

**Institute of Criminal Justice Studies**  
**University of Portsmouth**

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Security and Risk Management of the University of Portsmouth.

**Workplace violence as a strategic organisational risk**

Submitted by: Richard Edward Diston

Date: August 2018

Declaration:

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the above-named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Word Count: 50786

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

Concern about violence at work has led to many studies over the last few decades, however a solution remains elusive. The literature is dominated by similar perspectives on the issue, all of which focus on violence as an operational issue, rather than as a strategic risk to business aims and therefore a problem of corporate governance. The aim of this research was to understand how violence as a risk area is perceived by professionals working within demonstrably affected sectors throughout their careers, and whether a formal, risk-based framework for its management at organisational level would be perceived as beneficial. Specifically, it sought to examine the perception of violence risk in relation to other risk areas within organisations, identify the risk management models and methods that are currently in use for the management of violence in the workplace, examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current violence risk management approaches and establish to whether a formal risk management model would be seen as desirable by practitioners. A qualitative research methodology was employed, based on semi-structured interviews with 20 management professionals from a range of backgrounds including security, consulting, healthcare, education, training and NGOs. The participants' accounts suggested that the organisations they had experienced were generally unaware of the behaviour types that constitute violence (with a preoccupation with the physical form only), and therefore did perceive violence as a strategic risk. They did not engage to a great extent with the relevant academic and grey literature, and so awareness of existing models for violence management was limited. Opinions varied on effective countermeasures but tended to support a common theme in the literature that emphasised the importance of appropriate senior management engagement. The findings suggested that there would be support for a formal violence risk management model that addresses the issue as a strategic risk. This research therefore concludes by proposing a new typology for violence that supports practical risk management approaches, together with a formal, specific organisational violence risk management framework.

329 Words

# Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements .....	5
Lists of figures and tables .....	6
List of abbreviations.....	6
Chapter One: Introduction.....	8
Background.....	8
Research aims.....	13
Outline of chapters .....	13
Chapter Two: Understanding workplace violence .....	15
Introduction .....	15
Literature search and selection strategy .....	15
Definitions.....	16
The relationship between organisations and violence risk.....	32
The risks of violence to organisations.....	41
Discussion .....	45
Chapter Three: Workplace violence risk management in practice .....	48
Introduction .....	48
Formal violence risk management models .....	48
Approaches to workplace violence mitigation .....	57
Discussion .....	68
Chapter Four: Research Design.....	71
Introduction .....	71
Research methodology .....	71
Research method.....	72
Research experience.....	79
Conclusion.....	80
Chapter Five: Practitioner perceptions of workplace violence risks.....	82
Introduction .....	82
Organisational definitions of workplace violence.....	82
Organisational violence risk perception compared to other risks .....	86
Ownership of violence risks in organisations.....	92
Sources of advice for violence risks .....	96
How violence is assessed as a risk .....	101
Discussion .....	104
Chapter Six: Practitioner perspectives on the management of workplace violence risks .....	109

Introduction .....	109
Formal risk management models .....	109
Weaknesses of the current violence risk mitigation methods.....	111
Strengths of the current violence risk mitigation methods .....	117
Areas for improvement.....	121
Formal structures for violence risk management.....	123
Discussion .....	127
Chapter Seven: Conclusion .....	130
Summary of findings .....	130
Implications of research findings .....	134
Recommendations .....	137
References .....	141
Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview schedule .....	160
Appendix 2: Initial participant introduction letter .....	162
Appendix 3: Letter of ethical approval .....	164
Appendix 4: Ethics review checklist UPR16 .....	166
Appendix 5: Interview participant consent form.....	167

## Acknowledgements

The thesis you are viewing has been the result of a long (sometimes painful!) journey of discovery. During the four-odd years since it began, I have been variously inspired, supported, provoked, prodded, guided, pushed and pulled to the point where I am able to finally write this section of the thesis. While this is my own work, it is the result of the kindness, patience and generosity of a whole host of people who I cannot possibly thank enough.

Foremost I am eternally grateful to Dr Alison Wakefield who has patiently and diligently put up with my nonsense for four years, ever pushing me to improve my writing and thinking. You've had the unenviable task of helping me to moderate my more 'direct' opinions! Further thanks to Dr Risto Talas for his 12<sup>th</sup> hour support and guidance. I would be remiss if I also failed to mention the rest of the teaching and support staff that I have interacted with at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at Portsmouth University.

Next, I would like to express my gratitude to Danie Adendorff who was my tutor on my MSc in Security Management at Loughborough. It was he who pushed me to consider continuing my studies at Portsmouth and he who initially did all the hard work in turning a 'hooligan' into a 'pracademic'. I hope this work does him proud.

This research would, of course, not have been possible without the support and generosity of the strangers who gave their time and trust to be interviewed. Yours is a debt I hope to repay by doing something meaningful with this research, which can support you in your missions to create safer, more productive, respectful and kinder workplaces.

Last and by no means least I would like to thank my wife for her support, patience, coffee and snacks. You've endured my grumbling, stacks of paperwork and conversations about perhaps some of the driest and most abstract of subjects.

Thanks, one and all.

Rich Diston

## Lists of figures and tables

Figure 1	A typology of violence	Page 48
Figure 2	Social ecological model	Page 49
Figure 3	Interactive model of workplace violence	Page 50
Figure 4	The ISO31000 risk management process	Page 52
Figure 5	WRV8 Contextual typology of interpersonal violence	Page 56
Figure 6	The risk bow tie model	Page 110
Figure 7	Model for organisational violence management	Page 138

Table 1	List of Keywords	Page 15
Table 2	Factors that promote workplace violence	Page 40
Table 3	Participant occupations, experience and location	Page 74
Table 4	Thematic analysis 1	Page 105
Table 5	Thematic analysis 2	Page 127

## List of abbreviations

CDC	Centre for Disease Control
CWB	Counter-productive Workplace Behaviours
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NOS	National Occupational Standards
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act (US legislation)
PMVA	Prevention Management of Violence and Aggression
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (UK legislation)
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRV	Work Related Violence

# Chapter One: Introduction

## Background

Violence and conflict are unavoidable parts of our modern lives. Exposure for most people comes through the medium of round the clock news bulletins and social media. It is consumed as an essential ingredient in our mainstream entertainment through TV, cinema and videogames. For the unlucky, it is experienced directly, either in their personal lives or during their working day. Workplace violence started to gather attention in the 1960s and 1970s as a significant problem for workers and their unions, the latter involving academics to study the issue (Bowie, 2000, p.7). The 1990s saw a number of high-profile homicide cases that occurred in workplaces in the United States, which are discussed in some of the key literature that appeared at this time (e.g. Baron and Neuman, 1996, p.161, Neuman and Baron, 1998, p.391).

There was at first a degree of commonality in the cases of workplace homicide, not least that the perpetrators were disgruntled current or previous employees returning to their place of employment to exact revenge for some actual or perceived injustice performed against them by either their colleagues or the organisation itself. Such incidents are thankfully rare; however, they seemed to open the debate and raise the profile of violence in the workplace. It has long since been established that violence in the workplace forms a continuum that may begin at one end with hostility between colleagues or received from customers and continue to the other with instances of extreme physical violence (Southerland, Collins and Scarborough, 1997, p.3, Chappell & Di Martino, 2006, p.vi, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010, p.16, International Labor Office, International Council of Nurses, World Health Organisation & Public Services International, 2002, p.3, Budd, 1999, p.1), whether perpetrated by co-workers, customers, spouses of employees or criminals (including terrorists) (Bowie, Fisher and Cooper, 2005, p.2).

