be interjected into the organization, and it will change it somewhat. Now, if it's outside what's considered norms, then it's up to an organization to bring me back inside those norms, one way or the other –" (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001).

The second conversation, also from Group 2, highlights a concern that all the groups had: clearly defining the expected behaviors and then modeling those behaviors.

> Q: "If you could do one thing to reduce incivility in the organization, what would it be? Just one thing, and I'd like to hear from each of you – ... and I'll start with you [omit]...
> F1: Okay. If we're going to talk about civility, I guess we have to explain to everybody what it is and – and—and what it is—what the expectation of the organization would be.
> Q: Okay, [next]?
> M1: Just to be a good example. To do what you're supposed to do and, hopefully people will follow that – that example" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

The third discussion occurs within Group 1. Their debate raged over the issue of primary responsibility for civil behavior.

> Q: "If we have these problems, is it possible to create civil environments in organizations?
> F2: I think everybody has a – a personal responsibility toward doing that. I think that unless you're part of the cure; you're part of the problem.
> F4: I think a good example of that is leadership; and in this [organization], it is the [team]. You know, civility comes from top down often; and when you've go a good civil team and leadership and they understand that, then that permeates throughout the organization, generally speaking.
> F3: I think – I believe, [Jane], the culture of the organization generally sets the level of civility that is acceptable, like over in the [omit] office [it] is not going to be the same as what's here; and if you have – like we have a very relaxed work area, the expectation is everybody treats everybody like family, we are like a family. So your level of how you treat everybody is more common, more personal, and not so much as it would be, you know, up in [Dick's] office.

F2: I don't think that people should necessarily look to leadership to set the standard, though. I think there are people that want to come to work every day and smile and be happy with everyone; and even if the manager doesn't do that, they should still do that. They shouldn't say, 'Well, everybody that I work for is bitter, and so I should be bitter too.'
M1: Yeah. Won't disagree with that—
F3: No.
M1: -- but I –
F3: That sets the pace.
M1: -- I don't disagree with that, but I think it's a whole lot better –
F2: Yeah.
M1: -- when it does come from the top down.
F2: Oh, most definitely; but I think that everybody should take individual responsibility—
M1: Well, the have to – sure.
F2: -- for making an organization civil, rather than, 'Well, if the leader isn't civil, then I shouldn't have to be either.'
F3: Well, I think, individually, you're going to make that choice for yourself; but I think that, also leaders of the organization actually set the pace...
F2: True" (Group 1, Feb 2, 2001).

Group 3 provides the fourth example of data directed toward leadership's responsibility for civility in the workplace. The highlight of this conversation is that leadership must lead and demonstrate to the employees that it is an issue that they take seriously.

Q: ...Let's say that [the organization] does have a problem or the leadership has decided that civility is important to them and they want to create an environment like that, is that possible?
M2: They're going to have to lead. They're going to have to show us – show the individuals what they want. I mean, I think it's going to have to be from the top down.
Q: Yeah, right.
M2: They're going to have to demonstrate what they want, not just talk about it.

F1: It's an attitude, and it's a learned attitude, and not everybody has the attitude so you have to teach the people to have the attitude, and that takes a long time.
M2: Right.
F1: It doesn't happen overnight, and there are – you know, I think we've said this before, in our organization, a lot of old-time people that don't want to change and don't want to do – and [omit] with our organization changing constantly the way it is, it's hard to keep a positive attitude, [a] positive attitude which generates civility, so—
Q: Okay" (Group 3, Mar 6, 2001).

The final example is generated from Group 4.

Q: "You've – you mentioned the worst thing that a supervisor could do is come in and implant his own personal value system on the organization.
M7: Sure.
Q: How – how does – if – if he comes in and he – and he understands, talks to the groups like this and finds out the civility or incivility is a problem, how does he – how does he or she then go about trying to – to fix the problem? If they're not – if they don't want to come and put their own personal value system on it, what can be done?
M4: The last crew that came in and tried to move around, by [that time], it was too late. By the – by the time they tried to go in and talk to everybody, it was already too late for them to have accomplished anything.
M7: Okay. Getting back to what I'm saying. All right. If – if you can have a sample of your employees come in and be honest and say, "Hey, you know what, boss? This is this, and this is this, and this is this": and say, Okay. I'm the new kid on the block, you know. Let's see what we can do about this; and then you can come in to a – again, back to identifying of – what I'm hearing is that's the underlinging[sic] problem, all right?
M1: Right.
M7: Whatever that is, I can maybe make an – make and adjustment here, not a major adjustment but enough to let the ball go and then let all my employees take it from there, because if you're going to be a dictator, man, you're going to get a revolution –
Q: Right.
M7: -- and you're only going to make things worse.

M1: Malicious compliance comes in.
M7: Malicious, and that's the words I was looking for. Thank you. That's when you do exactly what you say, no more, no less –
M1: And we've seen [it]
M7: -- and you got to – that's exactly correct. So again, first of all, you've got to get your employees to open up to you; and – and that is people skills.
Q: Sure.
M7: Manipulation, if you will, people skills, manipulation, however define it. Find the underlining [sic] cause of you major problem, you overall problem, as [Jake] says, individually. Well, that's an individual. You're going to have to take that later. I – you know, as a boss of 400 people, I cannot be concerned, at this stage, with an individual. I must be concerned with an overall, [and] then go to the individual once I feel that my organization is on the right track to correct the underlining [sic] problem.
Q: Okay.
M7: All right? But to go in there and say, 'You know what? I want this done because that's the way I like it' – hell, you might as well shoot yourself in the foot.
M1: If I was in charge, heads would roll, but – I've always liked that attitude. Fix it.
Q: Chop it off at the head.
M1: Starts from the top.
M2: That's right.
M7: But you got – you must direct your people to cure their own problems and seek their own answers" (Group 4, Mar 20, 2001).

Outlier Responses to Leadership Responsibility

The outlier data for this category is sparse. The following exchange reveals the consequences of uncivil leadership:

F3: "But change [won't] happen if the leaders of that organization aren't – aren't receptive –
F2: Don't know that that's—
F3: [interested] in change.
F2: I don't know that that's –

F4: Change –
F2: --necessarily true.
F3: I think they [leadership] have to be [involved]
F2: Have to accept –
F4: -- I have worked for different bosses in a totally different – different atmosphere in which one boss was an absolute – sorry, there was another word for it, I won't say, but – and even though I did choose to act in a civil manner and if – and if she didn't respond to me that way, you know, I'd just have to slough it off, you know, I'm just going to keep on going and take it home with me, I guess; but, you know, as soon as I could get out of that environment, I had to, because it was not going to change: and, you know, you just – that was just the standard that was set; and so it became an uncivil environment, for me, that I could not [change] (Group 1, Feb 2, 2001).

Modal Themes of Organizational Guidance and Policy

There were a plethora of issues raised concerning the organization. The issues most often discussed were: (1) definition of acceptable behavior, (2) establishing policy, procedures, rules, and (3) consistently enforcing those rules. There was also a general theme that civility must be related to task accomplishment. The following are excerpts of central tendency and outlier data responses.

This first example from Group 2 refers to the problem one employee had several years ago with other employees in the same office. The participant worked at an office in a moderate sized Southwestern city. The context of the conversation expresses how they sought management's intervention to help

resolve a problem but nothing was done. The group discusses why that may have happened and what management should have done in this situation:

M2:—"bothering around me and I go the -- and I go -- to report this and nothing's done, then it's time for me to find something else to do.

M1. Well, it was. It was reported - and nothing was done, so we had this --

M2. Well, then it's time for these people --

M1. -- intimidation.

M2. You know vote with your feet.

M4. Someone mentioned something a while back and that was about --

M1. Need to get one of these and work for Company B (Indiscernible -- overtalking)

M4. -- and it was about --

M1. Oh, I don't really (Indiscernible -- overtalking)

M4. -- they don't know that their behavior's wrong, so they need to be -- a moment, Stan -- that -- or -- or Greg (Indiscernible -- overtalking)

M1. No, they were pushing the envelope. They knew it was wrong where they came. They knew we were -- we were conservative and they were not, and they -- nobody bothered to push them back, so they just kind of just took over.

M5. Well, that's the way it is in The Big Apple, yeah.

M1. I know; that's what I'm saying.

M5. Well --

M3. That's management's fault.

Q. I (Indiscernible -- overtalking) the term push -- push back. Is -- is that really the answer? I mean --

M1. I don't know. I don't know.

Q. What -- what should an organization or what can organization do in that case, if you have somebody with completely different personalities and -- and -- and a different culture on how to behave and how to act comes in and completely upsets your current mode? That doesn't mean, at the same time, that they don't have some right or whatever to express their own culture ---- but what does an organization do in that case or what should they do?

M5. They should define what -- what is acceptable and what's not acceptable.

Q. I mean, what's --

M3. That's --

Q. -- acceptable behavior for the organization?

M5. Yeah. You know, they -- they can't come -- I feel that those who are already there have set the tone for that particular organization; and anyone coming in ought to have that defined for them; and you can't -- they should -- you -- you should not be allowed to come in and insert your prior orientations to the policy of -- over the policy of what is already currently being used.
Q. Isn't it -- isn't that what an organization is, though? Everybody's coming -- take the [Training Center], so you come in from -- we just talked about here, Ohio --
M5. (Indiscernible -- overtalking) yeah.
Q. -- and Tennessee and all these other places. You all came together in to one facility here. You seem to all get along. How does that happen? Doesn't -- it seems to me the organization has to establish something, some guidelines, some rules, something to help --
M5. Exactly, but that's -- that -- that comes from a mutual -- mutual respect that is instilled as you come onboard. So the -- the policy's already set and you conform; whereas, in that Oklahoma City incident, they brought their own policies and no one said anything to them, I guess, I don't know.
M2. I believe there's got to be some acceptable norms of -- of behavior and being in a, I don't know, civil, if you will; but you -- I can't believe that everybody's got to be lockstep to an organization once they walk in the door. If I walk in to the door here and I -- you know, as a new guy, I see how the organization works. I see how people interact with each other, but that doesn't mean that I'm going to fall right into line with what -- what I -- and become an automaton. My personality will be interjected into the organization, and it will change it somewhat. Now, if it's well outside what's considered the norms, then it's up to an organization to bring me back inside those norms, one way or the other --
M5. That's exactly what we're talking about.
M2. -- either a general pressure or -- but -- but you can't expect me to walk into an organization and just automatically conform.
M5. Well --
F2. Yeah.
M5. -- I'm not saying that, but in a organization -- to me, the -- the more intelligent the individuals who comprise the organization is or are would dictate the tendency to have the opinion that you just expressed, okay? So they're automatically more leader oriented, but they have the ability to see what's acceptable. So, you know, with the intellect comes the tendency to, you know, march to a different drummer; but you can also see the norms

because you have that intellect and then conform to the point that you want to conform or leave. I mean, this -- nobody says you got to stay.

M2. Right.

M5. You know, if you don't like the way it is, you can -- you know, you had a job before -- you -- you were looking for a job before you found this one. Is that the way it goes?

M2. Yeah (Indiscernible -- laughing)

M5. So he could keep on looking.

M1. Well, then -- then this -- let's – [that's what] we're talking about The Big Apple. You got a different level of civility there than you do in [the smaller] City --

M5. That's true.

M1. -- or some other conservative states.

M5. It's cultural difference.

M1. So, evidently, civility is relative to where you're at --

Q. Okay.

M5. The culture.

M1. -- I guess. I mean -- or -- or they're just not civil and we are, I don't know.

F2. I think in an organization, the -- the main thing is or the focus would be the mission of the organization and the goals that are set; and the reason that you're hired is to fulfill or contribute to those goals; and your individual personalities --

M5. Well, I --

F2. -- will enhance --

M5. Right.

F2. -- enhance, perhaps, what -- what you're trying to do in working with the other people, even though you're not the same; and there is -- there are accepted behaviors in the organization, things that are acceptable; but they're expressed differently by different people.

F1. I think you have to be willing to listen, too.

M5. Yeah, but one of the strengths of the organization is this diversity --

F2. Exactly.

M5. -- but -- but you still have to all be headed in the same direction --

F2. Right" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

The next example is a portion of the same conversation cited above. In this case, this discussion revolves around enforcing policy:

M1: "No, they just didn't know what to do. They felt oppressed. They were oppressed. We were all oppressed.
Q: And – what – and in the – and the interesting question would be, what – what organizational policy does that violate? If I – if I choose to be nasty and I choose to use ugly language –
M1: But—
Q: --what—
M1: --well, they have –
M3: We've –we've—we've got that here.
Q: Do you?
M1: Yeah
M3: Yeah. There are policies that – that do address that, dress codes and everything else.
M1: It's there in [the]City, too; but they do not deal with –
M3: But your SOP [are] only as good as they aren't – their enforcement
M1: That's right.
M3: They didn't enforce –
M1: Yeah. They could have, I mean, they could have – just on that little thing, they could have slapped them, slapped them until they quit or got out" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Group 2 provides the third example. Here the respondents are asked what they think an organization can do about incivility. Their discussion continues to reinforce the need to clearly communicate expectations and be prepared to enforce standards when necessary:

Q: "What should – what should we do – what can be done about incivility?
M3: Well, first of all, if – if – this is all opinion, okay. First of all, if there are guidelines, then they need to be clearly communicated and enforced. I mean, nothing's worth its weight – I mean, it's just written and nothing's ever enforced – and you have to stick to it; and if that means that the good old boy network haws to suffer as a result of it, you've got to call one of your friends to the carpet, then so be it; but I don't – I don't think most organizations are willing to do that. I think, like he was saying earlier, the easy way out is to ignore it at times; and then you have all these incidents

build up; and then there is a point where, you know, it erupts and – and something happens tragically, heaven forbid; and you've got more mess on your hands than you can deal with.
Q: Okay.
M3: --and that's happened in some teams—
M2: Yeah. Well – if you're organization keeps ignoring something or keeps not taking action, then when is the point that they do take action –
M3: It's too late
M2: --and – you know, and then it's an arbitrator. It's not based on any policy or any guidelines...
F1: Okay. If we're going to talk about civility, I guess we have to explain to everybody what it is and – and what it is – what expectation of the organization would be.
Q: Okay.
M1: Just to be a good example. To do what you're supposed to do and, hopefully, people will follow that – that example.
Q: Okay.
M1: That's all you can hope.
Q: Okay.
M2: I think the people working toward a common goal, well, that'll help. So I – you – you got to have that; otherwise, there is – there is no foundation.
Q: Okay.
M3: Establish what it is and – and enforce it.
Q: Okay.
F2: I think all of the above – and try to eliminate, as much as possible, the separation in the types of employees that are here to do the same job.
M4: I – I like what [omit] said, and that is, make the rule – post the rules – I know this is not exactly what you said; but go ahead and – and put out the standard, enforce the standard; and then I'd go one more, and, that is, these are the consequences if you violate the standards" (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001).

