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Yoav Vardi and Ely Weitz
*Misbehavior in Organizations: Theory, Research, and Management*
Contents

Series Foreword
   Edwin A. Fleishman and Jeanette N. Cleveland xiii

Preface xv

Acknowledgments xix

I: ORGANIZATIONAL MISBEHAVIOR

1 ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND MISBEHAVIOR 3
   Prevalence of Misbehavior at Work 4
   Misbehavior in OB Discourse 5
   A Historical Perspective 15
   Toward a Framework for Misbehavior 22

2 A GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR OMB ANALYSIS 24
   Need for Conceptual Clarification 26
   Definitional Implications 31
   OMB as Intentional Behavior 36
   Antecedents of Misbehavior 38
   A General Framework 44
   A Road Map 47

II: OMB MANIFESTATIONS AND ANTECEDENTS

3 INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL MANIFESTATIONS OF OMB 51
   Intrapersonal Manifestations 53
   Interpersonal Manifestations 61

4 PRODUCTION AND POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS 76
   Counterproductive Workplace Behavior 77
   Political Manifestations 83

5 PROPERTY MANIFESTATIONS 95
   Physical Manifestations 97

ix
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Manifestations</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Final Observation</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ANTECEDENTS OF OMB</strong></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentions and Attitudes</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect and Emotion</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others’ Influence</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7 POSITION AND GROUP-LEVEL ANTECEDENTS</strong></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job-Level Antecedents</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group-Level Influences</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 ORGANIZATION-LEVEL ANTECEDENTS</strong></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Type</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Culture and Climate</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Control Systems</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III: IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9 MANAGERIAL ETHICS: AN OMB PERSPECTIVE</strong></td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Framework for Unethical Managerial Behavior</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of Ethical Decision Making</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An OMB Perspective of Unethical Decisions</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Israeli Bank Shares Regulation Affair</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Enron Affair</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary—The Organizationthink Phenomenon</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Propositions on Managerial Ethics</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sad Epilogue</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 MEASUREMENT DILEMMAS IN OMB RESEARCH</strong></td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilemmas Pertaining to Measurement Strategy</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems Affecting the Measurement of OMB</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Measure OMB</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11 A MODEL OF OMB MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward OMB Management: Prevention Versus Response</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rationale for OMB Management</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Integrative Model of OMB Management</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMB Interventions</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Implications</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendixes</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Index</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Index</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a compelling need for innovative approaches to the solution of many pressing problems involving human relationships in today’s society. Such approaches are more likely to be successful when they are based on sound research and applications. This Series in Applied psychology offers publications which emphasize state-of-the-art research and its application to important issues of human behavior in a variety of societal settings. The objective is to bridge both academic and applied interests.

This book fills an important void in the study and understanding of organizational behavior. Work in this field historically emphasized the study of positive, desirable behaviors facilitating the performance of individuals, teams, and systems in furthering organizational objectives. Relatively little attention has been given to research on what the authors call organizational misbehaviors (OMB) that can be dysfunctional in furthering the objectives of the organization.

In this book, Professors Vardi and Weitz present a systematic, careful, and thorough analysis of organizational misbehavior. For the most part, OMB has been indirectly addressed in the organizational behavior literature. There has been some discussion of dysfunctional political misbehavior, negative affect or emotions, or specific negative behaviors. This book is one of the first to organize and synthesize the diverse kinds of misbehavior in organizations.

The authors identify a range of organizational misbehaviors including “soldiering”, as described in Taylor’s early work, to vandalism and sabotage to modern issues of data theft, substance abuse on the job, sexual harassment, political behaviors such as’ whistle blowing, deception and Interpersonal manifestations such as incivility, bullying, and jealousy. Next, antecedents and important correlates
of organizational misbehavior are presented, including findings from different job types and organizations, organizational climates, and various control systems. Values and ethics are presented within the OMB context using up to date cases illustrating ethical violations including the Enron affair.

The authors have an impressive history of contributions to the literature of organizational psychology, management, leadership, human resource management, and career development. They have collaborated on research in OMB and related areas. We are very pleased to have this book in our Series in Applied Psychology.