When reviewing the literature, it quickly becomes evident that violence in the workplace has been the subject of research interest in many areas around the world. Despite this ever-expanding body of knowledge, it appears that the effective control and reduction of workplace violence remains problematic for organisations. Stewart and Strathern (2002, p.1) make the point that, whether we see violence as rooted in mammalian biology or as a consequence of historical or social conditions, the topic has proved challenging to analyse and understand for a variety of reasons such as a lack of recognition, inconsistent definitions and endemic under-reporting (Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller, 2012, p.5). Violence is unarguably a societal problem, however when it enters the workplace it takes



on additional dimensions to become an *organisational* problem as well as a personal problem for those directly affected. Employers have a legal and moral duty to protect their staff (and indeed customers) from harm, and this leads to the question of how the people that work within organisations and bear this responsibility perceive, assess and manage violence related risks.

Given the potential severity of the consequences of violence in the workplace, the issue needs discussion at organisational level, and can be seen as a governance issue for top management. While there is no single definition of corporate governance, it can be described as 'a defined set of processes and structures for controlling and directing an organisation' (Abdullah and Valentine, 2009, p.88). Kotter (1996 as cited by ISACA, 2015, p.39) defines enterprise governance more clearly as:

...a set of responsibilities and practices exercised by the board and executive management with the goal of providing strategic direction, ensuring that objectives are achieved ascertaining that risks are managed appropriately and verifying that the enterprise's resources are used responsibly.

This definition provides clear guidance on the responsibilities of board members and executive management and can be used to inform discussion around the potential for work-related violence risks to either negatively affect organisational objectives or prevent the responsible 'use' of (human) organisational resources.

There are numerous theories relating to governance, however each of these relate in some way to the function of senior management acting as agents of the shareholders and motivated to protect their investment and provide profit (Abdullah and Valentine, 2009, p.89). Interestingly, stakeholder theory goes further than the others in recognising that managers have 'a network of relationships to serve' including suppliers, employees and business partners (Abdullah and Valentine, 2009, p.91). The manner of serving of these relationships leads to a wealth of ethical theories relating to governance, notably feminist ethics theory which emphasises empathy, healthy social relationships, care for one another and the avoidance of harm (Abdullah and Valentine, 2009, p.93). In this way, governance needs to focus on social concerns as well as those related to profitability, leading to the proliferation of Corporate Social Responsibility (Jamali and Rabbath, 2007, p.1). The promotion of ethical conduct, fairness, transparency and accountability for senior management is now inextricably linked to the

concept of corporate governance, being described as 'two sides of the same coin' (Bhimani and Soonawalla, 2005). Whichever governance theory is considered, organisations where staff are not adequately protected from foreseeable harm are unlikely to be productive and profitable, which in turn can be used to argue for a failure of corporate governance.

Viitasara and Menckel (2002, p.118) state this clearly and suggest that it may even be considered an environmental issue for organisations, although they are unclear in what is meant by this term. Given the context of this statement, they support the idea that violence does not occur as an isolated incident but is instead a process, which can be influenced in a wide range of ways, thereby creating an environment in which violence is more or less likely. From a commercial perspective, the connections between workplace violence, challenges to recruitment, low staff retention and diminished job performance are hard to ignore (Jackson, Clare & Mannix, 2002, p.18). There has also been discussion around the perceived prevalence of violence at work. Waddington, Badger and Bull (2006, p.6) rightly question whether the issue of workplace violence is as significant a problem as some commentators make it appear. They refer to 'moral panic' and media exaggeration, stating that the tone of articles on the subject is often alarmist. They suggest that these articles may have been sponsored or promoted by trade unions and other special interest groups who may be exaggerating the problem to the benefit of their members. While reliable, factual data on the prevalence of workplace violence in the wider economy is not available, there are workplaces and occupations where it seems to be accepted that violence is a part of the fabric of reality.

Healthcare is one such occupation. The International Council of Nurses are cited as saying 'healthcare workers are more likely to be attacked at work than prison guards and police officers' (Taylor & Rew, 2010, p.1072). In the UK, the NHS created a department that was tasked with the protection of NHS staff and assets, called NHS Protect. Figures released by NHS Protect for 2014-2015 indicate that there were 67,864 physical assaults on staff reported in England (Nursing in Practice, 2015, para 1). (It is worth noting that since the closure of NHS Protect in 2017 and its replacement with the NHS Counter Fraud Authority, all reports and data that was previously available from their website is no longer accessible.) As a result of this documented prevalence (and considering the believed incidence of under-reporting) much of the published research on violence has been conducted within healthcare environments. Violence against people who devote their lives to helping others is an emotive subject and one that naturally attracts media attention, bringing with it the subsequent political debates

where it takes place in taxpayer funded establishments. Another such environment is the education sector.

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers published a press release discussing survey results in 2016 that revealed that forty-three percent of education staff have had to deal with physical violence from pupils in the previous year (Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 2016, para 1). A survey performed by the union Unison (2016, para 1) indicated that fifty-three percent of classroom or teaching assistants had experienced violence at schools in the previous year. In 2018, the BBC News website ran an article suggesting that (according to a Labour Force Survey) that secondary school staff were three times more likely to be physically attacked than the average UK employee (BBC News, 2018, para 1). The problem of violence in the workplace is not limited to the public sector, however.

Organisations establish security departments to protect their staff, clients and assets and so working in one or for one as a contractor is potentially another high-risk occupation, especially for those officers working on the front line. At the Security Industry Authority (SIA) Stakeholder conference in London in December 2015, Chairwoman Elizabeth France declared at the time that 'violence against security personnel is at such a level that, if it were happening to any other occupation, would be a national outrage'. She presented findings from research into workplace violence commissioned by the SIA indicating that eighty-eight per cent of respondents had experienced verbal abuse, seventy per cent had been assaulted without weapons and forty-five per cent had been assaulted with weapons. Further, forty-six per cent had required first aid and thirty-four per cent had been hospitalised as a result of an incident (Security Industry Authority, 2015). There have been cases of fatalities involving private security operatives (BBC News, 2016, BBC News 2010), incidents that highlight the risks that are faced, especially by individuals working in retail establishments. The British Retail Consortium annual retail crime survey indicated that reported rates of violence leading to injury had doubled on the previous year and that levels of violence and abuse for the year were the second highest ever recorded (BRC, 2018, p.4). According to research performed in the United Kingdom on behalf of the Trade Unions Congress (TUC) by YouGov on the wider workforce, one in eight people in the UK have experienced violence at work, including being pushed, spat at, punched or stabbed (Trade Unions Congress, 2016, para 1). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2017) in the UK cites the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales and from RIDDOR reports in stating that there were an estimated 698,000 incidents of violence in the workplace for the period, consisting of 329,000 assaults and 369,000 incidents of threatening behaviour (HSE, 2017, p.11). Perhaps because of all this evidence,

physical violence has been recognised as a major occupational health and safety hazard (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.46), and as such remains the focal point of much of the discussion in the literature.

While the data discussed so far was collected in the UK, there is little doubt that the challenge of protecting personnel and customers from violence in the workplace is a global one, and indeed similar figures are available and are being discussed elsewhere in the world (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010, p.51). Workplace violence is a significant problem that transcends borders, cultures and sectors, appearing in both industrialised and developing countries (Di Martino, 2006, p.17). Of particular interest is a report published by Securitas on the top security threats and management issues that faced corporate America (Securitas, 2016, p.2). This report discovered that workplace violence threats were both the second and third largest issue perceived by security managers in Fortune 1000 companies, preceded only by cyber security (second placed was workplace violence in general and third were active shooter threats). In the twelve such reports created by Securitas since 1997, workplace violence has been the top concern seven times, second for four and third once (Securitas, 2015, p.7). Workplace violence is clearly on the corporate agenda in America, yet despite over twenty years of research into the problem it appears (if the statistics can be relied upon) that little progress towards a comprehensive solution is being made.