While there are numerous examples to consider, this is the final example from Group 2. Again, the bulk of the conversation resonates standards and enforcement:

M5: "All right. Well, when these people came in, they were using their values and then inflicting that standard on a different culture; and there was a problem, so – and unless someone had enough nerve or however to tell them they were wrong and that was not acceptable behavior, they was going to continue. It was validation to let them go on with the behavior, validated the behavior in the –the first place. Yeah. 'Til somebody tells me I'm wrong, I'm not wrong. So, you know, problem continued longer; it got worse and worse.
M4: That's the enforcement issue again.
M5: Right.
M4: That you were alluding to [Jim]
M5: That's – that's the problem with supervision, particularly in [our] offices. They have – there's a general lack of the will to enforce that type of standard on the workforce" (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001).

The next two sections of transcripts are discussions from Group 1 and involve a debate about rules and creating awareness of expectations among employees:

Example one:

F1: "And as long as you do your work –
F3: -- but they had – and that's what I've told them, "As long as you do your work and – and you follow all the rules, you won't have a problem with me. It's the people who don't that have some problem" –
F2: Definitely.
F3: -- and so the could come into that, not wanting to train with me because they had this preconceived idea" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001)

Example two:

M1: "Okay. And even then you can't make anybody do any thing. I mean, we can't legislate – I mean, my – I can't really legislate morality or attitude.
Q: Okay. But if I say that in this organization, we are going to treat equal or each other with respect and – and dignity and that I want you to work, well, as hard as you can to be aware of how your behaviors impact those around you. I live that, talk it, preach it; and – and the first time I see

somebody who's not doing it, I talk to them about it. You know, what starts to happen?
F3: Change.
M1: Well, it can depend upon who you're talking to –
F3: At least awareness.
M1: -- I think, if you want to know the truth.
F2: They know you're serious about it, yeah.
M1: If somebody's closed off from what you're saying, it won't matter what you say –
F3: Yeah, but there's and awareness there.
M1: They hear some – there's self-awareness, yeah.
F3: There's an awareness of an expectation of this organization about your behavior.
F4: If you are their supervisor and you can exact consequences on the negative behavior, then they have to do it or else they're out.
F2: You have to follow through" (Group 1, Feb 2, 2001).

The next two excerpts concern goal setting and the importance of clearly communicating goals and expectations throughout the organization:

Example one:

Q: "We've talked about some problems, some issues. If you were going to come up with a definition of organizational civility that you might be able to go into an organization and talk to them about, what might you include in it or how might you define it?
M2: Considerate of others. I'd day consideration of others, the number on – or real – real high, you know.
F1: Respect others' opinions. Same thing, I guess.
M4: I think sometimes it might be going beyond the surface. It may have to have a goals, objective, and then expected what – what this guy is supposed to do, 'cause sometimes when – when we get in conflict and you – you come around, say, 'Well, what is my job? What [am] I supposed to do? You know, you didn't tell me what to do.' And, that itself can create an environment that led you to an uncivil environment. So if you – if you have a clear goal, if you have a objective, if you expect me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, that – that will help most of the problems.
Q: Okay
M4: Communication, put it this way, sure.
Q: Communication?

M4: Yes.
Q: Cleary defining—
F1: Like definite –
Q: -- your goal?
F1: Yeah.
M2: Yeah. Direction, yeah (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

Example two:

Q: "What steps would you take to create an environment of civility in your organization? This is your management staff here, what are you going to –
M4: I – I will – well, what I do, I open myself to – to listening to people. I think that's very important. I said at the beginning, even if – if they do have a disagreement, I am civil as a management, as somebody that's going to run and – and provide direction, I should listen, both ways, communication – and – and being tolerance. Again, be honest with yourself and with the-
Q: Okay.
M4: You know, it is very important. I think if we understand those few words, honesty, we be in a better position to say – and – and, again, once – once I analyze that and then to give them the direction and say, 'Okay. This is my expectation'; and this is what he's supposed to and then measure it. I would measure, definitely; and then based on that, I would reward and punish; and if – if you follow those simple procedure[s], I think you can be successful.
Q: Okay. [Charlie], we just fired [Paul]. You're now in charge. What would you do differently?
M3: Well, not – not much, because that - that first one – the – the first thing he said, which is the most important, is to listen; and that's not easy. A lot of people can't do that. Fortunately, we have a manager that does – can do that; and you listen to what's going on; and them try – well, input policy that needs to be – and not only having policy, but to enforce the policy; and if you can't enforce the policy, then don't accept any policy –
Q: Right.
M3: -- but unfortunately, that's not being done, but that's exactly – I agree with what he said to do" (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

The written comments from each person at the end of the group interviews also provide a strong indication of the importance that rules, expectations, and

enforcement played in the thoughts of these participants. One person from Group 4 wrote:

> 6. "Definite guidelines should be put in place within the organization that ensures that everyone is treated fairly" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Written examples from the other groups make similar comments. Focus Group 2 consisted of seven people; four of the seven comments contained some reference to objectives or goal setting and some also discussed the issue of enforcement:

> 1. " The tone for civility in the workplace should be set by management: monitored by management; and enforced by management. The employees should decide whether they can function under the standard or not. If not they should be willing to face the consequences. Otherwise, they should go elsewhere to find happiness and functionality in the workplace. Each workplace has its own tone of civility."
>
> 2. "Work toward a common goal and have respect for others."
>
> 4. "Civility in the workplace
> -Sensitivity to those around you.
> - Mutual respect
> - The "true" golden rule.
> -Understanding the mission of the organization and working together to accomplish that mission" (Group 2, Feb. 20. 2001).

All but one person from Group 3 wrote statements concerning the importance of establishing goals, objectives and/or direction as their most important issue during the focus group interviews:

1. "Consideration for other people's opinions, ideas, fears. We need to be more tolerant of the diversity in our employees. Management needs to be sure all individuals know the objective and direction of the organization."

3. "To respect your coworker and how to see a policy on civility in the workplace. Enforcing the policy is important."

4. "Based on our discussion on "workplace civility", I feel that some of the most important things discussed were: 1) being open minded. 2) being respectful to others (understanding and accepting diversity amongst colleagues), 3) enforcement of goals and policies when people choose to act uncivil over and over again. 4) taking appropriate steps necessary to ensure a civil workplace (example: mission statement with a clear set of goals, policies, rules, etc.)"

5. " Most important items to help increase workplace civility are:
- Clear goals -- set clear goals so the employee knows what to expect from you.
- Respect -- respect people as they respect you.
- Honesty -- do your job right the first time.
- Mutual understanding
- Open-minded
- Be able to listen to people having different opinions
- Open (two ways) [sic] communication."

6. "The most important aspects of workplace civility are respect for others opinions, open door communication, establishment of policies and then adhering to those policies. A defining a mission statement, goals and objectives so employees know what is expected of them. Allowing people to do their jobs w/minimal interference" (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

Outlier Response to Organizational Guidance and Policy

There was only one response referencing the organizational issues that could be considered as an outlier.

M2: "One, it's – just it just gets down to legislating – you know, it's – it's one thing for somebody to say, you know – you know, we're talking about

the statement, it's a known thing; and that's a very broad and kind of very understandable thing and that's okay to do but – but what worries me is sometimes the organizations get down to the point where a directive comes out that says any person who uses the coffee or it's down to less that half a cup has to now make the new coffee. That's where I think sometimes some organizations get in trouble because they try to – to nit pick every possible situation that can come up – and, you know, you – you – but it – but in these days and times, there are certain situations like, say, for harassment, where there are definite –
F2: They have to have parameters.
M1: -- indicators and parameters.
F2: Yes.
M1: They may not be in the interest of –
F2: Standards for it, yeah.
M1: -- everything, but, in certain things – there are. If – you know, and if you legislate that if you – you've had – then everyone would start leaving a third of – or three-quarters of a cup –
F3: As [Susan] was saying earlier, you have to be careful not to swing too far this way. You know, you have to maybe set some standards but realize that there's – you can go in either way on that standard, depending on the severity of the offense; but you still can't go way this way and make it like you said nit-picky – every single thing.
M1: Of you have to look at each –
F2: Yeah. You have –
M1: -- each situation individually, I think, you know –
F2: -- but you have to set some –
M1: --on how you're going to –
F3: --general standards; and – and just like, you know, being in a legal – a civilization, there is laws there; but you can go to either side and as – as offense as severe can go this – you can go, you know, six months in jail or you can get life, depending on how far you've been on the other side" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Modal themes of Communication and Training

Communication

These first two sections of transcript are excerpts of discussions from Group 2. The first one expresses the importance of listening and the second is oriented more toward communication and trust:

First example from Group 2:

F2: "I think in an organization, the – the main thing is or the focus would be the mission of the organization and the goals that are set; and the reason that you're hired is to fulfill or contribute to those goals; and your individual personalities –
M5: Well, I –
F2: -- will enhance –
M5: -- right –
F2: --enhance, perhaps, what – what you're trying to do in working with the other people, even though you're not the same; and there is—there are accepted behaviors in the organization, things that are acceptable; but they're expressed differently by different people.
F1: I think you have to be willing to listen, too.
M5: Yeah, but one of the strengths of the organization is this diversity—
F2: Exactly.
M5: --but—but you still have to all be headed in the same direction—
F2: Right" (Group 2 Feb. 20, 2001).

Second example from Group 2:

M1: "Well, let me say. Isn't that – I – to me, I know it's a big a job being a manager – and to monitor your people is a pain in the butt, so to speak, to monitor them all the time. You get feedback. Go talk to them. Well, that never happens. You know that.
M5: Well, that – well okay. Then you got –
M1: You think—
M5: -- to –
M1: -- you leave them alone, they'll leave me alone. That's the real world.
M5: All right.
M1: Where –
M5: Now, how – how in the world does that get conveyed from the level sevens and level nines to the [boss]?

M1: You talk to your people. You find – you talk to your managers. You talk to your people that your – are working for you, and –
M5: [The boss] comes down and talks to those people.
M1: Not the [boss], that – that manager of maintenance, first. That's where it should have started and then –
M5: Well –
M1: -- you find that there's a problem there –
M5: When – when –
M1: -- 'cause he didn't even realize it.... That's the problem. I agree. There's no communication.
M5: All right. So you know –
F2: To have that communication, you got to b able to trust that person also. You have to be able to trust them enough to know that, if you go to them and talk to them –
M5: Well, first thing – you've got to have access to them. That's – that's –
M2: Right.
M1: There was no access" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Group 1 in this third example discusses communication and listening as elements needed in trying to define civility:

Q: "What other things? What else did we talk about or think was important [in trying to define civility]?
F5: I'm going to say – I'm going to stay with –
F4: Honesty.
Q: We talked a little bit about awareness?
F3: Yeah.
Q: Was that – was that an important component of this or –
F1: I think so, awareness/listening, you know.
F2: Yeah.
F4: Communication.
F2: Talking, listening, yeah.
M1: Communication is at the root of a lot of problems.
F1: That's right (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Group 4 stated repeatedly that communication and education were the tools necessary to improve the organization. In fact two members of the group

continued to talk to me about the need for communication and training for thirty minutes after the focus group session ended:

> M7: "... the worst thing in the world for – for a manager to do is come in and impose ... his personal values.
> M1: Absolutely.
> M7: -- on – on the rest of the group. Well, that's the worst.
> M2: Well, what would improve this organization –
> M1: Yeah.
> M2: -- is better communication.
> M7: And education" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

The final two parts of transcript originated from discussions from Group 3. As with Group 1 the discussion focused on the need to listen more effectively:

> First example from Group 3:
>
> F1: Sometimes, you might know a person will be set in their ways; and so you can plant a seed; a – if you plant that seed and then pretty soon it's that person's idea and that comes back to you.
> Q: um-hum, and I have seen that before.
> M4: Sometimes, you may have to – willing listen; you know, sometimes, you think you are right; and then you think other guy's actually has got a lock[ed] mind or maybe it's his approach but if you just listen to them, maybe they convince you that, you know, you could also loosen up a little bit.
> Q: Right.
> M4: --because – yeah. It – it is – sometimes, you know, we either think that we are right, but actually [we] better open [our] eyes [we may not be right] (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

> Second example group 3:
>
> Q: "What steps would you take to create an environment of civility in your organization? This is management staff here, what are you going to –
> M4: I – I will – well, what I do, I open myself to – to listening to people. I think that's very important. I said at the beginning, even if – if they do

have a disagreement. I am civil as a manager. as somebody that's going to run and – and provide direction. I should listen. both ways. communication – and – and being toler[ant]. Again. be honest with yourself and with [others].
Q: Okay.
M4: You know. it is very important. I think if we understand those few words. honesty. we'd be in a better position to say – and – and. again. once – once I analyze that and then to give them the direction and say. 'Okay. This is my expectation'; and this is what he's supposed to [do] and then measure it. I would measure. definetly; and then based on that. I would reward and punish; and if – if you follow those simple procedure. I think you can be successful.
Q: Okay [Charles]. we just fired [Paul]. You're now in charge. What would you do differently?
M3: Well. not – not much. because that – that first one- the – the first thing he said. which is the most important. is to listen; and that's not easy. A lot of people can't do that. Fortunately. we have a manager that does." (Group 3. Mar. 6. 2001).