The book provides an important framework and typology for OMB, and provides an agenda for future research in this area. The book also highlights the relevance of these issues to effective management of human resources in organizations. The book will appeal to academic researchers in industrial and organizational psychology and to those in related disciplines concerned with the behavior of individuals in organizations. It can serve as a text or supplementary text in upper level I/O psychology and OB courses. The book will also be of interest to thoughtful managers concerned with these issues in a variety of organizations in the public and private sectors.
Preface

Ideas for new constructs come from different sources. The idea for Organizational Misbehavior (OMB) came from a surprise at being caught off guard. The incident was recorded in Vardi’s personal file and is quoted from there. It happened during the fall term of 1990 when he taught a course in an Executive MBA program at Cleveland State University. The course title was: Behavioral Sciences for Organizations. All of the 24 students attending the class on those Saturday mornings were either managers or had previous experience as managers in a wide variety of industries. Their real-life experiences, as well as their natural preference for the practical over the academic, were often shared in class vocally and enthusiastically.

Dr. Vardi wrote the following in his notes for an essay on teaching Organizational Behavior to managers:

During the class on work motivation, I posed a general question to the group: How can we design the work to be done so that people will want to expend more effort? Eventually we got to discuss different theories of work motivation. They particularly liked Adams’ inequity theory. We also explored the classical job design model by Hackman and Oldham. The students seemed to appreciate it, as many OB students do. It is one of these Organizational Behavior models that makes good theoretical sense and also seems to have practical value because it clearly demonstrates how employees react to their own jobs; as a consequence, it has implications for supervisors and managers. As we explored the model with its different facets and emphasized the role of the intervening “critical psychological states” in eliciting good performance, satisfaction, and motivation, John M. (who at the time ran a large manufacturing department) said, quite cynically: “You know, professor, I like this model, but there is one problem with it.” Expecting the usual comments about subjectivity versus objectivity or about the role of individual differences, I was taken by surprise when he said: “The way I see it, the problem is that this model has nothing to do with reality. Excuse me, but only academics who don’t really manage people can view the world like this. My job as a manager is not to make work more interesting or more satisfying. My job is to make sure people don’t waste time, don’t steal, don’t cheat their supervisors, don’t take drugs, and don’t fight with one another. Believe me, I am more of a cop than a cheerleader. I don’t want to give them more autonomy, I just want them to be honest and do their jobs.”
This quite uncharacteristic outburst started a heated class debate about misconduct at work—issues that had never come up in class before. They all recalled incidents at their organizations. They felt that there is a lot of improper behavior going around. Not only employees do this, they observed; executives engage in it. They even admitted that they, too, stray from time to time (small stuff you know, like making long-distance phone calls, doing their term papers on company time, etc.). I was completely caught off guard and taken aback. The model indeed says nothing about predicting misbehavior on the job. I promised to do a quick search of the OB literature for next class to see whether anybody writes about misconduct at work and why it happens. I was intrigued and spent the week skimming management and OB textbooks and found very little. I read several scholarly reviews of the field in the prominent Annual Review of Psychology — not a word.

It was then when I began to suspect that Organizational Behavior as a discipline has for some reason neglected to explore what I decided to call Organizational Misbehavior. Quite apologetically, I told my students that indeed there are no OB models that systematically explain why members of organizations are motivated to engage in misconduct and concluded that they were right to feel quite cynical toward them. If these models indeed fail to account for the negative aspects of work behavior, they offer only partial explanations for the wide range of organizational behaviors in the “real world.” I added that because we have a formal concept to describe exceptionally good behavior (OCB—Organizational Citizenship Behavior), we might as well have a new concept to tap “bad” behavior: OMB—Organizational Mis-Behavior).

It caught on.

The next few years were spent conducting graduate-level seminars and workshops, first in Cleveland with Yoash Wiener and later in Tel Aviv with Ely Weitz, focusing on such questions as: How prevalent is organizational misbehavior? What are the different forms of such misconduct? Who engages in them and why? Over 10 years, we collected hundreds of stories and questionnaires from participants willing to share their experiences and opinions (mostly anonymously, of course). We started to identify a lot of data about the economic costs of such phenomena as theft by employees, corporate fraud, substance abuse, computer and information sabotage, sexual harassment in organizations, monitoring and control, and much more. The evidence is staggering and quite overwhelming. Although many work organizations have had to deal with forms of improper conduct for years, either by choosing to ignore them or battling them, academia seems to be falling behind in realizing the extent of such phenomena. This initial effort culminated in a theoretical article entitled “Misbehavior in Organizations: A Motivational Framework” written with Dr. Wiener (1996) and a number of research papers with Dr. Weitz (2000–2002). At Tel Aviv University, over 30 studies for master’s theses were conducted during that period, all devoted to the study of OMB.