Violence in one form or another has been a feature of my own career and studies, long before I embarked upon a professional doctorate. I experienced it during my military service, during my time working as a front-line security officer and door supervisor, and as a natural part of my time in the martial arts as both a student and instructor. I have provided security and risk consultancy and training services to a range of organisations across a number of sectors, some of which were projects specifically related to violence in the workplace. I am also a qualified physical intervention instructor and have designed and taught many courses in a range of workplaces. With this background, my studies for my master's degree examined how the mandatory physical intervention training introduced by the UK Industry Security Authority affected the risks of physical workplace violence. The findings from that study convinced me that the official physical intervention training as a mitigation for violence actually contributed to increased risks to personnel and organisations (Diston, 2014), and I began to view violence from a more risk-based perspective, wondering what organisations either were doing or could do to reduce the risks of violence in advance so that the flaws in the training were mitigated. This blend of personal and professional experience and academic interest led me to choose this topic for my doctoral research.

## Research aims

The aim of this research, therefore, is to understand how violence as a risk area is perceived by professionals working within demonstrably affected organisations, and whether a formal, risk-based framework for its management at organisational level would be perceived as beneficial. There are four clear research aims for this thesis project:

- To examine the perception of violence risk in relation to other risk areas within organisations.
- To identify the risk management models and methods that are currently in use for the management of violence in the workplace.
- To examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current violence risk management approaches.
- To establish to whether a formal risk management model would be seen as desirable by practitioners.

## Outline of chapters

This thesis is constructed as follows. This introduction is followed by a literature review in Chapter 2, beginning with an overview of the literature search and selection strategy, and providing an appraisal of the academic literature in respect of the research aims. It examines the ways in which violence in the workplace is currently defined, measured, categorised and contextualised within the literature, and reviews the common mitigation strategies that have been identified. Finally, this chapter discusses violence as a concept of organisational risk and the application of relevant literature beyond the immediate topical boundaries of work-related violence. The literature provided clear direction for how workplace violence is historically being perceived and managed as well as highlighting some of the biggest challenges that are faced by both researchers and organisations, however issues with the current body of research were discovered.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, presents the rationale for the qualitative approach employed and summarises the research process that was followed. This chapter includes a critical analysis of the research approach selected, followed by a reflective discussion on the research experience. The research comprises semi-structured interviews with twenty respondents drawn from a range of organisations and backgrounds who hold (or held) corporate security and risk roles, as well as specialist trainers and consultants in the field of violence management.

Chapter 4 presents the thematic analysis of the interview data and examines the ways in which the professionals interviewed for this study perceive the approaches to violence risk management within

organisations in which they have had experience through their careers. Here it is established that the organisations that the participants were familiar with were, in general, unaware of the range of behaviours that are considered violence in the workplace, and that they have a preoccupation with physical violence at the expense of the other, more common and therefore costlier behaviour types. Resultingly, violence in the organisations experienced by the participants was generally not treated as an organisational risk. Ownership of the issue was often assigned departmentally, rather than at board level. It is suggested that these organisations were often in denial about the issues of violence and approaches to its management are more likely to be perceived as 'box ticking' than as a meaningful risk approach. It is established in the interviews that in the organisations being discussed, they were unlikely to be engaged with the literature and there was a lack of awareness about the current (albeit flawed) violence models that currently exist. Discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the mitigation approaches that the participants have experienced suggested that they felt that both the greatest strength and weakness to violence management is linked to the levels of engagement with the issue at senior management level. Finally, the research discusses the value that a formal, risk-based violence management standard might have for organisations, discovering support for this from participants from all sectors involved in the research.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a discussion of the findings and their potential implications. It recommends that the terminology for workplace violence is clarified and calls for the development of a formal risk-based standard for the management of violence within organisational settings.

## Chapter Two: Understanding workplace violence

### Introduction

It is essential to develop an understanding of the current body of knowledge surrounding the issues of violence in the workplace, which is central to the achievement of the first three research aims. This chapter explains the literature search and selection strategy that was employed before examining the ways in which workplace violence is currently defined and contextualised, its perceived organisational costs, its perceived prevalence and the relationship between organisational behaviour and the risks of violence.

### Literature search and selection strategy

Given that a search for the term “violence at work” in Google Scholar returns nearly two and half million results, it was clear that a robust strategy was required to ensure the study was grounded in the most relevant literature. The first step in this process was to establish the different ways in which violence in the workplace is described. There is a wide range of different terms in use, which resulted in a list of over a hundred potential search terms. This was then necessarily distilled into a shorter list that was directly informed by its relevance to the research objectives. The final list of keywords that were used is presented in Table 1.

Violence at work	Violence reporting	Organisational violence management
Work related violence	Violence staff perception	Organisational violence
Work-related violence	Violence risk management	Violence management models
Violence risk assessment	Occupational violence	Violence risk models
Workplace violence risk assessment	Workplace assaults	
Violence at work	Workplace violence and aggression	
Workplace violence definition	Workplace bullying	
Violence at work prevention	Violence risk perception	

**Table 1: List of Keywords**

The first searches were performed using the bibliographic databases EBSCO (accessed via the University of Portsmouth) and the British Library ETHoS system. The latter search engine is specifically for academic theses and was therefore considered to be an important early stage in the process to discover whether the subject had been researched from a similar perspective already, thus potentially informing the direction and approach of this study. The searches were then performed using Google

and Google Scholar, which in some cases provided signposts to further academic literature which were then followed directly using the University online library.

A search in the University of Portsmouth library website was also undertaken for academic journals specifically related to workplace violence, however this proved fruitless. While this search returned thirty-two journals that discuss violence, they all discuss the issue in specific contexts (such as sexual, domestic, terrorism, mental health and others). This is reflective of the nature of violence as a social phenomenon, and it is natural for discussion to centre around the specific contexts in which various communities experience it, relative to their interests. This said, none of the journals returned in the search specifically relate to violence in the workplace and so did not contribute to the focus necessary for this study. It would be easy for this research to become diluted with tangential discussions around the many different contexts in which violence may exist, each of which are worthy of a thesis of their own and I felt that as a result using these journals was undesirable and incompatible with the research objectives.

All articles that were included in this literature review were either written in or available in English. It was necessary to identify the key commentators on the subject of workplace violence within the Anglophone literature, a process that was supported by comparing the numbers of citations that certain articles had received in Google Scholar. This provided a foundation for identifying key points for discussion, including areas of conflict in the literature and tangential topics that may contribute to the research. This process supported key themes for the literature review that both directly and indirectly related to and helped to further shape and clarify the research aims. Attention was also paid to media sources for cases involving work-related violence that might illustrate key discussion points or establish legal precedent. Other websites that were utilised during this study include those of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), NHS Protect, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for example.

## **Definitions**

The first research aim sought to understand how organisations perceive the risks of violence in relation to the other risk areas that they may face. Consequently, examination of the definitions in use within the literature and their consequent discussions can be considered a logical starting point for discussion.



Perhaps the simplest component to define is that of 'the workplace'. Vandenbos and Bulatao (1996, p.3) suggest that instead of considering 'the workplace' to give context to violence, it may be preferable to categorise it as an event that takes place 'while working or on duty'. Given the increasingly diverse nature of work today, it seems almost redundant to try and define a workplace by the physical boundaries of an organisation (Paterson et al. 2012, p.13). As a result, this research shall consider 'the workplace' to be 'anywhere that an individual works or performs their employment duties'. While such a definition can present issues (such as situations where an employee works from home and suffers domestic violence which is arguably beyond the remit or ability of the employer to protect against) it provides a degree of clarity for further discussion on the issue in general terms.

It is also pertinent to the first research aim to clarify what is meant by the term 'risk'. It is worth starting with the definition most accessible to the layman, which is the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2017) which proposes two definitions for the word 'risk'. The first suggests:

(Exposure to) the possibility of loss, injury, or other adverse or unwelcome circumstance; a chance or situation involving such a possibility.

The second definition follows the same theme with;

To endanger; to expose to the possibility of injury, death, or loss; to put at risk.

Both definitions focus on the potential for negative outcomes, making risk 'personal' (in that they make reference to injury and death) and as such are less appropriate for application to organisations. Hubbard (2009, p.8) uses similar definition:

The probability and magnitude of a loss, disaster or other undesirable event.