The following are the written responses that each person was asked to provide at the end of the focus group session. Five of the twenty-eight comments contain a reference to communication as the most important lesson the respondent learned as a result of the focus group discussion:

1. "Civility in the workplace is a must. It is an ongoing learning process as to how to accomplish complete civility. It needs to be realized what we are asking. that is. we are dealing with imperfections. that's fact. Just recognize that. listen. and respect. As long as there are human beings. this problem we'll exist. but isn't life and it's diversities grand" (Group 2. Feb. 20. 2001).

2. "Most important items to help increase workplace civility are:
   - Clear goals -- set clear goals so the employee knows what to expect from you.
   - Respect -- respect people as they respect you.
   - Honesty -- do your job right the first time.
   - Mutual understanding

- Open-minded
- Be able to listen to people having different opinions
- Open (two ways) [sic] communication" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

3. "The most important aspects of workplace civility are respect for others opinions, open door communication, establishment of policies and then adhering to those policies. A defining mission statement, goals and objectives so employees know what is expected of them. Allowing people to do their jobs w/minimal interference" (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

4. "Civility is a perception and that perception is determined by education, environment or culture" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

5. "The fact that you can't pigeon hole any one thing and call it civil or not. Education is the best tool in conjunction with communication to stem a hostile environment. I think this was a good session and I hope it will help you" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Outlier responses to communication

There is no specific example that contradicts the role communications plays in creating, defining, or sustaining a civil environment. However, there are two conversations that stand out as providing somewhat of a unique focus on interpersonal communication. The conversations allude to the concept of emotional intelligence and its role in the communication process. The first example is from Group 1:

M1: "But within the population as – as whole, there are varying levels of self-awareness within people.
F4: That's so true.
M1: Some people do not – are not aware enough of themselves to really know that, and you – probably met people like that.
F2: Definitely, or just –

M1: You know, and there are other people who are very aware of how they feel and try to make adjustments to, you know, how they might react to something like that, but there are people who don't have a clue.
F1: Yeah" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001)

The second dialog occurred in Group 2 and is a significant observation on the part of the respondent.

M4: "What I was thinking is – is, first of all, if there's disagreement, we might want to examine ourselves first and say, "Am I wrong?" and "Is this person right?" That's the first thing to do –
M2: But –
M4: because, you know – 'cause we all are kind of myopic. We all have this tunnel vision, and think, "Well, I'm right and everyone else is wrong; and I have a disagreement, so obviously they must be wrong"—"and I must be right"; and so we got to – you know, and that's the what the real mature person is saying, "Wait a minute." –
M2: Well –
M4: -- "Maybe I'm wrong."
M2: -- Very few people [will] accept the fact that they're wrong.
M4: Yeah – and that's a fact.
M2: You know, and – people have called me down before; and immediately I'm defensive because, "No, I'm not wrong; but then, yeah, maybe I was wrong."
M4: Yeah.
M2: Okay, and – and I'd eat a little crow –
M4: Oh, yeah –
M2: -- but you don't accept it automatically. That's not going to happen. "Uh, uh, well, let me thing about this for a minute. Am I possibly – no. Nope. Not me, I'm not wrong," you know" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Modal themes to training

This review of this data looks at one section of transcript for each group.

Group 2:

M1: "They were vicious. They were vicious. They were vicious people.
F2: Don't you think, too, the [company], for a long time, didn't train their supervisors and management –
M1: They still don't
F2: -- on how to treat people in diversity and all that until – you know, they finally have started to but don't you think for a long time –
M1: Started.
M5: I can't remember when they – didn't have the ability to handle discipline problems.
F2: No. I'm [not talking about that]. I mean, to train – teaching them to treat people. You know, for teaching them to be a supervisor, not just a dictator or to treat people –
M5: -- That's what I'm saying.
F2: -- to listen to people's [concerns]". (Group 2, Feb. 20 2001).

Group 1:

F4: "—you—you exemplify what you want to happen, and then you need to have training for that sometimes, when you need to – you know, the fact that – that, you know, to give people skills, training for relationship building or better communication skills within the organization. There's lots of ways that can be done.
M1: But here – but—but after identifying what the problems are, as opposed to just throwing stuff out, you need to identify what they are; and it could be just conflicting personalities; it could be –
F4: Yeah.
M1: -- just and awkward situation, but you probably need to identify those situations first, then can start working at solutions.
F4: Well, that's what they do in – in training sessions usually, is help, you know, conflict situations – lies that are there and how do you resolve those, those kinds of things, you know, conflict management" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Group 4:

M2: "They don't – they're not going to tell anybody that. They're just going to give you the 1.6 and Pete, the 5.6.
F: Right.
M7: And, again, it goes down to education, people skills, who micromanages, who don't micromanage. I mean – (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Group 3:

M2: "To – to add on that, I was kind of curious. I mean, you know, we have talked about civility, as something that's acquired over, you know, maybe the first dozen years of one's life. Applying that to the workplace, how do we get an uncivil employee acclimated to the civil, you know, attitude or whatever in an amount of time that we're going to be able to have a useful product, you know, or get some usefulness of that – of this employee? It seems to me like, if it's going to come from within it's going to take a while; and I – I know that throwing down rules and regulations, they might agree with it; but I'm saying they're not – they haven't bought it. I mean they're just doing it. They're – they're— they're just floating across the surface, just trying not to grab anybody's eye; and so it's going to take more than that. It's going to take some sort of program that's actually going to get these individuals to be more considerate of others, more tolerant of others or whatever—
Q: Right.
M2: -- and that's what I think we need to start working on, personally. You know, they have it here, slowly but surely; but it seems to me like there's never anything going back and doing any remedial ed[ucation] or any checking that [it] really worked.
Q: So some training program –
M2: Yeah.
Q: --or something that – that's going to help those? What percentage of individuals do you think that is in an organization that just refuses or just doesn't get it?
M2: Or not.
F1: I think it's kind of low.
M2: Yeah.
F1: I wouldn't know what percentage, but –
M5: Yeah.
M2: But the impact—
F1: I think most people [cooperate].
Q: The impact is big? You're –
M4: The impact is huge" (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

The written comments (4/28) provided by the participants at the end of their focus group interviews that correspond with training and/or education follows:

> 1. "The tone for civility in the workplace should be set by management; monitored by management; and enforced by management. The employees should decide whether they can function under the standard or not. If not they should be willing to face the consequences. Otherwise, they should go elsewhere to find happiness and functionality in the workplace. Each workplace has its own tone of civility" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).
>
> 2. "Civility in the workplace is a must. It is an ongoing learning process as to how to accomplish complete civility. It needs to be realized what we are asking, that is, we are dealing with imperfections, that's fact. Just recognize that, listen, and respect. As long as there are human beings, this problem we'll exist, but isn't life and it's diversities grand" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).
>
> 3. "Civility is a perception and that perception is determined by education, environment or culture" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).
>
> 4. "The fact that you can't pigeon hole any one thing and call it civil or not. Education is the best tool in conjunction with communication to stem a hostile environment. I think this was a good session and I hope it will help you" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Outlier responses for training

This section on training has one example of an outlier involving education and its role in the organization.

> Group 1:
>
> F1: Well, I mean, oh, you know – we were having problems in the organization and well, they make – they – you know—it's like an organization is trying to force the issue – you know. We have a guy come

in, and he talks to us all individually, and then the plant two weeks later has a meeting for us to – you know, it's supposed to be all private – and all of a sudden, he brings us into a meeting and wants us to talk about it in front of everybody. Well, that was offensive to not only me but everybody else; and I just happened to be the one that opened my big mouth and – and fought the situation; but I don't – I think he – if you – if an organization waits for incivility to get started then try to solve it by training and – I think all you're going to do is build up resentment and it's going to get worse, because I've seen it happen within this organization. If the training is offered up front while the organization is doing well, I think you're going to have better results; but not – you know – identifying the problems and trying to fix them by force-feeding people through meetings and training. I think it's just going to –
Q: So then is it a hopeless cause?
F4: No, not—
F3: No. I think the other way that that could have been handled is, as a new person comes in, they're given that information when they come in so they're not all that – you're affecting change by promoting that every time you make a new hire, if they had that information instead of –
F2: But, unfortunately – you might sit down and explain that to them, but when that person goes out, walks out of your office and they encounter 99 negative people, the first thing that they think is –
F3: Right.
F2: -- you know, this –
M1: I don't think you can do it all in advance. I mean, I think things can come up and you have to be able to deal with some of these things after the fact.
F1: Well, and I agree with that, I mean, you know, in our situation, we worked through those times. It's been painful but we've worked through" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001

Describing Organizational Civility

"I don't think you'll ever have it completely, a complete civilized unit or organization, unfortunately, because we're human beings and we're not perfect and there is imperfections and there's differences" (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001).

Respect was the predominant term referred to by these respondents as a descriptor of civility. The Golden Rule, which is the second part of this findings section, was discussed as a distinguishing characteristic of the term respect.

Modal themes of respect

The following are examples of how these focus groups viewed and discussed respect. The data indicates that respect is the key element in any definition of civility. The following conversations involve discussions on how the focus group members associated respect and civility:

Example one:

M1: Well it almost sounds like it is almost [a] misnomer to even use the word customer, we're really talking about several things here; and it's still going back to mutual respect.
F5: Yeah.
Q: "What would be the words you'd use to define civility in the workplace?
M2: The word that seems to be coming out most often in our discussion here is respect.
F4: Um-hum.
M2: -- but, I mean, if you went to –
M1: Mutual –
F2: Yeah,
F4: Mutual
F2: --respect
F4. Trust –
F3: And morality, I – I'd go along with that" (Group 1, Feb 2, 2001).

Example two:

M1: "Well it almost sounds like it is almost a misnomer to even use the work customer, we're really talking about several things here: and it still – it's still going back to mutual respect (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Example three:

Q: Okay. XXX, let's assume that you're the CEO of Company X here and this is your management staff and you've all decided that civility is an important issue for your organization and then you are going to create an environment of civility. How do you go about doing that?
M3: Let's establish the grounds for what acceptable behavior is.
Q: Okay. What do we think those are?
M3: We said [the] respect factor, but that becomes a little vague. We have to define that.
Q: Right.
M3: Do we want profanity to be on that list, no profanity? Proper dress? I mean, you know, you just go on and establish the rules. From that point, you figure you come up with a course of action on how to implement those..." (Group 2, Feb 20, 2001).

Example four:

Q: "—does civility mean you have to like somebody?
M5: No.
M4: No.
F2: No.
M2: [As long] as there's – there's— respect
M5: --respect
M3: Just respect.
Q: Just respect. It doesn't mean I necessarily like you as a person, or – or shouldn't – and again, we're trying to define that term; but it seems to me that it shouldn't rely anything on whether I like you or not.
M2: Right (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001)

Example five:

M4: "I – I think I do have a little difficulty of defining uncivil, because if – if – let's say if I am sitting down here with [Jim] arguing a matter, right?

Even at the end of the argument, you know because I have my own way and [Jim] has his own way, we're not uncivil, are we?
M1: No, I don't think so. It's –
M5: Um-hum, you can agree to disagree.
M1: As long as we – as long as we respect why we're both coming from the position and understand and listen, that's civil—
M4: Okay (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

Example six:

M3: "But I have a feeling – my feeling is, though, you can have civility and it's – can suppress the hostilities. People are happy. Everyone's treated fair. Everyone does – now, you're going to have extremes and the exceptions out there, but if everyone's treated fairly, everyone's shown equal –
M7: Okay. You're talking in – in – in a corporate-wide situation or you just talking on the team? See, that's a – that's –
M3: Well no. If everyone was treated fair, everyone's showing that same respect, everyone's showing the same rewards and awards, the recognitions, I think that creates a more comfortable working environment, which, and in turn, would suppress the hostilities. You know what I'm saying? It's not going to eliminate them, It can reduce the hostilities –
M7: Yeah. Make them easier –
M3: -- but with your –
M7: -- to tolerate, that's true.
M3: Sure, but I'm saying it has a tendency to drive that down and make it a more pleasant environment, work environment (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

The respondents provided the following written comments concerning civility and respect. This first comment is from Group 1:

1. "Mutual respect from each individual will reflect the civility level of an organization" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

The next five comments were all generated from Group 2's discussions:

1. "Work toward a common goal and have respect for others."

2. "Civility in the workplace is a must. It is an ongoing learning process as to how to accomplish complete civility. It needs to be realized what we are asking, that is, we are dealing with imperfections, that's fact. Just recognize that, listen, and respect. As long as there are human beings, this problem we'll exist, but isn't life and it's diversities grand."

3. "Civility in the workplace
-Sensitivity to those around you.
- Mutual respect
- The "true" golden rule.
-Understanding the mission of the organization and working together to accomplish that mission."

4. "Being concerned for the feelings of my coworkers, recognizing that they may have different objectives than me, and those objectives have value."

5. "Civility in the workplace depends on each individual accepting responsibility for his/her own actions, understanding there are differences and trying to treat others with dignity, respect, and compassion" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Group 3 provides the following discussion about civility:

1. "To respect your coworker and how to se a policy on civility in the workplace. Enforcing the policy is important."

2. "Based on our discussion on "workplace civility", I feel that some of the most important things discussed were: 1) being open minded, 2) being respectful to others (understanding and accepting diversity amongst colleagues), 3) enforcement of goals and policies when people choose to act uncivil over and over again. 4) taking appropriate steps necessary to ensure a civil workplace (example: mission statement with a clear set of goals, policies, rules, etc.)"

3. "Most important items to help increase workplace civility are:
- Clear goals -- set clear goals so the employee knows what to expect from you.
- Respect -- respect people as they respect you.
- Honesty -- do your job right the first time.
- Mutual understanding

- Open-minded
- Be able to listen to people having different opinions
- Open (two ways) [sic] communication."

4. "The most important aspects of workplace civility are respect for others opinions, open door communication, establishment of policies and then adhering to those policies. A defining mission statement, goals and objectives so employees know what is expected of them. Allowing people to do their jobs w/minimal interference."