The rationale for our book is this. It is safe to assume that most, if not all, members of work organizations, throughout their employment, engage in some form
of misbehavior related to their jobs, albeit in varying degrees of frequency and intensity and for different reasons. Certainly unconventional work-related manifestations by employees are not new. Some date employee theft (a major form of OMB), for instance, to ancient times. Scientific Management brought such practices as soldiering and goldbricking out into the open and the early proponents of the Human Relations production restriction and rate busting (and their consequences) as early as the 1920s. Nonetheless, it appears that most management literature has presented normative, if not plain positive, aspects of behavior at work. We found that only in recent years have organization scholars become more willing to acknowledge that various forms of work-related misbehavior by employees and managers are prevalent, and that their consequences for employers are indeed quite significant and costly.

We wish to emphasize that misbehavior in business is not at all a new phenomenon. We simply wish to reintroduce the topic into mainstream organization studies. As early as 1776, Adam Smith argued that salaried managers would not administer honestly:

The directors of such companies, however, being the managers rather of other people’s money than of their own, it cannot well be expected, that they should watch over it with the same anxious vigilance with which the partners in a private copartnery frequently watch over their own. Like the stewards of a rich man, they are apt to consider attention to small matters as not for their master’s honour, and very easily give themselves a dispensation from having it. Negligence and profusion, therefore, must always prevail, more or less, in the management of the affairs of such a company. (Smith, 1937, p. 700)

Thus, the purpose of this book is to delineate a new agenda for OB theory and research. It is intended for students of organizations as well as practitioners who manage organizational behavior. The message is a simple one: For many years we, the scholars aligned with mainstream research paradigms that make up OB have been leaning toward the more positive depiction of organizational reality. For most of us, behavior patterns that are unconventional, so to speak, constitute deviance in the sociological sense or unethical behavior in the managerial sense. We have not come to grips with the fact that certain forms of organizational misbehavior are indeed commonplace, are prevalent, are part of any organizational life, and are not necessarily bad or dysfunctional for either perpetrators or organizations. We must explore misbehavior simply to better understand people's behavior in the workplace. In short, we can no longer dismiss organizational misbehavior as some esoteric form of deviant behavior. To claim that such deviance is indeed pervasive is to use an oxymoron. We know OMB is part and parcel of OB.

We devote this book to the study and management of misbehavior in work organizations. We do not take a pessimistic view of organizational life, just a realistic one. Part I discusses the prevalence of these phenomena. It then searches
for typologies and definitions for misbehavior in the management literature using a historical perspective and proposes a general framework of OMB. Part II explores some important manifestations and antecedents of OMB at different levels of analysis—person, job, organization. Finally, Part III presents practical and methodological implications for managers and researchers. Thus, we offer a comprehensive and systematically developed framework for the identification and management of misbehavior in organizations.
During the past 13 years, in which this book gradually emerged from unorthodox questions about the field of Organizational Behavior, through numerous graduate seminars and research projects, to this final format, many wise and caring individuals have contributed willingly and enthusiastically to the Organizational Misbehavior (OMB) approach. They all deserve our gratitude and most heartfelt appreciation.

First, we thank Professor Emeritus Yoash Wiener of Cleveland State University with whom scores of most challenging and rewarding hours were spent in conceiving the foundations of the motivational model of OMB. As we began to evaluate various possible answers for the inevitable question of why would employees misbehave on the job, we were struck by the similarities between our explanations of normative and non-normative behaviors. We realized that people misbehave at work because they want to; because they have their reasons just as they do for behaving properly. This intellectual exercise culminated in a 1992 paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, in which the motivational framework of OMB was first introduced.

Professor Peter Frost of the University of British Columbia deserves special thanks for his editorial role in reviewing, improving and accepting an early (1996) paper on behalf of Organization Science. In his introductory statement he recognized the importance of studying organizational misbehavior. At Cleveland State University professors Stu Klein and Ken Dunnegan carefully read and commented on early manuscripts. Dr. Vlado Dimovski of the University of Ljubljana and other members of the 1990–1991 doctoral seminar, were the first students to systematically search the literature and articulate ideas about OMB. Cornell University ILR professors Tove Hammer and Larry Williams encouraged the project in its earlier stages. Our colleagues at Tel Aviv University commented on various research projects and papers that eventually became the raw material for this book: Yinon Cohen, David DeVries, Yitchak Haberfeld, Dan Jacobson, Gideon Kunda, Guy Mundlak, Amos Spector and Haya Stier. Moshe Semyonov, Ephraim Yaar and Yinon Cohen strongly supported the initial idea to write this book and actually suggested this co-authorship. Professors Hugh Gunz from the University of Toronto, Aharon Tziner from Netanya College, and the late Rami Sagie from Bar Ilan University, contributed helpful commentaries on papers and earlier chapter