A focus purely on the negatives is unlikely to be attractive to businesses who are seeking opportunities for profit, although this is entirely appropriate for those working in crisis management. Borodzicz (2005, p.5) introduces a common dichotomy of risk as either 'speculative' (leading to potential gain) or 'pure' (which typically leads to loss), which is more business-centric. Talbot and Jakeman (2009, p.321) present their primary definition as:

The chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives.

This definition mirrors the official definition in the ISO31000:2009 (2009, p.1) international standard for risk management which defines risk as;

The effect of uncertainty on objectives.

This definition is supported by additional notes that add clarification such as 'a deviation from the expected – positive and/or negative', relating to 'potential events and consequences' and importantly 'a combination of the consequences of an event and the associated likelihood of occurrence'.

An expanded description is presented by Murray-Webster (2010, p.4):

An uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, will have an effect on the achievement of objectives. A risk is measured by the combination of the probability of a perceived threat or opportunity occurring and the magnitude of its impact on objectives.

This definition goes beyond merely citing uncertainty by explaining how risk is commonly calculated. While the ISO definition (and notes) and that of Murray-Webster may be more appropriate for organisational thinking, Hopkin (2010, p.12) prefers to provide his own definition:

Event with the ability to impact (inhibit, enhance or cause doubt about) the mission, strategy, projects, routine operations, objectives, core processes, key dependencies and/or the delivery of stakeholder expectations.

This definition is more robust in expressing what a risk may affect within an organisation, which in turn has the potential to take the generic definition and give it valuable currency and relevance for organisations at all levels and departments. Hopkin (2010, p.13) further divides risk into three categories; 'hazard or pure risk' (which can only lead to loss), 'control or uncertainty risk' and 'opportunity or speculative risk'. Hopkin discusses the former as commonly considered as 'operational' risks that are managed within a level of tolerance within the company, citing theft as an example. When considering the spectre of violence within organisations (which is unquestionably a 'pure' risk as it can only lead to loss and a hazard that can lead to harm), the definition offered by Hopkin is perhaps the most helpful and so it is this that shall be applied throughout this thesis.

Having clarified our definitions for the 'workplace' and 'risk', it is important to understand what we mean when we use the term 'violence'. The Oxford English Dictionary Online (2017) again provides two useful 'layman' definitions, the first of which states;

The deliberate exercise of physical force against a person, property, etc.; physically violent behaviour or treatment; (*Law*) the unlawful exercise of physical force, intimidation by the exhibition of such force. Formerly also: the abuse of power or authority to persecute or oppress.

In this definition, there is clear focus on violence as a physical act, however it should be noted that it also continues to include 'abuse of power or authority to persecute or oppress'. The relevance of this will be discussed later. The second definition is more succinct;

To subject to violence; (also) to violate.

This latter definition reflects the thoughts of Garver (1973, in Buffachi, 2009, p.171) where he discusses that the word 'violence' has its roots in the Latin word 'vis' (force) and 'latus' (to carry), giving rise to the combination 'violare'. He explains that the past participle of this is 'violans' (which is a plausible source for the modern word) and is closely linked to the word 'violation', which led Garver to suggest that violence is in fact the violation of something as a result of force being carried against it (in Buffachi, 1996, p.171). He makes a distinction in human interaction between the use of force and the use of violence, giving a powerful example of surgeons and dentists who use force against us in the delivery of our care without it being considered violence (in Buffachi, 1996, p.172). The distinction is made that a person is violated in some way, and Garver goes on to discuss the state of being human and links this to the undeniable rights that a human being has. He notably lists the right to their own body, their dignity, autonomy, the right to the consequences of their actions (such as the products of their labour), and the right to their own property (as an extension of their 'self' and products of their labour) as inalienable human rights (Buffachi, 1996, p.172-173.) This provides a firm foundation for understanding what violence is, based on whether an action can be argued to violate some aspect of the human condition, and clarifies that this harm can be far more than simply physical.

According to Galtung (1968, p.169) there are two types of violence; violence against the body and violence against the soul. He suggests that violence can be present where there is no object harm (to either body or soul).

...the threat of physical violence and indirect threat of mental violence that may be characterised as some type of psychological violence since it constrains human action. (Galtung, 1969, p.170.)

Despite that the work of both Galtung and Garver appears to be a clear guideline for deciding what does or does not constitute violence in a place of work (presented several decades ago, no less), there is a notable absence in the literature of a consistent definition of workplace violence, something that was identified as a problem at least as far back as 2000 (Bowie, 2000, p.11). At the time of writing, eighteen years later, there is still no widely agreed upon, unified definition. This presents a significant issue with the body of research into workplace violence, highlighted by Flannery (1996, p.65) who stated that;

Empirical research on worksite violence is needed. Many of the studies... are methodologically deficient in a variety of fundamental respects.

Flannery clarifies this bold statement by citing failures in the definitions of violence and inconsistency in their uses. Criticism is also leveled at research assessment procedures as being insufficient, improper control group usage and a lack of clarity on control measures (Flannery, 1996, p.65). Rippon (2000, p.454) shared this view, stating that there are methodological problems with the entire body of literature, specifically relating to definition, differing standards, and differing research instruments. In the opinion of Wassell (2009, p.1054), this had not changed nine years later when he stated that the quality of research was variable with few studies paying attention to study design that would lead to credible results. It is certainly fair to conclude that the data that currently underpins the body of literature for violence management is imperfect at this point in time. As a result, the literature is dominated with studies that focus on the subjective opinions and experiences of front-line personnel, and few studies use conceptually framed and validated tools (Zelnick, Slayter, Flanzbaum, Butler, Domingo, Perlstein & Trust, 2013, p.76). While far from being the only issues with the body of literature on the topic, these comments serve to highlight the significance that unclear definition has in relation to how violence in the workplace is perceived and understood. VandenBos and Bulatao (1996, p.1) address this, stating;

It is important to understand what workplace violence actually covers. Researchers and government officials are still struggling towards a consensual definition. Essentially, they face

three issues: (a) how broadly to define violence, (b) how to define the workplace, and (c) whether to focus on the link between violence and work.

This quote concisely explains the issues relating to the definition of violence at work, which in some ways are as relevant today as they were twenty years ago. Having already addressed the nature of 'the workplace' (which has arguably evolved since this statement was made) attention can turn to the other issues raised. Some early definitions of violence in the workplace only related directly to physical, 'conventional' acts of physical violence, whereas others include threatening behaviour (Bowie, 2000, p.11). Budd (1999, p.1) expands further on this:

The definition of violence itself is contentious. Definitions of violence form a continuum ranging from those which only include physical assaults to broader definitions which also include threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, and emotional or psychological abuse. Those who favour the inclusion of nonphysical acts argue that the consequences of nonphysical violence may well be as serious for the victim as physical assault. However, methodologically it's more difficult to measure nonphysical violence.

Even writing in 1999, Budd illustrates here a challenge that has plagued the subject ever since, that being the measurement of violence when we cannot yet agree clarity on what it *is* in terms of the workplace. Taylor and Rew (2010, p.1079) (in their literature review covering studies on violence in emergency departments) found that there was no consistent definition being applied, and that none of the studies they reviewed had used the same research instruments (2010, p.1078). The importance of this observation cannot be understated as it casts doubt on the body of violence research as a reliable means of understanding the wider problem. The issue of definition can be linked to the fact that there are multiple complex variables in an incident of violence, and it could be argued that the experience of violence in the workplace is as individual as each workplace itself. Other attempts at definition differ in the ways that they seek to address intentionality, perpetrator type, intended victims, methods of violence and consequences (Grubb, Roberts, Swanson, Burnfield and Childress, 2006, p.40).

Indeed, there is no consensus on what the phenomenon of violence in the workplace should even be called. The terms 'workplace violence', 'work-related violence' and 'occupational violence' are in common use and are being used interchangeably. Neumann & Baron (1998, p.395) prefer the term 'occupational violence', arguing that this should be used to reference violence that is directly related

to the job that is being performed. They go on to suggest that violence performed by external agents that has nothing to do with the occupations of the victims or the organisation they represent should not be considered 'workplace violence.' Certainly, the violence-related risks presented to personnel working for an oil and gas company in potentially hostile environments may be very different to those typically faced by staff in a retail or office environment, however the suggestion that only violence against staff that is linked to their job roles while they are at work is considered is arguably unethical.