Finally, these last two written comments followed the discussions of Group 4:

1. "The most important issue in obtaining civility in the work place is the respect the rights and beliefs of all employees."

2. "Civility is something that each person has to practice with other people. Each one must show respect for the individuals if respect and civility is expected to be returned" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Outlier response to themes of respect

The examples above reveal how prevalent respect appeared as the defining element of civility. The following excerpts were provided and indicate that some of the respondents saw difficulties with trying to use respect as a defining element of civility.

The first three examples showcase the difference between offering someone respect and an individual earning respect:

Example one:

F2: "I believe that that's true, but I – I think in the – the outset in the military, you're taught to respect a person based on their rank.

M1: Or at least have an –
F2: And –
M1: -- appearance of respect.
F2: Exactly.
M1: It may not be internal; it may be just through actions and [words] (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Example two:

F1: I just – a value that you place on other people's opinions or beliefs is what is respect or disrespect. Whatever value you put on their beliefs or disbeliefs, to me, is respect or disrespect.
M2: I'd go along with that. I'd say that respect is probably – for me, anyways, it always has been something that someone has to earn, if they want my respect. I give – I give them – I give everybody consideration, just being in a ... room or whatever, consideration and try not to be rude or whatever; but I don't believe, for me anyways, that respect is something I just toss out. I have to see what a person is worth before I usually give that (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

Example three:

M1: "I don't see civility and respect as the same thing.
M7: Doesn't –
M1: No.
M7: -- have to be, but—
M1: They're not.
M7: -- but that's a starting point.
M3: I have to disagree.
M7: So it does not have to be.
M3: I think they are one in the same.
Q: That's interesting, 'cause what – what is it then it if – if civility isn't respect, what is civility? I mean, if – from – from my perspective, especially from what I've heard so far-
M7: You have malicious compliance, which – which is probably is most incivil as you –
M1: Uncivil as you can get...
M3: ... How is that respect?
M7: It's – it's not.
M1: It's not.
M7: Just the opposite is what I'm saying.

M1: But that's what I'm saying, civility –
M7: But you – but – but—
M1: I mean, civil doesn't have to be –... --but that's polite. I mean, you could, "Yes sir, I'm going to – yes sire, I'll do that sir; yes sir; yes sir; yes sir." You know, malicious compliance on the surface is, "Okay. I'm doing exactly what I'm told to do."
M3: But that's not respect--
M7: I mean --
M1: It's not respect or civil.
M3: -- [it's] a mandated response; its not respect. Respect is something that come from within that you treat people –
M1: Right.
M3: -- openly and as they would wanted to be treated, without having to be told, "This is how you got to treat them."
M1: Well, I don't—
M3: You say, "Yes, sir" and "No, sir."—
M4: I think that we –
M3: -- because they tell you, you got to.
M4: We just misstated the – the point that was made a – a few minutes ago. We do not treat people by that proposition as they wish to be treated. We treat people as we wish to be treated.
M3: Not necessarily.
M4: That is what the –
M3: I know a lot of people—
M4: -- Golden rule is.
M3: A lot of people treat people crappy, but they don't want to get treated crappy.
M1: Oh, yeah.
M4: Well, the idea is to treat people the way you wish to be treated and –
M2: Yeah. Do unto others as you would have the [do unto you].
M4: As you would have been do unto you, not the other way you perceive you need to treat them, but the way you expect them to treat you –...
M3: To me [respect and civility] it's one in the same.
Q: ...And – and so – and – and then, so, [Bill], if – if respect is – if civility isn't respect, what do you see it as?
M1: Civility does not bring respect; however respect –
M2: Right.
M1: --does bring civility.
M3: Okay.
Q: Okay.
M3: I can see that.

M1: And all of us have sat in an office where a boss or somebody else has treated us very civil but we know damned well, they're –
M7: --little respect.
M1: Yeah.
M7: That's right.
M1: They're cranking you.
M7: That's right.
M1: That's what I mean –
Q: I – I understand.
M1: 'cause respect will get you civility, but civility – ***pfft*** **--** ... That's just a social – socially accepted way of turning you up a notch –
M7: Right.
M1: -- and not being accountable.
M7: Right, saying "screw you" with a smile (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

This next example was the result of a conversation from a leader who makes a statement about wanting to create a civil environment. The participants were asked to respond to this statement from their supervisor, "I'm going to come out with a vision of our organization. I'm going to put down some rules on how globally we want to – to act and how we're going to do things; and one of those things is I want everybody to – to be civil and treat each other with respect". Group 2's response was:

M5: "That means nothing.
M3: Too vague.
F2: Right.
Q: Okay?
M1: It's not defined. It's not defined.
Q: So what – and defined in what way?
M1: It's not defined at all" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Another issue that arose dealt with the relationship between civility and task accomplishment.

Example one:

F2: "And there's – that's something that [Sara] and I were talking about earlier is that some people worry so much about being civil toward other people that they don't get their jobs done.
M2: That's right.
F2: Well, I'm just pointing to the danger of –
M1: Sure.
F2: --forcing civility so far to the point that things don't get accomplished.
M1: That it's more important to be civil than do the work" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Example two:

M1: "Well, within the work environment, it's a whole lot easier 'cause you know what you're supposed to be doing. You know, you're – you have a –
M2: They're not paying you to be social. They're paying you to do a job.
M1: Yeah. Do a job, you know.
M2: So you know what each job is" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

Another series of excerpts features a discussion of the issue of differences and was first raised earlier in the section on incivility. This first example discusses the concern that different types of organizations may have different civility needs. The group did decide that there is probably a minimum level of civility required for almost any organization but that civility in the workplace is still organizationally defined:

M1: "You know, but it just seems like we're talking about larger, moral issues and also that I'm not necessarily sure I would put under the umbrella of civility.
M2: -- but I think you have to look at the established norms within the certain culture that you're looking at. Our level of civility is probably going to be different here within our workplace than, the people at – that work at McAlister State prison.
F2: Exactly.
M2: You know, you have to look at each – each subculture at the same time.
Q: That's an interesting point. Should there be different levels, then, by different type of organization? Should we expect something different on the way people – where the prisoners respond to the guards, the guards responding to them, compared to this work – workplace environment, compared to IBM or Chrysler or?
M1: Well, I think we're just talking about the realities of certain environments and cultures; and that civility in one setting may be different than civility in a different setting – depending on that and environment. I mean, even in the prison setting, we treat, you know, prisoners as human beings.
M2: Right.
F4: I'm not so sure that they really shouldn't have basically the same standards things from the [entire] operation. I mean, you know, like maybe the reality is different, but, I don't know why the expectation [wouldn't] be basically the civil treatment of, you know, -- treatment of each other isn't the same, but –
Q: So there would seem to be a minimum level, even though –
F2: Yes.
Q: -- there may be some variances here and there?
M1: ... Yeah. The Golden Rule thing that [Susan] said earlier –
F3: I think the Golden Rule [applies] –
M1: -- that's – that covers a lot of that.
F3: -- should apply across the board (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

In this next clip, again from Group 1, the discussion concerns degrees of civility or degrees of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior and the fact that those vary from person to person. Anyone wanting to enhance civility in the

workplace would have to work out plans to help clarify the intent and meaning of their effort:

> M1: "I think – I – I agree with -- I think it is a relative issue.
> F2: Yeah.
> M1: What one person thinks as – as somebody is being rude to them, another person might not.
> F1: Right.
> M1: So, you know, I could agree with that. The magnitude appears to have something to do with it.
> F3: Yes. There are degrees of civility –
> M1: Yeah.
> F3: -- degrees of acceptable—
> F2: That depends on--
> M1: And could vary –
> F2: -- so many different things.
> M1: -- from person to person (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

The dialog in the next three examples provides yet another excerpt that speaks to the regional differences that can represent the diverse behaviors of people. Additional examples are provided concerning the way differences can impact an organization's attempt to create or modify behavior.

First example:

> F2: "Or they just – you know, they might just be from a different part of the country where they're going to respond to you –
> M1: A little differently.
> F2: -- different.
> M1: Yeah.
> F2: Yeah. I mean, that's you know, something that I have definitely found, being in the military and meeting someone from every single state in the Union is there's a huge difference between somebody that was born and raised in Oklahoma, the way they're going to approach you versus somebody that was born and raised in New York City" (Group1, Feb 2, 2001).

Second example:

M1: "It was very civil until they came, and then they started causing lots of problems, and nobody would take care of it, and so you have everybody in fear and oppression constantly 'cause of these few people that came in, and that's – that's they type of situation I'm talking about.
M4: So you're saying it was geographically induced, then?
M1: Well, yeah, well—
M4: It was a factor.
M1: Yes ...
Q: ...What – what should an organization or what can organization do in that case, if you have somebody with completely different personalities and – and – and a different culture on how to behave and how to act comes in and completely upsets the current mode? That doesn't mean, at the same time, that they don't have some right or whatever to express their own culture – but what should an organization do in that case or what should they do?
M5: They should define what – what is acceptable and what's not acceptable.
Q: I mean, what's--
M3: That's –
Q: --acceptable behavior for the organization?
M5: Yeah" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Third example:

M1: Well, then – then this – we're talking about the Big Apple. You got a different level of civility there that you do in Oklahoma City –
M5: That's true.
M1: -- or some other conservative states.
M5: It's cultural difference.
M1: So, evidently, civility is relative to where you're at –
Q: Okay.
M5: The culture.
M1: -- I guess. I mean – or – they're just not civil and we are, I don't know (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

This next transcript also relates to the issue of perception of behavior. Specifically how people perceive the same behavior differently:

> M5: "I know this is a common sense thing, but you have people that are sick and irritable and they don't smile, they don't – they're not nice, and it's just because they're sick. They're employees. How'd we handle them – and they're sick? They've got cancer or something, you know.
> M2: Ain't no job requirement to be –
> M1: I know, but –
> M2: -- smiling all the time and happy.
> M1: -- I mean, this is – this is a civility-type thing. They just – you know, they –
> M2: Where is that coming from?
> M1: -- they – but I'm – I know. That's the common sense – you have feeling and sympathy for those people – and empathy, but do we – where do we put them in the rules, 'cause they're not being civil and we don't
> M3: -- I guess we don't expect them to be civil...
> M2: Difference between civil and jolly, you know (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Group 3 provides yet another important distinction. In this case, the group discusses the difference between surface level civility and a deeper more meaningful level:

> Q: "So would – if you're trying to create a civil environment, is that – is that approach different to the approach of trying to reduce incivility? It might be a fine distinction that I'm trying to get at, here.
> M1: Might be whether you're doing a surface or a – a meaningful change. You – when we talk about civility, I see it as just the surface level, being polite to each other, using politically correct language, allowing everyone to have their say. That, you can enforce; and that's one thing you can control with edicts if – if management is willing to actually do it; but then there's the deeper level – I guess I've been trying to talk about – and – and a lot of us, the – the trust, the true respect of you as an individual; and that's the level where you need to do more than just put out policy and enforce the policy.

M4: And – and the bad things about it that once – once that the root is not fixed, the surface may effects for a day or so, then come back as a – as a corrupted root, you know –
M2: Even harder, come back worse. All that's – all that gathered up: and all of a sudden, it's vented at one time (Group 3, Mar. 6, 2001).

There are also some examples of outlier responses that are a result of the participants providing written answers at the end of each interview. Below are some of the written statements written by the subjects, which fit within this outlier category:

Group 1:

1. "We all seem to have ideas on what civility is, but have differing ideas on a specific definition of civility or how to respond."

Group 3

1. "I would venture that the key concept I heard on this subject is that "there is no easy solution." A surface civility can be imposed, but real workplace civility is a tough act to achieve."

Group 4:

1. "There is not one answer to enforcing a civility environment. Different perceptions evoke responses according to the individual's background."

2. "Definite guidelines should be put in place within an organization that ensures that everyone is treated fairly. There are various levels or degrees of civility."

3. "Civility is a perception and that perception is determined by education, environment or culture."

4. "The fact that you can't pigeon hole any one thing and call it civil or not. Education is the best tool in conjunction with communication to stem

a hostile environment. I think this was a good session and I hope it will help you."

This section looked at the data on respect as it fit the central tendency and outlier categories. In some cases, participants observed that the Golden Rule could be a defining characteristic of respect. This next section will explore the information on the Golden Rule as provided by the focus groups.

Modal themes of the golden rule

In this first example the dialog pertains to the Golden Rule being a possible rule for establishing a minimum level of civility in any organization:

Q: "We ought – we ought to be able to come to an agreement on at least what a minimum level of civility in an organization might be, and where do you think that might – I know we've heard a couple different opinions, but at least it sounds like you respect treating – treating them like you want to be treated?
M1: Yeah. The golden rule thing that [Mary] said earlier—
F3: I think the golden rule--
M1: --that covers a lot of that.
F3: -- should apply across the board.
Q: That's an interesting question; and I know, as I've done some research on it – does everybody believe in the Golden rule? So what if – what if you're and atheist? Would an atheist still believe in some form of –
M2: Well you realize that Golden Rule, there's nothing Christian
F4: Interesting? Not at all.
M2: It is not a – a theological statement.
M1: Actually, I thought most religions probably have something very similar
M2: That's always been kind of a misconception.
F4: Who was it, Ben Franklin or somebody that (indiscernible – overtalking)
M2: I thought it was [somewhere] in the Bible that said that.

F4: Where they dug that one out, but it's – everybody thinks it's the Bible, but it's not.

F2: The key to every religion, though, I think, is to treat others well so that you can go on to a better place or to be saved or to not burn in some form of hell" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Group 1, in this next clip, states that the Golden Rule is the one precept they would use to reduce incivility in the workplace:

Q: "What one thing could you do to try and reduce incivility?
F4: I'm thinking pretty much just be honest with yourself and –
F2: Again, I would say that I want to come in to work every day, knowing that no matter what tasks are ahead of me that I like to treat everyone as I would like to be treated and to make it known that I expect the same in return, they cannot expect anything other than that" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

In yet another example, this section of transcript discusses the fact that the leader in the organization creates the atmosphere and that it is the leader's responsibility to create a standard for others to follow. In this case, the standard would be the Golden Rule:

M1: "That's why I think you have – you know, if you have a civility problem, you just – you know, if – strong enough leader. You know, if you're not a strong enough leader you are not going to get anything done. But if you are strong enough to have poser to get things changed or done – you have to have that kind of power. If you don't have that kind of power and authority - The man at the top or the women creates ... that – that atmosphere; and if you – if you have strong leadership, you can have these meetings. You can create that standard, and then – what I was getting – the questions I was getting at is how do we instill into the individuals that sense of how to treat – you know, treat somebody like you --
M3: Right.
M1: -- wanted to be treated, the Golden Rule, of course; and I think that – if we could get that, then it would be, you know, a great workplace.

F1: [I think] the majority of the people are like that" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001).

Group 4 provides the data for this next section. The dialog concerns how we handle and react to all the differences in personality, perception, etc:

> Q: -- "one last question, if I can. With all the differences, the different personalities, the cultures, races, how to we come together to – to a common ground in how we treat each other?
> M7: Forget about all that, just if you knew – each person individually. The hell with what how – what it is or who it is or how it is or whatever.
> Q: So treat – I'm not sure I understand "treat them individually." Do you have to get to know them well enough? What if they're stangers and you don't know them well enough?
> M7: You give them the benefit of the doubt ... --but if you're looking at the entire big picture, like you were saying, you know, different ethnic groups or whatever – I mean, everybody's going to seek what they're comfortable in or what – who they can relate to.
> M1: Right.
> M7: Whether that means you – you, you know, you're an Italian or you're a Panamanian-
> M1: Yeah.
> M7: -- or – or –
> M1: Right.
> M7: -- whatever – right, whether you're Baptist, you're Catholic, if you are comfortable in that environment, you are going to seek those people out because you're going to want to stay comfortable; and – and values have a lot to do with it.
> M4: Birds of a feather
> Q: Except – except for in a workplace, often you can't do that
> M2: Well, I mean – he goes by the Good Book. Treat others the way you want to be treated.
> M1: Right.
> F1: That is exactly what I was going to say.
> M2: Okay" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

There were two examples of the written work relating to the Golden Rule that these groups were asked to perform:

1. "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

2. "Most important regarding civility in the workplace: I think being polite and courteous in the workplace is a high means of civility. Being pleasant and courteous creates a pleasant workplace - this making better workers which creates better results in the end. Treat others, as you would like to be treated" (Group 4, Mar. 20, 2001).

There were a few examples of data where respondents did not think that the Golden Rule provided enough specificity on what was considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior. The next two transcripts provide some evidence of this concern.

Outlier responses to the theme of golden rule

Example One:

F1: "I – I – even including Golden Rule, everybody's expectations are different. If you do that to me, I'll yell at you and go make another pot. You know—

M2: You – do you consider [leaving less than a cup in the coffee pot] uncivil?

F1: Well, no, it wouldn't hurt my feelings. It – you know, I'd probably give him a hard time about it all day but it would all be in fun. I mean, my level of expectation of the way I'm – expect to be treated by everyone is probably vastly different from [Susan's]. So as far as civil and uncivil, it's going to be a matter of personal judgment; and I'm not sure there's a way to standardize that across the board....

M1: I think – I – I agree with – I think it is a relative issue.

F2: Yeah.

M1: What one person thinks as – as somebody is being rude to them, another person might not.

F1: Right.

M1: So, you know, I could agree with that. The magnitude appears to have something to do with it.
F3: Yes. There're degrees of civility—
M1: Yeah.
F3: -- degrees of acceptable –
F2: That depends on –
M1: And that could vary –
F2: -- so many different things.
M1: -- from person to person" (Group 1, Feb. 2, 2001).

Example Two:

M2: "—and – you know, and then it's an arbitrator. It's not based on any policy or any guidelines.
M3: It's like obscenity. I mean it's subjective. What's obscene tome may not be obscene to you. Well, respect to me may not be respect to you. So what is civility, what is mutual respect? Treat me the way I want to be treated.
M2: Right.
M3: Well, I may want to be treated like a stepchild, you know. I don't mind getting cursed out or whatever. I don't – I mean, I do; but, you know, that may be my take; and so I'm going to treat you that way I want to get – eh, there are too many holes there, I think.
M5: Well, that – you know, we have to have some perspective from which to operate; and the only thing that we have is our opinion. You know, my wife is always asking me why someone did something. How do I know, you know?
M3: 'Cause you're [Charlie].
M5: You know, because – that's the way they are made up; and we always want to put our values on someone else's actions. So we start evaluating their behavior, we use our standards and it's just normal. I mean that's the way we do it" (Group 2, Feb. 20, 2001)

Summary

The findings from the data were presented in this chapter. Four distinct themes emerged from the data: (1) descriptions and causes of incivility, (2)

incivility in the workplace, (3) creating civility, and (4) describing organizational civility. These respondents used the term disrespect when trying to describe uncivil behavior. They believe that the differences between people and lack of training are the primary causes of incivility. Moreover, there is no question that these respondents believe incivility in the workplace is a problem. The respondents presented a number of issues that need to be considered in any solution to incivility. Key considerations are: (1) role of personal responsibility, (2) role of leadership and organizational responsibility, (3) defining, publishing, and consistently enforcing appropriate behavior, and (4) establishing effective communication and training. In the final segment, the respondent's view of respect as a key descriptor of civility was reviewed. Additionally, the Golden Rule was presented as a rule that could help organizations delineate appropriate respectful behavior. A complete analysis of these findings will occur in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this section is to analyze the findings presented in Chapter Four. The analysis will follow the four major themes that emerged from the data. The four themes are: (1) Descriptions and causes of incivility, (2) Incivility in the workplace, (3) Creating Civility, and (4) Describing organizational civility. However, the analysis also provides answers to the original research questions first presented in Chapter One. The original questions were:

1. Do the participants in this study recognize incivility to be a problem? If so, what types of behaviors characterize these acts?
2. Do the employees recognize that they have a responsibility to help create civil environments in organizations? If so, what do they see as their responsibility?
3. What do the respondents believe is the organization's role in establishing civil environments for employees to work in?
4. What are the necessary components of a definition of organizational civility?

Within each major theme there will be two primary points of data analysis. First, the data will be analyzed according to how it fits with one of the original research questions. Additionally, when appropriate, the data will be analyzed

according to findings that were not originally presented or considered but emerged from the interview process.

Descriptions and Causes of Incivility

The data in this theme provides a partial answer to question 1 of the original research questions: Do the participants in this study recognize incivility to be a problem? If so, what types of behaviors characterize these acts? The descriptions and causes of incivility were analyzed first through conducting a content analysis of the data and secondly through constant comparative analysis of the transcripts.

Discussion

A content analysis of the data revealed forty-three different words or phrases used to describe incivility and its causes. Table 1 reveals that the most common term used to describe incivility was disrespect. It was mentioned twenty-three times throughout the transcripts. The next closest descriptors found within the data were violence (15 times), rudeness (8 times) and ignorance (7 times). The following comments were those used most infrequently when describing incivility: deceitful, militant attitudes, cutthroat actions, mistreating people, backstabbing, and selfishness. These terms were each mentioned only once.

The most commonly used phrase for discussing the causes of incivility was "the differences between people." It was mentioned forty-six times. The differences referred to were listed as cultural, racial, geographical, and personality. The next five closest descriptions for the causes of incivility were lack of training (45 times), lack of good people skills (14 times), differences in perception (13 times), ego (11 times), and finally, a sense of power (10 times). In a similar way, the following responses were presented but were used infrequently when discussing the causes of incivility: "mapping is different, sense of entitlement, mismanagement causes incivility, incivility breeds incivility, they were born like that, some people enjoy creating conflict, and it is ingrained behavior in some people." The table below consolidates the most frequent participant responses.

Table 1	
Participants' responses in Describing Incivility	
Descriptions of Incivility	# of "Mentions"
Disrespect	23
Violence	15
Rudeness	8
Ignorance	7
	43
Participants responses for the Causes of Incivility	
Differences between people	46
Lack of training	45
Lack of good people skills	14
Differences in perception	13
Ego	11
Sense of power	10
	139

Much of the current literature would agree that disrespect, rudeness and ignorance are descriptors of incivility. Most authors would not argue that cultural differences, lack of training, and differences in perception are important causes of incivility. What is surprising, however, is how often violence, ego, and a sense of power were used to describe the causes of incivility. Together these three words were referred to 36 times. In her definition of incivility, Christine Pearson (1999) stated that incivility is "low intensity deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm the target...(p.457)." Certainly, violence is not a low intensity behavior. It can be argued that ego defense behaviors and power issues in an organization also go beyond the realm of low intensity behaviors. Are the words the respondents used to describe uncivil behavior out of step with the literature? Did they simply confuse the relationship between terms? It is likely that they did not understand the need for the parameters of low, moderate, and high deviant behaviors. Pearson's definition helps to delimit the behaviors that should be considered under the rubric of antisocial behavior, keeping violence and incivility as separate components. However, such limits are unimportant to practitioners if the limits are not socially constructed and recognized as such by people in the workplace.

Perhaps the relevance of the distinction of behaviors depends on the focus of research. Is the purpose of the research theoretical or is the purpose directed toward applied research? If the researcher intends to apply theory and concepts to

the workplace and change behavior, then incivility should be described and defined in socially constructed terms as they are recognized in the workplace. Furthermore, researchers add to this confusion with definitions that are not synonymous. For example, workplace violence is defined by Meyer (2000) as "any act of aggression, physical assault or threatening or coercive behavior that causes physical of emotional harm and occurs in the work setting" (p.28). Acts of incivility can cause emotional harm. Interestingly, disrespect, which is by far the most dominant term used to describe incivility, is the first condition needed for violence to occur. According to Sarkis, (2000) the three ingredients needed for violence to manifest itself are: (1) the element of disrespect, (2) the inability of the employee to reverse the act of disrespect, and (3) the belief by the employee that the most viable way to resolve the conflict is through violence. While the distinction between incivility and violence may be significant for theorists, it is not as easily discerned in the workplace. This then partially explains why these respondents use violence as a synonym for incivility.

One item not directly mentioned but alluded to was the issue of inequity. There have been enormous amounts of research conducted on equity theory. Equity is an important component in organizations. The problem is that one must know what people value before they can attempt to ensure that equity exists within the organization. In the case of this research, people who suffer at the

hands of inequity may respond in uncivil ways, which further perpetuates problems within the organization.

While disrespect is mentioned often within these four focus groups, it is only a portion of the overall context and importance of the messages. These respondents have stated clearly in their messages that people are different, they have dissimilar opinions, and they want disparate things. According to these participants, those views are not given credence nor are they often respected. Another aspect of the dialogs dealt with the childish, loud, disruptive behaviors of some office workers. Furthermore, these respondents discussed uncontrolled emotions and behaviors such as yelling, temper tantrums, arguing, and confrontations.

Often when disrespect was mentioned there was very little discussion affiliated with it. It was as if everyone knew and agreed on the definition of disrespect. In most cases, there was some affirmation. The participants do bring other issues into the debate over incivility. Words like hostility, violence, indifference, favoritism, and mismanagement are used often. They also reflect that incivility itself breeds further incivility. Like the descriptors of incivility, the causes of incivility are burdened with very similar issues.

The two most reported causes of incivility were: (1) diversity between people, and (2) a lack of training. There was a distinct impression that regional differences between people represented be geographical boundaries added to the

cause of incivility. There were numerous examples in the data from these respondents that showed this distinction. Regional differences between people from New York City and people from small conservative Southwestern cities were most often cited as a distinctive difference. It is interesting that these respondents often attributed the differences in attitude first to geography and second to cultural nuances. While there may be other reasons for the differences, it is important to remember that this is how these respondents associated the event with the behaviors. Regardless, this discussion highlights part of the reasons people associate with the cause of incivility.

Conversations from various focus groups were surprisingly similar when discussing regional differences. Obviously regional differences and cultural differences do have an impact on how we relate to one another. If an organization has a very diverse population, taking regional differences into consideration and helping organizational members understand regional differences may be a key component in resolving incivility. From the context of the group discussions it was clear that the participants felt that they were on their own when it came to learning how diversity had an impact on their relationships and the training environment.

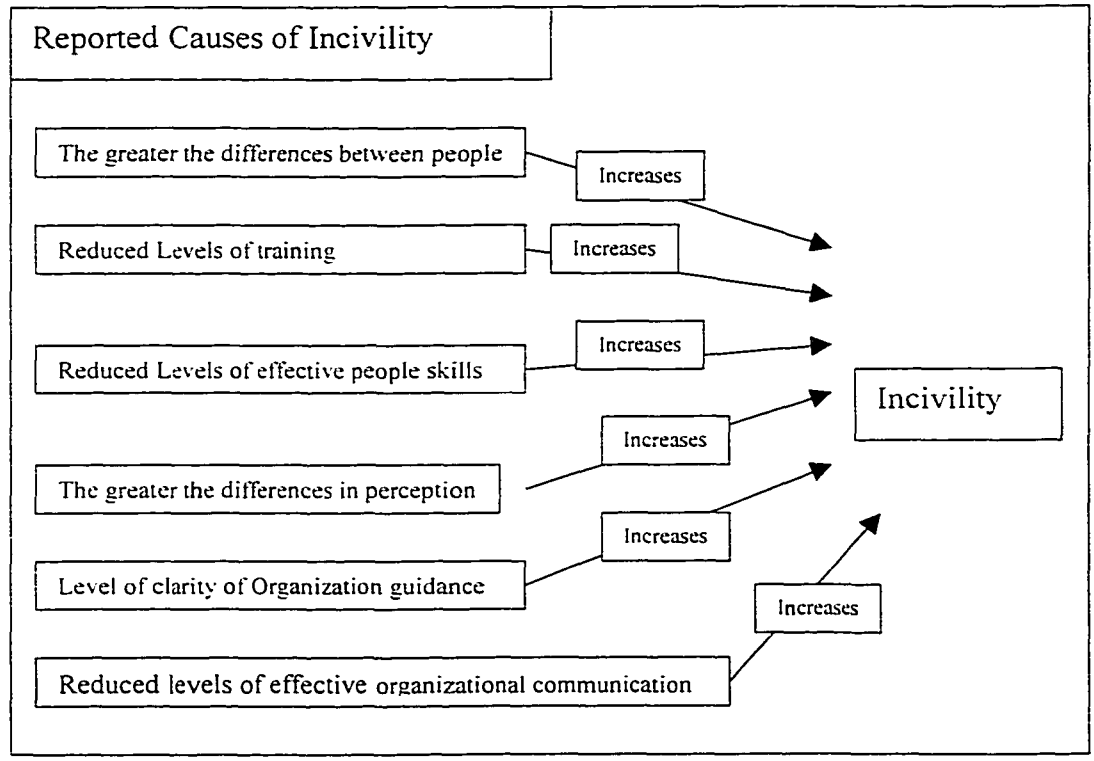
The data from the four focus groups revealed that the participants believe that there is no single cause of incivility. It is a complex issue. Clearly the differences between people whether it is cultural, regional, or personality driven,

does have a significant impact. It is important to note, however, that lack of training and or education was also mentioned as a cause of incivility. The participants believe that training is a key factor in resolving incivility.