Brubaker and Laitin (1998, p.427) offer a clearer perspective on the problem of definition.

The problem is not that there is no agreement on how things are to be explained; it is that there is no agreement on what is to be explained, or whether there is a single set of phenomena to be explained.

This cuts directly to the heart of the problem; we are trying to define singly what is, in reality, a range of phenomenon, perpetrated in a variety of environments, for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways. Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller (2012, p.7) cite Breakwell (1992:5) who stated that there are 'no simple definitions of violence which stand detailed analysis'.

It is generally accepted that acts of physical violence in the workplace are rare in comparison to other negative behaviours, despite the extensive media coverage that the former incidents attract. Behaviours such as verbal abuse and passive, indirect hostility (referred to as 'obstructionism' where a person actively impeded the ability of the victim to perform effectively) have been evidenced as more common than the more overt physical violence that makes headlines (Baron & Neuman, 1998, p.458). Such behaviours were also found to be related to certain types of changes in the workplace environment, specifically those that create job insecurity, increased diversity, cost-cutting, and organisational changes (such as restructuring) (Baron & Neuman, 1998, p.459). Passive forms of aggression may include non-compliance with requests and failure to provide operational support that can mean victims are unable to perform effectively (Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller (2012, p.8). It is important to recognise all types of aggression exist on a spectrum, and an excessively narrow focus on physical violence is undesirable (Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller, 2012, p.9). One commonly understood violence type in the workplace is that of bullying.

Bullying is understood as a series of intentional actions designed to cause harm to the recipient and so could be considered as fair for inclusion in a wider definition of violence. Low-level 'horizontal' violence (such as bullying or 'mobbing') is understood to at least equal the emotional trauma of

physical assault (Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004, p.117). A physical assault may be considered impersonal in some situations and usually has an extremely short duration. A case of bullying, on the other hand, is likely to be perceived as a highly personal attack on the individual's identity, and one which may continue for a significant amount of time with a variety of intensities. Westwood (2003, p.276) asserts that an ongoing series of small acts of 'violence' of this type may well be more impactful than a single dramatic physical event. In contrast, Garver (in Buffachi, 1996, p.175) makes the point that physically attacking a person is more than just using force against a physical entity, but instead is an attack on a *person*, which leads to more than physical harm. While cases of bullying can be identified, evidenced and responded to, general incivility in the workplace presents more of a problem and has led to the conflation of the term 'violence' with that of 'aggression'.

Some commentators argue that rather than discussing violence and aggression as equal phenomenon, some suggest that violence is itself a subset of aggression that involves the infliction of physical harm upon another (Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller, 2012, p.4). Barling, Dupre & Kelloway (2009, p.673) point out that the terms workplace aggression and workplace violence are often used interchangeably although they are distinguishable. The word 'violence' carries with it a degree of moral judgement, despite that some forms of violence, in specific circumstances, are desirable (such as defending oneself from criminal attack). The word 'aggression', on the other hand, does not appear to suffer in this way as a description of behaviour, however its use does separate it from the concept of the potential resulting violation of a person (Garver in Buffachi, 1996, p.181).

The protection of personnel from the hazard of physical violence is clearly the responsibility of the organisation and is usually devolved to occupational health and safety managers and is eminently measurable. The problems of bullying and aggression in the workplace are arguably outside their remit and these become the responsibility of organisational leaders and managers, ultimately becoming a cultural problem. Issues with negative working cultures are undoubtedly some of the hardest to overcome. Grubb et al.(2006, p.37) discuss 'low intensity' forms of violence that appear to be commonplace in organisations, and recognise their severity even if they are less dramatic than overt forms of physical violence. These include victimising, humiliating, undermining, and harassing or threatening behaviour. While 'low intensity' compared to physical violence, these behaviours can carry a high personal and organisational cost and are linked with burnout, job dissatisfaction, intention to leave the organisation and physical and psychological harm to victims (Grubb et al. 2006, p.39). Piquero et al (2013, p.389) concluded after a review of over a decade of research that physical violence at work is in fact rare, that the risk is linked to occupational factors and demographic status, and that

it mainly appears to be linked to situational factors, stress and the pursuit of specific purposes. This research is clearly focused on the physical manifestation of violence, rather than describing the spectrum of violent, aggressive, hostile and uncivil workplace behaviours. Several commentators make a point that there is a need to distinguish between workplace aggression and workplace violence (Barling, Dupre & Kelloway, 2009, p.673, Neuman & Baron, 1998, p.393) because treating them as one behavioural instance has a significant impact on the statistics and is likely to skew the picture of prevalence.

On the subject of prevalence, Hunt, Hughey and Burke (2012, p.43) refer to literature written *eighteen years before* their article to support their assertion as to the prevalence of violence in the workplace, a behaviour which is another notable issue with the literature. Further examples of this include Schat & Kelloway (2003, p.110) who cite statistics published eight years before the date of their article, Zollers & Callahan (2003,p.4) referred to data six years old at the time of writing, Rogers & Kelloway (1997, p.63) who cite data four years out of date, Dillon (2012, p.15) cites data six years out of date, and Stouffer & Varnes (2013, p.140) reference a report from four years previous as 'recent'. While it can be challenging to gather secondary data that is recent, this behaviour may also indicate an unwillingness to progress beyond data that supports existing beliefs about the topic instead of looking for more contemporary sources. The citing of literature many years old is understandable where it contains the identification of fundamental principles or represents a watershed in the development of theory, however much of the literature arbitrarily refers to documents that arguably do neither.

Whether there is reliable statistical evidence in support of any assertions on the prevalence of violence at work, some commentators still argue that violence and verbal aggression are endemic to the workplace (Spector, Coulter, Stockwell & Matz, 2007, p.127). Zollers & Callahan (2003, p.9) cite a study that suggests that over two thirds of the respondents experienced disrespect, condescension, social exclusion and other forms of incivility while at work. Although everyday verbal aggression in the workplace may lead to an increased potential for more direct and active forms of violence (Baron & Neuman, 1996., p.171), there are no strong grounds to support this although the suggestion is consistent with our intuitions. Were this truly the case however, given the sheer suspected scale of lower levels of workplace aggression, every workplace would be seeing incidents of physical violence of some form on a daily basis.

The definitional unification of violence and aggression is not without its problems. Dillon makes the point that while all violence is aggressive, not all aggression can be considered violence (2012, p.15),



an observation which clarifies the problem of treating violence and aggression as the same entity. O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin & Glew (1996, p.228) support separate definitions for violence and aggression, with the latter to be considered the process of a potentially destructive act with the former as the consequence. They attempt to clarify this by stating that the actions of an individual who attempts to physically hurt a co-worker would be labelled as aggression and the resulting injury to that co-worker would be considered violence. They cite Berkowitz (1993) in suggesting that 'violence' be reserved for situations of aggression that involve the most serious negative outcomes. Rippon (2000, p.454) takes issue with the word 'aggression' specifically.

The word 'aggression' has so many different interpretations and is used in such a variety of contextual meanings that it has become virtually useless for purposes of scientific analysis.

This is a powerful statement and one where the word 'aggression' may easily be supplanted with the word 'violence'. It is also worth considering the link between aggression and incivility.

While it should be stated that incivility is undesirable in any organisation, it does not necessarily meet the criteria for 'intent' that bullying achieves (Andersson & Pearson, 2003, p.456). Incivility may be as a result of characteristics of an individual, relationship or situation, and so may not be a deliberate attempt to cause harm. This said, 'harm' appears to be in the eye of the beholder and this leads us to a discussion on subjectivity. This is relevant when reflecting on the first research aim, relating to how the risks of violence are perceived by organisations in comparison with the other risks that they may face.