Figure One presents the major causes of incivility as reported by the participants into a theoretical model. The model contains both interpersonal and organizational problems. The term organizational guidance, within Figure 1, refers to the mission, vision, organizational policy and procedures, and enforcement of those policies.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model to Causes of Incivility



It is obvious from the comments used to describe incivility that people have strong emotions about workplace behaviors. Every group had responses in the outlier category. The data generated from the respondents referring to the causes of incivility are highly emotional. Underlying their comments is a resigned sense of helplessness. The participants' responses describe situations that are out of control.

According to the participants in this research, incivility is many things. It is an issue that applies to how people relate to one another. A person can focus on any organizational issue and the potential for incivility exists. It does not matter whether the issue is equity, harassment, power, communication, meetings, reward systems, or management style. Incivility can be an aspect because it is about how people respond to each other and therefore not necessarily easily reduced or confined to simple definitions.

The majority of what is presented in this analysis on descriptions and causes of incivility fits with current literature on incivility. One major distinction is that violence is correlated with incivility. The previous literature has separated uncivil behaviors and violent behaviors into two of the categories of behaviors under the rubric of antisocial behaviors. The point made in this analysis is that these respondents did not separate the two terms. In the social organizations in which these participants interact the terms appear to be almost synonymous.

Disrespect is the first condition needed for violence to occur and disrespect is the term most commonly used when these respondents discussed incivility.

Incivility in the Workplace

This section elucidates how the participants' responses provided partial answers to question 1: Do you recognize incivility to be a problem? If so, what types of behaviors characterize these acts?

Discussion

The conclusion that incivility is a serious workplace problem is similar to conclusions reached by Lynne Anderson and Christine Pearson and Lilia Cortina and Vicki Magley in their research on incivility. This study built upon their previous research by confirming that these respondents believed incivility existed in the workplace and that it was a serious problem. The stories and examples provided by my participants strongly correlate with the previous research finding.

There are limits, however, to what behaviors the participants believed should fall into that category of incivility. This research presented twelve transcript excerpts from the focus groups presenting the respondents' concern over workplace incivility. Each example indicated how prevalent these conversations were throughout the transcripts. It was improbable to count the various references to incivility in the workplace because in many instances the majority of the transcript dealt with the subject. Incivility is a problem, people do

think about it, and if they cannot change the behavior they often will find other work.

The focal point of the data that was presented as outliers dealt with the differing expectations of people. There were some behaviors that people disagreed with as to whether or not they should be considered examples of incivility. The examples ranged from expectations over celebrating birthdays, obscenity, hygiene, and the manner in which people greet each other daily.

Incivility issues for these employees have two core components: (1) issues they face in interpersonal relationships and (2) organizational issues where the perception is that corporations fail or abuse employees. People have differing expectations. Moreover, civility is a learned behavior. If a new employee has not learned appropriate workplace behavior, then training and education is imperative.

Creating Civility

There are four subcategories of analysis within this section. They are: (1) Personal responsibility, (2) leadership responsibility, (3) organizational guidelines and policy, and (4) communication and training. These subcategories provide the respondents' answers to two of the original research questions: (1) Do the participants recognize that they have a responsibility to help create civil environments in organizations? If so, what do they see as their responsibility? and

(2) What do the participants believe is the organization's role in establishing civil environments?

Discussion

Personal Responsibility

Because of the number of responses dealing with personal responsibility it became a major element of this study. I could not find any previous research that discussed or presented data relating to organizational members discussing responsibility for correcting the problem of incivility in the workplace. There were several newspaper articles and books that discussed individual responsibility but there was no indication that those references were supported by any research findings. Mostly, they appeared to be personal opinion.

The respondents in this research repeatedly presented the contention that an individual in an organization cannot waive his or her responsibility to act civilly. It was not an excuse to be uncivil simply because someone else is not acting civilly or because the organization and its leadership may not be acting in a civil manner.

There is no question that the participants believe that an individual has many responsibilities to help to create civility within the organization. While the organization has its role, they unambiguously placed responsibility on the individual to act civilly. Out of the 4 groups, there were a total of 28 respondents. From the written responses provided by each participant, seven of those

respondents wrote statements that reflected their concern for an individual's responsibility toward maintaining and creating a civil environment.

The responsibility for telling a colleague that his or her behavior is uncivil was not as definite. There were some respondents that were comfortable approaching others and discussing these issues with them. Others, however, wanted and needed management to take that role. Borrowing theory from conflict management may help explain this phenomenon. There are two factors related to the type of conflict management style a person may possess. The first factor relates to how concerned someone is about other people. The second factor is how concerned someone is with himself or herself (Kilman & Thomas, 1975). These two factors are correlated with three different conflict management styles: (1) nonconfrontational, (2) controlling, and (3) cooperative (Bebbe & Masterson, 1997). A nonconfrontational person will avoid conflict or will seek someone else to resolve it. A controlling person will do whatever it takes to get his or her way. Both of these styles involve a person who is primarily concerned about themselves. The last style, cooperative, is concerned about other people. This type of person does not see conflict as a win or loose proposition. These conflict styles may reflect the same type of behavior involved in persons who are or are not willing to approach others and discuss their behavior with them.

The outlier data made reference to individual responsibility. Two examples of transcripts were presented. One example was from a person taking

responsibility to act civilly. The other example was from a person placing the responsibility for identifying inappropriate behavior on the target of incivility. In the first example the person was taking responsibility for expressing to another that their behavior had a negative impact on them. In that case, it was the target of the behavior taking responsibility. In the second example, it was the instigators abdicating their responsibility to behave civilly by putting the responsibility on the target to let instigator know that their behavior is inappropriate.

The response by Group 4 concerning the instigator abdicating responsibility to act civilly and placing the responsibility to control behavior on the target is typical 'bully' behavior. Rudy Yandrick (1999) highlights the problem of bully behavior in his article "Lurking in the Shadows" stating that bullies have a need to control other people. He further states, "[A target] complaining [about bully behavior] is equated with whining or weakness and may be taboo. So there's denial and no responsibility for the problem. If the manager says, 'work out the problem between yourselves because I don't want to get involved,' this is a green light for the bully." Yandrick goes on to say, "The end result for employers who tacitly tolerate bullying is a process of adverse selection in which the best and brightest may be let go at the expense of the most aggressive and uncivil." I would suggest that putting the responsibility for controlling or altering behavior on the target of uncivil acts is playing into the hands of the instigator or bully.

Leader Responsibility

Two distinct themes emerged from the data as it applied to leadership's responsibility toward civility. First, leadership needs to model the desired behavior. Second, those in leadership are responsible for establishing expectations concerning appropriate and inappropriate behavior. There was a general consensus among the four groups that management's role should be in developing and implementing policy and then enforcing it.

Leadership acting as a role model for subordinates is not a new issue. The problem has extensive research and literature to support it. Gary Yukl (1994) stated "managers should demonstrate effective behavior and attitudes in the workplace to set the example for subordinates to imitate (p.130)". The importance of role modeling is also mentioned as a key leader behavior in changing or maintaining organizational culture (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Yukl again relates the importance of leadership by example in his discussion of transformational leadership. He states that leadership by example is a key guideline for transformational leaders. It is the age-old problem that "actions speak louder than words" (Yukl, 1994. p 372). A leader will instantly loose credibility if their actions are not in concert with their words.

Group 1 believed that both the individual and leadership had a role in acting civilly. It was agreed, however, that although management may not act

civilly that did not relieve others of their responsibility to be civil. They also acknowledged that it would be more difficult for change to occur if management was not involved. The reverse is also true. If the employees do not "buy into" the change, management cannot do it alone.

Group 3 provided an example of data directed toward leadership's responsibility for civility in the workplace. The highlight of this conversation was that leadership must lead and demonstrate to the employees that it is an issue that they take seriously.

Group 4 constantly contradicted themselves. On one hand they wanted management to let them "fix their own problems" but on the other hand they blamed management for many of the organization's ills. Generally, they believe that leadership needs to be involved in changes but may be incapable of doing an effective job of implementing change.

All groups understood the need for leadership to be involved in any workplace change. The only issue that nears an outlier area is the thought that change can occur without leadership being involved. A few people believed that it could, most did not. As predicted in the literature review, one of the respondents from Group 1 left her job because her supervisor was not treating her civilly. Christine Pearson (2000) in her research concluded that as many as 46% of people contemplated changing jobs and 12% reported taking other positions due to uncivil behaviors in the workplace.

Once again, the respondents believed that the two most important roles for leadership were: (1) modeling the desired behavior and (2) setting the goals and standards for appropriate behavior. The examples cited reveal that these respondents do believe leadership has an important role in dealing with incivility and/or creating civil work environments. No one believed that the entire weight of responsibility rested with management but clearly nothing was going to change if management did not get involved. The people in charge must lead by example, set the guidelines for desired behavior, and be willing to enforce consequences on people who do not exhibit the appropriate behavior. In situations like this management needs to involve organizational members in determining the root problem. If there is an issue that is creating hostility and incivility, management must ferret out the root problem or it will eat away at whatever successes the organization has had at establishing a civil environment. These respondents established that there is clearly a role for leadership and for the employee in creating or sustaining civility in the workplace.

Organizational Guidelines and Policy

The issues that emerged within this category were: (1) definition of acceptable behavior, (2) establishing policy, procedures, rules, and (3) consistently enforcing those rules. There was also a general theme that civility must be related to task accomplishment. It is perplexing that after the seminal

research that began with Elton Mayo and Frederick Taylor in the early part of the 20th Century and continued by numerous people since then, that our problem today is still associated with the relationship between task and people.

I coded 61 different examples of discussions that related to the organizational issues mentioned above. Some of those excerpts exceed 3 and 4 pages. Obviously the issues of providing direction, rules, and goal setting, the element of enforcement, and the necessary function of rewards and punishment were a major factor of discussion with the focus groups. The oral arguments contained many examples of these debates.

It is interesting to note some of the contradictions that were in evidence after reviewing the written statements each person provided following the focus group interviews. While the oral discussions about the issue abound in each group, the written did not. Group 1 did not have any written comments directed toward rules and enforcement. All of their comments were directed toward the individual's responsibility to act civilly. Written comments from Groups 2 and 3 were predominately directed toward rules and enforcement. Group 4 only had one of the eight respond with a comment concerning rules. Still 32% of the written comments discussed the issue of rules and enforcement, concluding that these respondents believe this as one of the most important issues with regards to workplace civility. Although, it is crucial to note that the majority of the comments on rules and enforcement stemmed from only 2 of the 4 groups.

The only outlier response is from Group 1. This groups concern was that an organization could take policy too far and provide too much direction. There is a limit that an organization can reach that would begin to approach the absurd when it comes to forming rules. Setting organizational standards certainly requires a balance between policy and individual action and responsibility.

The data collected sufficiently establishes the participants' belief that there is a relationship between civility and the establishment of rules, direction, goals, and the clear communication of those expectations. They also believe that an organization must enforce the rules it establishes. Furthermore, the participants strongly agree that once rules are established they should be enforced. Finally, these focus group respondents stated that there should be rewards for those employees who support the organization and punishment for those who do not abide by the rules or expectations.

Communication and Training

This analysis under the rubric of communication includes matters of interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and topics such as training and education. The differences between people, which were the result of culture, race, or geography, was one of the key elements discussed under incivility earlier in this analysis. Within the focus groups it was generally

accepted that communication and education were the two keys necessary to overcome the differences and creating a civil dialog.

Six different examples of transcripts were provided to highlight the fact that these respondents believed that listening skills were critical to civility. The communication element most frequently mentioned by the respondents was effective listening rather than effective speaking. From the written responses, there was five out of twenty-eight that discussed communication as a critical component of civility.

There is no specific example that disagreed with the role communication plays in creating, defining, or sustaining a civil environment. However, there are two conversations that stand out as providing somewhat of a unique focus on interpersonal communication. The conversations allude to the concept of emotional intelligence and its role in the communication process. Somewhat unwittingly, these two respondents introduce a relatively new theoretical construct into the conversation concerning civility. They introduce the notion of emotional intelligence (EI).

The term 'emotional intelligence' was first coined in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer (Cherniss, 2000). Their recognition of this concept was due in large part to the previous work of Howard Gardner. Gardner first recognized the concept of multiple intelligence. His work centered on interpersonal (the ability to understand other people) and intrapersonal (ability to understand oneself)

intelligence (Cornell University, 2001). Definitions of emotional intelligence currently vary as widely as the number of researchers involved in working on the subject, however, one of the most popular definitions is the original from Gardner: "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Cherniss, 2000).

An example was given in Chapter 4 of a person that may possess higher emotional intelligence. While EI was not a discussion point, the respondent indicated that he was willing to consider someone else's view as being right, which implies open-mindedness and a willingness to listen.

The elements of the transcripts previously cited indicate that the participants believe that effective communication is one key factor necessary to develop civil environments in organizations. Education and training were also presented as effective ways of improving both communication and civility.

Presented within the findings section were four transcript examples and four written comments (4/28) provided by the participants. It is apparent from the data available that training and education, for these subjects, is a key component for creating, building, and sustaining civil organizations.

The section on training has one example of an outlier involving education and its role in the organization. The significance of this conversation on page 92 is that education and training can help alleviate problems but only if it is

conducted effectively. The example revealed that education and training can have a negative result if executed unprofessionally.

The outlier represents the importance of execution. Training and education are necessary parts of the organization. However, if not executed properly, training can have disastrous consequences. In the example provided, trust with the leadership was lost because the employee believed she was having a private conversation. She did not expect an organizational meeting to take place and that her (and other's) opinion would be highlighted and debated. Obviously, there is a time and place for group training as well as a time and place for individual action and attention. If training on civility is to be effective, these distinctions must be remembered.

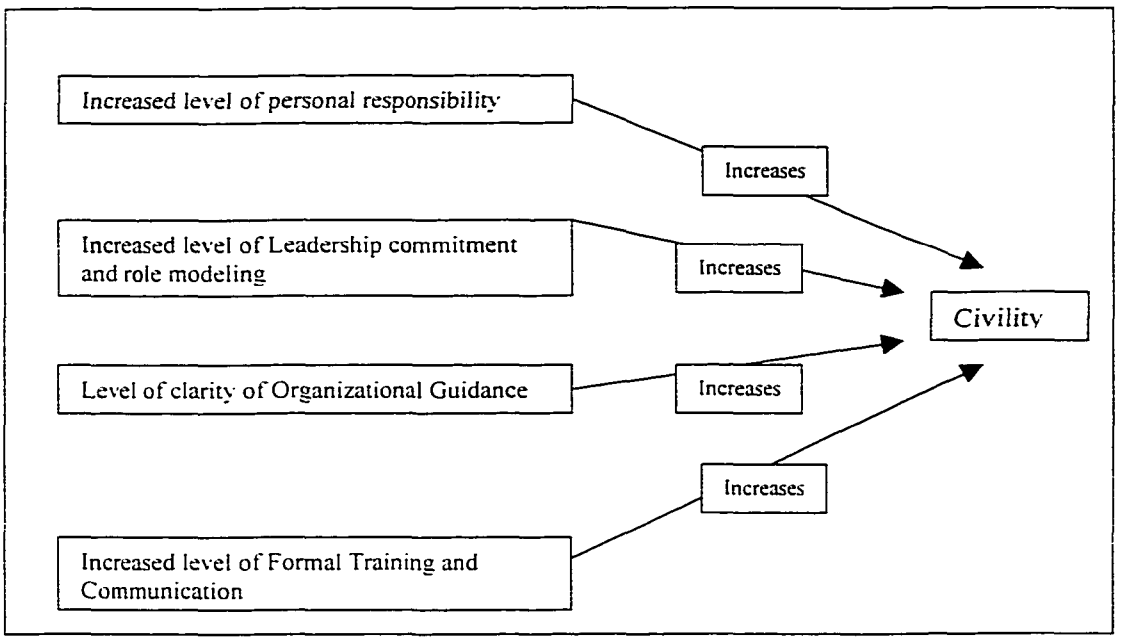
The transcripts presented emphasize the importance the respondents place on effective communication and training. The respondents believe training is an important step toward building and sustaining civility. As was shown, however, training must be executed effectively or it can have and opposite effect on the organization. Effective communication must occur at both the interpersonal and organizational level. What is effective civil communication? These participants did not reflect on what effective communication looks like. They just "know" when it does not exist. Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson have written a book about civil communication. It is entitled Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age: Community, Hope, and Interpersonal Relationships (Arnett & Arneson, 1999).

Arnett and Arneson (1999) claim that today's problems in interpersonal communication stem from American's cultural emphasis on individualism and a total disregard of a collective identity. Furthermore, they believe that social groups within society continue to further fragment. They, like Carter and Peck, believe in the importance of a common good and a commitment to "we" rather than "me". The difference in philosophy is that Arnett and Arneson do not associate the common good with a higher power or religious precept. They state that civil communication's primary task is to keep the conversation going. Arnett and Arneson (1999) present their minimal conditions for civil communication as a (1) commitment to something beyond oneself, (2) an attitude of respectfulness toward others, (3) respectfulness to topics other than your own, (4) a respectfulness to different and incompatible perspectives, and (5) respect to the current historical moment from within which the communication event occurs.

Figure 2 below is a theoretical model of the participants' views of creating civility in organizations. This depiction provides the implications that as levels of individual responsibility increases civility is likely to increase; the more leaders are committed and provide examples for others the more likely civility increases; the clearer the organizational guidance and policies and the better the policies are enforced the more likely civility increases; and finally the more often and more effective formal training and communication occurs the more likely civility increases.

Figure 2

Theoretical model for creating civility



Describing Organizational Civility

The final section of this analysis provides the answer to the last research question: What are the necessary components of a definition of organizational civility?

Discussion

This final theme is critical to understanding civility in the workplace. As noted through out the sections above, the task of defining civility is a complicated one. There are several issues involved. What emerged from the data was the

participants' belief in the absolute requirement to define civility in clear terms. It cannot be ambiguous. Moreover, it must be related to task accomplishment.

I conducted a content analysis of the various words that had been mentioned throughout the interviews to reveal which words were used and how often each appeared. There were twenty-four different terms used to describe civility. Those terms appeared 414 times within the transcripts. The word respect was employed more often than any other word. It emerged 167 times or 40% of the time. The next four closest terms were morality/golden rule (40 times/10%), responsibility (39 times/9%), communication (26 times/6%), and politeness (23 times/6%). At the other end of the spectrum, the descriptors most infrequently used were manners (2 times/less than 1%), conscience (2 times/less than 1%), mutual understanding (3 times/less than 1%), peaceful (3 times/less than 1%), and civilization (3 times/less than 1%). Table 2 provides a pictorial description of the modal characteristics of civility.

Table 2

Participants Responses to Modal Characteristics of Civility

Civility	Mentions
Respect	167
Golden Rule	40
Responsibility	39
Communication	26
Politeness	23
	295

The results of this content analysis form the baseline for the discussion of organizational civility. It is note worthy, that the word most often used to discuss civility was respect and the word most often used to describe incivility was disrespect. Clearly, respect and civility are linked and respect should be a key element of any definition of Organizational Civility (OC).

At the end of each session, I asked the participants to write down what they thought was the most important discussion point or what was most relevant to them out of all the was discussed and debated. Each person presented these thoughts at the conclusion of the group interview (one and a half to two hours). Twelve of the twenty-eight written comments (43%) reflected on the association of respect and civility. This is by far the largest quantity of comments written about any subject relating to this analysis.

The written comments mentioned above show how prevalent respect appeared as the defining element of civility. There were problems and issues associated with its use however. Some of the excerpts and written comments provide a commentary on the difficulties that will need to be addressed when trying to define and implement a program to create civil environments in organizations. Three of the examples presented describe the participants' view that there is a difference between offering someone respect and an individual earning respect. There is a significant and subtle difference between offering someone respect because they are part of the human race and respecting someone

because they are your friend or mentor. The organization needs to define those distinctions and clearly explain what civil respect means to the team. That difference must be clarified through the definition or through education and training.

Several examples within this findings section discussed the importance of relating any definition of organizational civility within the context of task accomplishment. The need or requirement for civil behavior in an organization can go beyond the bounds of what is simply necessary to get the job done. Civility, however, should not take precedence over getting the job done. In fact, civil dialog is completely focused on continuing a conversation thus enabling the normal organizational issues like conflict to be resolved.

Another series of excerpts presented the respondents concern, again, with the issue of variance. This issue was first raised earlier in the section on incivility. These participants know what they mean by civil or uncivil behaviors and can define civility for themselves. However, they perceive a problem in encouraging or enforcing civility because of the differences between people, which are created from many different reasons. Furthermore, they believe that there may be several levels of civility. Some spoke about it as levels and others indicated that there was a surface level of politeness, respect, and political correctness while underneath there was a much deeper and more important level of civility that could only be approached by trust, honesty, and earned respect.

The first example discussed the concern that organizations may have different civility needs. The groups did decide that there is probably a minimum level of civility required for almost any organization but that civility in the workplace is still organizationally defined.

In another excerpt presented from Group 1 in Chapter 4, the participants discussed their concern that there may be degrees of civility or degrees of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior. These behaviors, according to the respondents, vary from person to person. So, anyone wanting to enhance civility in the workplace would have to work out plans to help clarify the intent and meaning of their effort.

The findings in this section presented three more examples of regional differences that represent diverse behaviors of people. Additional examples of the way diversity can impact an organization's attempt to create or modify behavior, were also provided. This highlights that too often leadership assumes that everyone has the same understanding of issues and problems, which is often not the case. Obviously, not everyone acts and behaves the same. Human beings have numerous differences, which effect both our behavior and the perception of that behavior. Yet, organizations seem to relinquish any responsibility within their settings to help define and clarify what is acceptable to that organization. It is too often assumed that people understand behavioral expectations. The current trend in society would indicate that this problem is becoming much worse with

society's continued fragmentation. Ultimately, organizations will have to discover ways to address this problem.

Another transcript example in this section related to the issue of perception of behavior. Common sense dictates that individuals perceive the same behavior differently. What is important to one may not be important to the other. Once more this highlights the need for organizational involvement to specifically define the expected behavior for the workplace. According to a few participants, if a coworker does not say "Hello" or is acting "unhappy" at work, their behavior is a question of civility. Most respondents believed that as long as the behavior was consistent it would not bother them. However, if the inconsistent behavior was targeted towards a single employee then it could pose a problem.

Group 3 provided yet another important distinction to the possibility of levels of civility. The group discussed the difference between surface level civility and a deeper more meaningful level. They believed that an organization could establish policy and enforce a surface level kind of civility but it would take different approaches to get at the "root" problem. It is the participants' belief that the root must be fixed or it will simply corrupt the rest of the organization again.

It is evident that the respondents believe that respect is a key component of civility. The outlier responses also reveal that the participants have problems settling all of the issues of differences between people and how they perceive

respect. In some cases, the participants observed that the Golden Rule could be a defining characteristic of respect.

A conversation in Group 4 provided the data for this next section. The dialog concerned how people might handle and react to all the variance in personality and perception. This group felt that it was best to treat people as individuals and use the Golden Rule as the basis for interaction with other people.

There are two examples of the written work these groups were asked to provide that relate to the Golden Rule. Both cases claim that the Golden Rule is the answer to solving the problem of people not being civil in their interaction toward one another. These two responses represent about 7% of the total responses given. It does appear that some people associated being civil with the proper use of the Golden Rule.

The data indicates that these participants generally felt that the Golden Rule was beneficial in helping clarify expectations about people's behavior in the workplace. Clarification was an issue in both the central tendency and outlier cases. In the first category, the respondents believed that it was a clear guide to establishing guidelines on behavior. They also stated that the Golden Rule was not just a religious precept. It applied to both the secular and the religious. On the other hand, the outlier cases claimed that the Golden Rule still did not speak clearly enough to appropriate behaviors because of people's differing interpretations. It is obvious for these few participants that the organization

would have to establish some means to further define pertinent behavior so that the people on the fringes would have a more complete picture of appropriate workplace behavior.

The Golden Rule was mentioned as a possible precept for a common moral understanding in the literature review. Authors Stephen Carter and M. Scott Peck, both stated their own belief in the Golden Rule as a central element of a common moral understanding. These participants did not mention the Golden Rule in those terms. They did present the GR as a guide to help operationalize respect. The respondents also believed that the GR, while widely accepted, would still need to be defined by the organization. There are some people who may treat others in a fashion they themselves are comfortable with but would still be outside of the bounds of decency and respect advocated by the organization. This analysis revealed that respect as an integral component of a complete definition of organization civility. Also, that the Golden Rule, when appropriately clarified, could assist in describing appropriate behavior. The definition of OC should make reference to both individual and organizational responsibility. Furthermore, there appears to be an argument that the definition should also include emotional intelligence and task accomplishment.

Summary

This data analysis reviewed the data collected from the four focus groups on organizational civility. The process of coding, recoding, axial coding and returning to each full transcript numerous times and finally mapping all the different nodes resulted in four major categories of information. The categories of information were (1) descriptions and causes of incivility, (2) incivility in the workplace, (3) creating civility, and (4) describing organizational civility.

Within the first theme, the data indicated that disrespect was the prominent term used to discuss incivility. The data further implied that there is more than one cause of incivility. It is a complex issue perpetuated because of the differences between people and further exacerbated by lack of training, poor leadership and unclear expectations.

The data further indicated that there was very little doubt that these respondents saw incivility in the workplace as an organizational problem. The participants provided numerous examples of personal experiences involving incivility and why they believed incivility had occurred. Workplace incivility grouped around two types: (1) the one-on-one or person-to-person interaction, and (2) incivility issues as a result of organizational issues or leadership action/inaction.

The third section looked at four primary areas of civility in the workplace. The four themes were: (1) personal responsibility, (2) leadership responsibility,

(3) organizational guidelines and policy, and (4) communication and training. The participants in this study clearly believe that individuals must take responsibility for their own behavior. There was little question that there are numerous reasons to blame the problem on someone or something else. In this case, however, the respondents believe that personal responsibility must be a primary element of any organizational attempts to create civil environments. The focus group participants did not place all the responsibility on individuals to behave appropriately. They also applied responsibility for creating civility on the shoulders of the organizational leadership. Leadership must define the expectations, establish guidelines for behavior, train and educate the workforce, but primarily lead by example. It is the age-old problem of "do as I say not as I do." That theme has seldom proven to be effective throughout history and certainly, if these respondents are correct, will not work in trying to create or sustain a civil environment. The third theme of this section under workplace civility focused on organizational issues of providing direction, establishing rules, providing for rewards and punishment, and having the courage to enforce the standards. The one caution that was sounded was the notion that there is a limit to establishing rules and that it can easily move to the absurd. The final section of this theme was on communication and training. The data for this section showed the need for effective interpersonal and organizational communication. It also highlighted training and education as key components of a civil environment.