Bowie (2002, p.1) states that workplace violence is;

Perceived or actual verbal, emotional threat or physical attack on an individual's personal or property by another individual, group or organisation.

This definition introduces further dimensions to the discussion, the foremost of which is that of perception. The very fact that it opens by recognising the *perceptions* of the event as an 'or' to their actual occurrence creates an opportunity for personal interpretation. One way of illustrating this is to borrow from Nord and Connell (1993, p.116). In discussing realist and constructionist perspectives, they employ the example of a lens and a kaleidoscope. If we are viewing an incident where one person walks into a workplace and starts shouting at and pushing an employee, this can be examined using a metaphorical lens. The lens will only show us what took place (a realist perspective). If we replace this

lens with a kaleidoscope where we can twist and turn the event to view it from different perspectives, we are now *constructing* what we see. We are no longer connected to the actual reality of what may have happened. This subjectivity lies at the heart of the problem with defining workplace violence as an 'act'. Gill (2001, p.2) discusses this;

The experience of aggression and violence is subjective in that each individual perceives such acts uniquely in the light of his or her own experiences, skills and personality. Thus the same violent incident may have a quite different impact upon the different people involved. In some instances, for example, someone witnessing an attack on one of his or her colleagues may be more distressed than the actual target of the aggressive incident.

This statement is supported by Rogers and Kelloway (1997, p.64) who suggest that the vicarious experience of violence (including witnessing or even hearing about an incident) may have a negative effect on an individual. They further state that fear of violence or harassment is associated with mental and physical distress, intention to change jobs, reduced productivity and absenteeism. As seen in the earlier quote, Budd (1999, p.34) noted that victims of threatening behaviour were, if anything, more likely to have a negative emotional reaction than those who actually experienced physical assaults. Much of this comes down to personal resilience and the ability of the victim to cope with the stresses that violent encounters may present, both physically and emotionally, regardless of whether the person was actually involved. Waddington, et al. (2005, p.146) recognised that people may be frightened or intimidated by a wide range of behaviours and appreciating this is crucial to the discussion. Littlechild (1997, p.222) comments:

Every individual experiences certain types of behaviour differently. One person may view a situation as violent and threatening, whereas a colleague may not. It's important that we allow the threatened person, or the person who has been victimised, the reality of their perceptions. This means we cannot define violence just in terms of physical contact.

While this is a strong argument for the expansion of the word 'violence' beyond its obvious physical manifestation, Tombs (2007, p.537) presents a strong counter argument against allowing workers the freedom to create their own definitions of violence. He suggests that workers are subjected to a wide range of influences including ideological terminology (such as 'accident' and 'occupational hazard'), victim blaming, the realities of their work, organisational culture and a lack of enforcement activity and are therefore not best placed to do so. The results of allowing this are unlikely to produce inclusive

accounts of violence and are certain to further contribute to widespread inconsistencies in this field of research. Waddington et al. (2005, p.146) support this argument against privileging subjective meanings, mainly because it risks creating circular logic. The example they present is that if somebody becomes fearful, it must be as a result of the other person acting violently towards them, thus frightening them. Tombs (2007, p.538) expands on this, proposing that the converse would be true and that in the absence of fear there could be no violence. It may even be argued that if somebody feels that they have been a victim of violence, to dispute their interpretation and experience may itself be considered 'violence' on the part of the organisation. Setting aside circular and self-perpetuating arguments, some suggest that the definition of violence should be extended beyond 'conventional' physical forms to include deliberate non-physical acts of harm, mainly due to the harm (both personal and organisational) that it causes. Perone (1999) argues this point gracefully and is cited in Bowie(2000, p.12):

If the definitional parameters of violence are drawn too narrowly, there is a risk of over concentrating on what are essentially sensational, though rarely enacted forms of occupational violence: while overlooking the more prevalent, though insidious manifestations, which may have longer lasting effects, and which represent more of a financial drain on our health system and our economy generally.

Here Perone presents a rational argument for the importance of a wider definition of workplace violence and supports a commonality in the extant literature for the tendency to refer to 'violence and aggression' rather than just violence alone. This is entirely appropriate from a risk management perspective, given that aggression can become uncontrolled and lead to physical violence. Perone rightly suggests that an act of physical violence in the workplace is unlikely to be anywhere near as common as general aggression, hostility and other more insidious harmful behaviours.

Subjectivity in the definition of violence also provides us with an issue of reporting in that we are receiving the perspectives of only one of the parties involved, which may be open to dispute (Waddington, et al. 2005, p.147). Also mentioned were threats made against the 'professional self', such as threats to ruin the victim's career by making official complaints (Waddington, et al. 2005, p.152). This presents a significant conflict of interest, with the protection of staff needing to be balanced against the needs of the organisation to allow negative feedback (Waddington, et al. 2005, p.153). Waddington, et al. (2005, p.153) make the point that the terms 'perpetrator' and 'victim' carry moral weight, and that there may be merit in describing the *situation* rather than the roles of the

parties involved. The realist versus constructionist arguments over the definition of violence have certainly led in some cases to an unhelpful distortion of 'violence' as a term.

In recent years, it seems that the term 'violence at work' has come to represent an ever-growing range of undesirable behaviours and effects. This is referred to as an 'inclusive' definition of violence (Renold & Barter, 2003, p.92), reflecting the expansion of the term from its 'conventional' usage (describing the use of direct physical force or threat of force against a person). This respect for subjectivity naturally creates the problem of 'definition creep'. Commentators define and redefine the phenomenon, adding further elements to the typology that broaden the meaning of the term 'workplace violence' to such an extent that it becomes so varied that it becomes hard to understand and harder to address (Bowie et al, 2005, p.3., Waddington, Badger and Bull, 2006, pp.9-10, Fredericksen and McCorkle, 2013, p.223). As an example, Piquero et al (2013, p.389) even go so far as to suggest that *computer hacking* represents 'violence' directed at organisations. Other examples of this are the attempt by some commentators to expand the definition of workplace violence to include poor labour conditions, unjust or grossly unfair treatment at work (DiMartino, 2006, p.18) and even workplace suicides (Perone, p.3). Di Martino (2006, p.18) goes further and includes 'making an employee do something they have no capacity to do, providing low salaries, indecent work conditions and allowing the coexistence of multiple types of work contract where the same work is done for different salaries' as examples of organisational violence. While this is unarguably poor organisational behaviour (which we will be discussing shortly), to describe it as *violence* is perhaps somewhat extreme. By this rationale, anybody who has ever worked for an incompetent manager has therefore been a victim of organisational violence.

In another example, when discussing workplace violence in developing countries, Di Martino lists a range of violations such as child trafficking and sexual harassment (2005, p.20). These are activities that either come under international or (hopefully) local law and while they may occur in workplaces, they represent a far greater set of societal ills. Unless the organisation is conducting these activities themselves (and is therefore a criminal enterprise and not a 'workplace') it seems irresponsible to try and expand the definition of workplace violence to make them accountable for them. There is a very real danger that, in seeking to define violence in the workplace, there is created a definition so broad that it encompasses everything undesirable in human behaviour and therefore defines nothing. One thing is clear; the broadening definition of the word 'violence' in relation to the workplace leads to the risk of greatly inflating the apparent incidence of such incidents (Waddington et al, 2006, p.9).

Stanko (2003, p.3) is perhaps one of the most respected commentators on the subject of violence, and she provides us a way to conclude the wider definitional debate that recognises the shifting, elemental nature of violence with this statement;

... It is only through fluidity of definition that we can think creatively about disrupting violence as a social phenomenon.

This seems to be an argument against attempts to create solid definition of the term 'violence', and from a philosophical position it has some merit in that it seeks to break free from linear thinking that prevents creative solutions to the problem. At the same time, it reinforces the challenge discussed earlier that is prevalent throughout the research literature; that without clarity and consistency, violence in the workplace cannot be studied reliably beyond localised projects and therefore the results cannot be reliably compared with other studies. While a consensus cannot be achieved, many organisations have contributed to the management of this risk by providing their own formal definitions of workplace violence. While by no means perfect (considering the challenges already discussed), these at least provide some point of reference that organisations can consider as a foundation for their own perceptions of violence within their domains.