The theories behind emotional intelligence and dialogic civility were introduced as potential answers to some of the issues presented in this section.

The final component extracted from these data was the issue of describing organizational civility. Respect was shown to be the primary defining element of civility. Yet, there were many concerns with operationalization of the term. These data presented many examples of how the differences between people make defining terms and ideas difficult yet critically important. The Golden Rule was presented as a possible answer in further defining the meaning and intent of respect. The Golden Rule can only be effective if there is a corresponding emphasis on increasing each person's emotional intelligence. Increased levels of emotional intelligence will allow some to recognize how their behavior effects others. This feedback will ensure that a person's behavior is consistent with the values promoted by the Golden Rule.

This information is significant in trying to establish a definition of organizational civility. These data have shown that responsibility is significant and that respect is an integral component of a definition but must be defined. The Golden Rule can help clarify the intent of respect but only in context of increased awareness based on increased emotional intelligence. Finally, all of these aspects must fit within the context of the organizational mission. With these differing aspects in mind a definition of Organizational Civility can be achieved. I define Organizational Civility (OC) as: that aspect of an organization's culture that

embraces a norm of mutual respect and responsibility and enhances a person's ability to recognize their own behavior and its impact on the organization.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Incivility was presented in the literature as a problem costing employers billions of dollars annually. Furthermore, it was shown to cause stress and high levels of anxiety in employees. The literature also indicated that people are beginning to take notice of the problem. Yet, very little research of civility in the workplace had actually been documented. The books and articles that have been written presented a view of civility based on respect. In some cases, a respect that was linked with a higher a higher moral authority and in other cases was simply based on being a communal member of the human race. I compiled what the literature offered and formed an initial definition of organizational civility: An organizational culture that promotes a norm of treating everyone with respect and dignity and enhances a person's ability to recognize how the impact of their own behavior affects the people or the community of people around them.

This definition, at the time, combined what I considered to be the most important aspect of what I discovered during the literature review and years of reading and research in areas of organizations, diversity, and human relations issues. The primary dilemma was that workplace civility at that stage was only a concept. The majority of the literature review and my own conclusions had not

been investigated from the viewpoint of the organization or its employees. Exploring the cause, the description, the impact, and the possible solutions to incivility and civility required research in the workplace.

This study attempted to fill that void in the literature by conducting focus group interviews with employees in the workplace. The purpose of this study was to combine current literature together with the viewpoints of employees. Understanding the employee's view of the problem is an important first step as organizations attempt to eliminate or reduce this problem. Furthermore, most research has focused on identifying and defining incivility issues. There is very little research on creating civil environments. There is a substantial difference between identifying uncivil individuals in organizations and changing their behavior and with organizations taking active steps to create more civil cultures.

In this study, focus group interviews were conducted with four groups of employees. The sessions were audio-tape recorded. Transcripts from the tapes were prepared, coded, analyzed and modeled. From the coded data and mental modeling process four themes emerged: (1) descriptions and causes of incivility, (2) incivility in the workplace, (3) creating civility, and (4) describing organizational civility.

Conclusions

The research questions study are:

1. Do the participants in this study recognize incivility to be a problem? If so, what types of behaviors characterize these acts?
2. Do the employees recognize that they have a responsibility to help create civil environments in organizations? If so, what do they see as their responsibility?
3. What do the respondents believe is the organization's role in establishing civil environments for employees to work in?
4. What are the necessary components of a definition of organizational civility?

Summary of Findings

After the literature review, collection, coding and analysis of the data the research questions can be addressed. The findings for each of the research question first presented in Chapter one are presented below.

> Q1. Do the participants in this study recognize incivility to be a problem? If so, what types of behaviors characterize these acts?

Analysis of the data provides a clear picture that these participants believe that incivility is a problem in the workplace. They presented numerous personal examples of situations where incivility had occurred. Additionally, these respondents presented cases which revealed that incivility in the workplace can be

placed into two categories: one-on-one, person-to-person issues and organizational or leadership derived incivility.

Disrespect was the predominant term used to characterize incivility. Violence, rudeness and ignorance were terms that were also mentioned frequently.

> Q2: Do the employees recognize that they have a responsibility to help create civil environments in organizations? If so, what do they see as their responsibility?

The respondents in this study indicated a strong tendency to place responsibility for creating and maintaining civility with each individual. They would not accept that there is an excuse to be uncivil if treated uncivilly. To some extent they believed that it was possible for employees to create civil environments on their own. For the most part, however, they did acknowledge that if a civil environment did not already exist it would be difficult to establish without the help and direction of organizational leadership.

Q3: What do the respondents believe is the organization's role in establishing civil environments for employees to work in?

An analysis of the data yielded a definite expectation from these respondents that the organization has a responsibility for creating civil work places. The discussion raged over the extent of that expectation and the ability of leadership to affect change. However, a clear expectation exists that the organization will establish a policy, implement it, and enforce it. Furthermore,

and more importantly, it is expected that leadership will model acceptable workplace behavior. Additionally, the participants in this study believe that the two most important resources an organization has to clarify and effect change is communication and training.

Q4: What are the necessary components of a definition of organizational civility?

The literature review and analysis of data provided a concept for a definition of organizational civility. The literature review provided some of the initial components. The data collection and analysis confirmed most of the thoughts from the literature review but also added many new points for consideration. The initial definition contained elements of culture, norms, the golden rule, and an individual's ability to recognize their behavior and how it impacts others. The data analysis added to this the issues of both personal and leadership responsibility for establishing policy and exhibiting appropriate behavior. The analysis more closely aligned respect with the golden rule. The issue of someone recognizing their own behavior and how it impacts the people around them was closely associated with the theories on emotional intelligence. Finally, the data revealed that any definition of organization civility must be placed in parallel with mission accomplishment. I propose a definition of organizational civility as: An organization culture that encourages both individual and leadership responsibility for establishing and exhibiting behavior that

promotes the norm of treating all employees with respect (treating others as you wish to be treated) and enhances each person's ability to recognize how the impact of their own behavior effects the community of people around them (Emotional Intelligence) which must occur within the context of the organization's mission.

Emergent Findings

Diversity

The predominantly recognized cause of incivility was the issue of diversity. Somewhat surprising the differences were not limited to race or culture. Regional and geographic differences were frequently mentioned. The more common but least mentioned differences in personality and perception also were listed as significant. There was no single broad approach presented by the participants as a means of resolving problems presented by diversity. Generally, the respondents believed that the answers lie in treating people as individuals, following the precepts of the Golden Rule, and treating everyone with respect. As mentioned earlier, while the basic tenets of respect and Golden Rule do apply, it is necessary to further define appropriate behavior in the workplace, communicate that behavior effectively and provide training when necessary.

Dialogic Civility

Dialogic civility was presented in Chapter Five as a communication theory developed by the authors to build a common communicative space for civil dialog between diverse people. Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson (1999) feel strongly about civility and its role in American society. Together they wrote a book titled, Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age: Community, Hope, and Interpersonal Relationships. Many communication texts discuss communication as an analysis of the process. Most people are familiar with these types of text where authors look at the circular nature of communication and analyze the sender, receiver, feedback and noise issues that create less than 100% understanding. This current example is different; these authors look at interpersonal communication before the event actually occurs. They are interested in what people bring to the conversation before it begins that either helps or hinders the communication event, or perhaps more appropriately, what can make the conversation civil or uncivil.

Arnett and Arneson (1999) claim that today's problems in interpersonal communication stem from American's cultural emphasis on individualism and a total disregard of a collective identity. Furthermore, they believe that social groups within society continue to further fragment. They, like Carter and Peck, believe in the importance of a common good and a commitment to "we" rather than "me". The difference in philosophy is that Arnett and Arneson do not

associate the common good with a higher power or religious precept. They state that civil communication's primary task is to keep the conversation going. Arnett and Arneson (1999) present their minimal conditions for civil communication as a (1) commitment to something beyond oneself, (2) an attitude of respectfulness toward others, (3) respectfulness to topics other than your own, (4) a respectfulness to different and incompatible perspectives, and (5) respect to the current historical moment from within which the communication event occurs.

Civility, according to Arnett and Arneson, does not require a person to change their personal attitudes. Civility does require an individual to establish a goal of keeping the conversation going. Unreflective cynicism has become a normative part of American Society (Arnett & Arneson, 1999). These authors see dialogic civility as a background narrative that all people should bring to a communication event and that can replace cynicism with hope. It should remind us of how we should address each other. In their view, there are no longer any common places for communication. Dialogic civility can become a philosophical common place. In an age of diversity and difference, there is need for a background narrative formed by a need for a minimum common ground for guiding interpersonal communication. This narrative does not dictate how someone responds but does establish some assumptions that if agreed upon by enough people could influence people's perceptions and actions. The central element of a public narrative of dialogic civility is "respect for others".

Arnett and Arneson (1999, p. 303) list six precepts for dialogic civility in a cynical age:

> 1. Communication must reclaim the public domain as the major part of communicative interaction in an age of diversity.
> 2. Respect in the public domain requires a term that reminds us of the public arena – dialogic civility.
> 3. Dialectic responsiveness calls us to attend to the metaphor of the other and responsibility as historically needed emphasis in a time of excess emphasis on self and crisis.
> 4. Dialogic civility keeps the conversation going in a postmodern culture that lacks meta-narrative agreement.
> 5. Dialogic civility embraces a web of metaphoric significance
> 6. A web of metaphoric significance leads to a narrative form of guidance.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) was presented as a theory that could explain a person's ability to recognize their own behavior and how that behavior effects others. As stated earlier, the term 'emotional intelligence' was first coined in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer (Cherniss, 2000). Their recognition of this concept was due in large part to the previous work of Howard Gardner. Gardner first recognized the concept of multiple intelligence. His work centered on interpersonal (the ability to understand other people) and intrapersonal (ability to understand oneself) intelligence (Cornell University, 2001). Howard Gardner defined emotional intelligence as: "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate

among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Cherniss, 2000).

Research conducted on emotional intelligence indicates that it is a far more important indicator of a person's success than the more traditional intelligence quotient (IQ). It is estimated that IQ accounts for approximately 4% to 25 % of the variance of job performance, which naturally means there is at least 75% variance remaining to be accounted for (Cherniss, 2000). Many believe that a large part of that variance could be EQ.

Daniel Goleman (1998) believes that emotional intelligence can be measured, learned and developed. Goleman conducted a study of 200 global companies. His research found that the so-called "soft skills" correlate with emotional intelligence. It is a matter or self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills all wrapped together under emotional intelligence. A leader capable of understanding the emotional makeup of a subordinate is able to move that person in a direction that helps accomplish the organizational mission and it is likely to lead to transformation of the employee.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has just begun the research effort directed toward civility in organizations. Organizational civility is an interdisciplinary contention and requires further examination. Future research efforts could take many directions.

As mentioned earlier, this study investigated civility through the use of bureaucratic type organizations. Research is required to determine if other researchers studying different organizations would reach the same conclusions. The thesis could position these organizations in a comparison and contrasting relationship. For example, bureaucratic vs. non-bureaucratic, public vs. private, union vs. non-union, and profit vs. not for profit institutions. Employee's views are often constructed through social interaction within the context of the organization and therefore it is likely that employees from different types of organizations may have contrasting views. However, one problem presented in this study concerned the differences between people and how that led to incivility. These differences likely exist across all types of organizations. Additionally, relationships between people develop in similar ways. Consequently, it is just as likely that there may not be any differences in views of civility or incivility based on organizational types. It is a question that can and should be investigated.

Another research effort needs to be directed toward further investigation of the possible correlation of emotional intelligence and civility. Does a person with higher emotional intelligence behave more civilly than someone with lower emotional intelligence? There are a number of scales that measure a person's emotional intelligence. Anyone of these measures combined with a recent incivility scale, developed by Christine Pearson, could be combined to determine if there is a correlation between EI and civility.

Research is also required to develop and perfect an implementation program for civility in organizations. This type of applied research would need to take the elements from the findings of this research project and develop a training plan. The obvious approach would be to issue a pretest measuring civility, conduct the training session, and conduct a posttest to determine the impact of the training on attitudes and views of the employees. This kind of research is absolutely necessary if civility is to move from theory to action.

It is also important to continue to develop research concerning the impact of incivility on employees in the workplace. To date, there are few research efforts directed at the impact of incivility. A study examining incivility through exit interviews of employees voluntarily leaving the workplace could be illustrative and provide further indications of the importance of finding ways to create and sustain civil environments in organizations.

A final research effort should be directed toward organizational leadership. Most of the current research, including my own, has looked at the issue from the viewpoint of the employees. A critical component of any applied research will be the opinions and views of leadership toward the problems presented by incivility and if, in their view, there are solutions to the problem. If so, what are they and how would they see them being implemented?

Conclusion

I began this research effort after concluding that a previous project did not meet my own expectations. There appeared to be a basic problem that we as humans in many ways lost our ability to communicate about the problems we are facing. It appeared that civil dialog was lost. There was very little previous research on civility. This project built upon what was available and has expanded upon it. While I will continue my own research in this area, it is my hope that others will pick up the banner of civility and carry this research even further. I welcome agreement and disagreement but more than anything I welcome a civil discourse concerning the problem of civility in the workplace. This is a problem that is upon us now and requires realistic, well-researched theory to help provide solutions. Society continues to fragment and finding common ground from which this large diverse population can meet and discuss the issues that confront us is one of the most important problems we face. The findings from this research agree that incivility is a problem. It is incumbent on all of us in society to find solutions.

Organizational Civility presents numerous implications for organizational and leadership training, such as, developing a shared purpose and vision for the organization, collectively pursuing the vision, the collective responsibility for organizational success and failure, establishing expected organizational and

personal behavior within the organization, developing trust and mutual respect, and even predetermined processes for decision making.

After completing the data collection and analysis, I have reached my own conclusions of how to respond to workplace incivility which is through organizational civility which is that aspect of an organization's culture that embraces a norm of mutual respect and responsibility and enhances a person's ability to recognize their own behavior and its impact on the organization.

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