It is worth at this stage looking at more formal definitions of workplace violence since some of these are used in law, and therefore relevant to organisations wishing to avoid liability and prosecution for non-compliance. It is arguably these definitions that may be more relevant in relation to how they influence organisational perception of violence risks. We can start with the definition offered by the UK Health and Safety Executive (1996, p.1);

Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

This definition is perhaps a good one but for the inclusion of the subjective term 'threatened'. This draws us back to the debate on subjectivity, and unless incidents are reported in such a way that clearly specifies the nature of the violence being encountered, it is entirely possible that a rise in the reporting of perceived threats may be statistically interpreted as a rise in actual physical violence. This is undesirable, not least because the mitigations for each are significantly different. The other drawback with this definition is 'relating to their work' which is also open to some interpretation. Despite this lack of clarity and the use of some subjective language in the definition, it has been used

successfully against corporate organisations in prosecutions in the UK. The International Labour Office (ILO) likewise proposed a substantial definition that sought to identify violent behaviours;

Any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured in the course of, or as a direct result of, his or her work.

This definition is important, primarily because it clarifies the expectation of 'reasonable conduct' in the workplace. It also contains a note to clarify the term 'direct result', specifying that there must be a clear link with work and that the action, incident or behaviour occurred within a reasonable period afterwards. Mayhew & Chappell (2007, p.328) felt that this definition focused more on physical injury within specified workplaces and did not sufficiently recognise the emotional or psychological consequences of violence at work. The European Commission (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010, p.16) arguably addressed this in their 1994 definition as;

Incidents where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.

The reference to 'well-being' can be argued to resolve the concerns of Mayhew and Chappell, and this wide-reaching definition has also been adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (WHO, 2002, p.3).

Without an agreed upon definition of work-related violence, there is clearly no easy way to assess the scale or the severity of the problem in the wider world, something which would be the greatest benefit of a unified definition. Standing and Nicolini (1997, as cited in Bowie, 2005, p.164) conclude that there is no perfect definition of violence at work and that one should be contextualised and adapted to each workplace. In contextualising violence, they suggest that consideration is given to the source, the potential target, the perception of the act (from the target perspective), the potential impact and the relationship between the act and work-related duties. Bowie (2002, p.4) contributes to this list by suggesting that the local definition of violence should also include clarification of the impact of the act on the target. Standing and Nicolini are cited again by Bowie (2002, p.4) stating that the local definition should be broad enough to encompass different types of violent occurrences and that any definition should refer to a range of phenomena reflecting the idea that aggressive behaviour and violent assaults belong to a continuum of behaviours that may overlap rather than exist in isolation. For

organisations where violence may present as a risk, a local definition of violence is a logical starting point alongside that provided by legislature (such as the Health and Safety Executive in the UK) and then this can be used as a foundation upon which to begin the work of contextualising the risks of violence within a formal risk management framework. These are factors that might potentially help an organisation establish the context of its violence risks. These arguments for a localised definition within organisations that appropriately contextualise violence provide us with a natural progression for the discussion of the relationships with violence that organisations can have and, in their management (and potential causation) of workplace violence risks. Galtung (1968, p.168) helpfully states:

...the concept of violence must be broad enough to include the most significant varieties, yet specific enough to serve as a basis for concrete action.

Rather than proposing a further definition of work-related violence, a working definition for the purposes of this thesis is used:

Any behaviour that, either deliberately or negligently, directly or indirectly leads to harm to a person (physically, emotionally, psychologically, culturally, socially, financially) or their property while under the direct care of the employer.

This definition seeks to address several points missing in those definitions already discussed. First, it attempts to focus on the types of harm, rather than the behaviours that may cause it (the issue of a contextual typology for violence will be discussed later). It clarifies whether that harm is a result of direct action or a failure to act as well as whether the harm caused is direct or indirect. It also states clearly that the harm is taking place while there is a reasonable expectation of protection from the employer (such as during the performance of work duties or while on company premises). This definition seeks to go further than simply describing violence and is crafted to address the harm that organisations may themselves be the source of.

A new definition for 'organisational violence risk' is also proposed:

The impact of negative organisational structures and human interactions on the safety, operational stability, profitability, reputation, legal liability and culture of the organisation in relation to its strategic organisational aims and objectives.

This definition seeks to clearly inform organisations of the costs of work-related violence and their relationship to organisational risk.

### **The relationship between organisations and violence risk**

The discussion in the literature around the role of the organisation goes further than 'organisation as victim', however, and enters darker territory when we consider violence that is perpetrated *by* the organisation. While a limited amount of inappropriate behaviour can be expected in the pressurised workplaces of today, there must clearly be a line drawn for the protection of those who are less powerful and more vulnerable (Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004, p.129). It is worth revisiting the definition of violence that was provided by Oxford English Dictionary Online (2017) which made reference to 'the abuse of power or authority to persecute or oppress'. This is a critical definition when considering the ways in which organisations contribute to their own violence risks with violence of their own.

As we have seen, Galtung (1968, p.168) discusses violence as a phenomenon that is present where human beings are influenced so that their mental and physical potential is not realised. Violence, according to Galtung then, is the cause of the difference between 'potential' and 'actual' states – in his words 'between what could have been and what is.' Where the 'actual' is avoidable and still occurs, he states that violence is present. This includes situations in social systems such as the monopoly of resources, the reduced availability of opportunity and more. This is described as:

The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances (Galtung, 1969, p.171).



Galtung (1969, p.173) also recognises the reasons why personal violence (in his lexicon) receives wider attention than structural violence:

Personal violence *shows*...(it) represents change and dynamism – not only ripples on waves but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is *silent*, it does not show – it is essentially static, it *is* the tranquil waters...(it) may be seen as about as natural as the air around us.

This quotation is eloquent in describing how actual physical violence is impactful because it is observable, whereas structural violence in the organisations and social structures that we engage with daily is often invisible. During the process of drafting this thesis, we have seen significant media debate relating to the ways in which organisations and those in authority within them use and (may) abuse their power. This debate began in the entertainment industry and includes topics such as equal pay (Robehmed, 2017, para 2), inclusivity (Guardian, 2017, para 3) and sexual harassment (Pulver, 2018, para 1). The issue of the misuse of authority for sexual advantage goes beyond Hollywood, however, with several high-profile accounts from the charity sector (Khan, 2018, para 1, Dearden, 2018, para 1) as one example. The media reports are shocking, and the decision to include such current affairs in this thesis reflect a belief that if the scale of these cases is to be believed, such behaviour appears to be not only endemic but also widely tolerated for many years. Using our established definition of violence as being a violation of a person in some way, these cases clearly qualify as violence in the workplace that goes well beyond the typical problems of workplace incivility to become a greater issue of governance failure. There is a dual argument that can be made for such organisations that relates directly to the first research objective; first, that they are unlikely to perceive their own actions or behaviour as violence, and second, that they may be increasing their risks of being targets of violent behaviour in retaliation for this from their staff, ex-staff or customers.

There is a recognised emotional and behavioural continuum upon which individuals may travel; from frustration to conflict to aggression, and sometimes ultimately to physical violence (Tobin, 2001, p.98). Where individuals experience frustration, and this is not appropriately addressed either by themselves or the organisation, they are more likely to engage in conflict behaviours (Tobin, 2001, p.96). Organisations therefore need to recognise the part that their culture, structures and practices may play in regard to this continuum if they hope to see a reduction in violence and aggression.

Tobin (2001, p.101) cites Hall (1996) and Morgan (1986) in stating that it is the very nature of organisations to contribute to conflict and that this is built into organisational structure, roles, and stereotypes. From a philosophical perspective, violence may be considered inherent to the *process* of organisation which, at its heart, seeks the establishment of one order at the expense of another (Westwood, 2003, p.275). The earlier quote from Bowie refers to the organisation in this way, introducing the idea that violence can be performed *by* an organisation. This is where the working definition of violence, already problematic, becomes something more esoteric.

This may relate to the idea that the victim organisations of the extreme events described bear responsibility in some way for triggering them due to 'violence' that they perpetrated or allowed to be perpetrated against the perpetrator in the first place. Typically, perpetrators of physical workplace violence are categorised on a pathology model of 'mad, bad or sad' and are seen as individually responsible (Bowie, 2002, p.8). This simplified perception of the psychology that drives violent behaviours does not appear to reflect the part that organisation, structure and culture plays as an influencer and moderator of behaviour. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the psychology of workplace violence in great detail, it is worth introducing some existing ideas on the subject. Toch (2017, p.39) discusses the psychology of violence, stating that:

Ultimately, violence arises because some person feels that he must resort to a physical act, and that a problem he faces calls for a destructive solution.

While this statement explicitly focusses on physical violence, it is important to consider that violence is often not a rational choice on the part of the perpetrator, and that 'destruction' may be an unconsidered consequence of the interaction instead of a desired outcome. An example of this might be the unintended damage that negative workplace behaviours can inflict on relationships, despite no obvious deliberate violence being perpetrated and no direct aim achieved. What is of value here is the potential connection that can be made between the perceived needs of the perpetrator and the behavioural responses employed (intentionally or otherwise) to try and meet them.

Toch (2017, p.39) continues, offering a more important observation:

To understand violence it is necessary to focus on the chain of interactions between aggressor and victim, on the sequence that begins when two people encounter each other – and which ends when one harms, or even destroys, the other.

This reminds us that any act of violence (wherever it resides on the spectrum of negative interpersonal behaviours) is a part of a chain of events. When consideration is given to the recognised influences that may be present during this process, such as personal, cultural and organisational, we are provided with a useful perspective that may offer opportunities for violence reduction before harm is done.

Across the literature there seems a tendency to view physical workplace violence with a focus on embittered employees acting out against what they perceive to be dysfunctional working relationships. This focus on the perpetrator potentially provides a number of false trails. Catley (2003, p.5) suggests that this focus 'insulates' organisations through blame attribution, resulting in a lack of attention to the organisational or structural features that may have contributed to the situation. It also provides a potentially oversimplified understanding of violence where it can be prevented by taking the right series of steps. Catley (2003, p.5) goes on to state that this position 'encourages us to see workplace violence as a problem *for* organisations rather than a problem *of* organisation'.

Bensimon is quoted by Karl & Hancock (1999, p.52) and makes the point clearly:

Time and time again, disgruntled workers who have become violent said that what impelled them was not the fact that they were demoted, fired or laid off, but the dehumanising way the action was carried out.

This reflects our previous discussion around negative organisational behaviours and whether or not they can or should be considered as 'violence'. People who are committing acts of physical violence that are directed against an organisation are likely to feel justified in their actions. One line of thinking in the conceptualisation of workplace violence relates to whether the behaviour is 'target specific', making a distinction between aggression directed at the organisation itself and of that directed at an individual (Herscovis, Turner, Barling, Arnold, Dupré, Inness, LeBlanc, & Sivanathan, 2007, p.228).

This is closely followed with consideration of the contribution of both individual and situational variables in creating these events. Bowie (2000, p.16) discusses this in posing whether violence is directed at the employee themselves or the organisation they work for. An employee may present a convenient 'lightning rod' for disgruntled or aggrieved individuals who wish to vent their displeasure at the employer organisation. It may be interesting to consider that in situations where women kill their partners following long-term and systematic abuse, campaigners have succeeded in garnering

sympathy for a defence of provocation (Levi, Maguire & Brookman, 2007, p.689), but this thinking has yet to be applied to individuals who act out after suffering long-term and systematic abuse at the hands of their employers. Galtung (1969, p.173) makes the point:

...there is no reason to assume that structural violence amounts to less suffering than personal violence.

Regardless of the experiences of the perpetrator of such acts, it can be argued from the perspectives of both the victim and the law, the distinction between violence against the 'organisation' and the 'employee' is not a relevant one. Di Martino (2006, p.17) proposes that there are four dimensions of workplace violence, these being personal, organisational, societal and cross-national. This is potentially useful in building a framework for defining the different types of violence, however it can be argued that if we are on the receiving end, *all* violence is personal.

It is widely accepted that the organisational structure, culture and the style of managers is a key component for the management of violence. Organisations where there is little support and an inharmonious working atmosphere appear more prone to threats and fear of violence (DiMartino, 2006, p.16), and so it is certainly in the interests of the employer to remedy such cultures. DiMartino (2006, p.23) rightly states that violence and aggression are detrimental to workplace functionality and actions taken to reduce it should be considered an integral part of organisational development. Organisations with a culture of openness (where communication is valued and encouraged) are more likely to see reductions in stress and violence than authoritarian working environments where staff are isolated, defensive and mutually suspicious (Di Martino & Musri, 2001, p.15). Zollers & Callahan (2003, p.23) focused on violence triggered by organisational factors, and note that organisations with old-style authoritarian management, one-way communication and polarisation between executives in the workforce contribute to a toxic environment which leads to loss of individual control, stress and potentially physical violence. Traditional command and control hierarchies with rigid management styles, clear divisions between management and staff, and highly competitive business environments all enhance the potential for violence (Mayhew & Chappell, 2001, p.12). This can be exacerbated by permissive culture where incivility and aggression are normalised, job insecurity, workers feeling a strong sense of entitlement and who subsequently feel cheated (Mayhew and Chappell, 2001, p.13), and inefficient human resources processes. Where there is a lack of policy, or a lax management attitude this creates a permissive organisational culture where employees can set their own standards of behaviour (Fredericksen & McCorkle, 2013, p.231). This is supported by Gruenert & Whitaker (2015,

p.36) when they state that “The culture of an organisation is shaped by the worst behaviour the leader is willing to tolerate.”

It is in such cultures that hostility, aggression and violence will be most evident. Certainly, bullying and incivility are organisational phenomenon that contribute nothing positive to the workplace, and may in some cases be seen as violence occurring on two distinct levels; the first being that of the perpetrators and the second being the organisation that allows it to occur unchallenged. In 1998, analysis of large-scale longitudinal data indicated that in organisations demonstrating a climate of procedural injustice, this was an effective predictor of assaultive behaviours (Folger, Robinson, Dietz, Parks & Baron, 1998, p.1).

It can be argued that the reduction of harmful interpersonal behaviours in the workplace is a cultural challenge for organisations that goes far beyond the reduction of physical violence, and any reductions are likely to be a beneficial by-product. Andersson & Pearson (1999, p.466) recognised that repeated acts of workplace incivility served to erode organisational norms for respectful and civil behaviour which, they found, can spread throughout an organisation, harming productivity, reputations, and culture. In this respect, the organisation may be argued to be a victim of its own culture. Violence within organisations can be seen as a result of the complex interplay of a wide variety of factors, some of which are within the control of the organisation and some of which relate to the characteristics of the individuals who are involved (Denney,2010, p.1310 citing Standing and Nicolini, 1997).

Perhaps fundamental to the discussion is the criminological perspective. An individual entering a workplace and harming a staff member is clearly likely to be considered a criminal act, and this is often where the thinking ends. What should also be considered is the fact that if the employer did not take sufficient steps to protect their employee, then this is a *further* crime, albeit a ‘safety’ crime (Tombs, 2007, p.532). About whether organisations *intend* harm, Tombs (2007, p.533) quotes Levi and Maguire (2002):

In that sense, they are not mere accidents but the result of a process of profit maximising self-centeredness by corporations, which define as acceptable the levels of risk to themselves or others they (rationally or not) expect, or who (psychopathically?) do not think of themselves as producing risks for others.

It should not be forgotten that the employer has a legal duty to protect their employees, who are likely to suffer the same amount of harm irrespective of whether or not they were the ultimate intended victim. Tombs (2007, p.541) cites Reiman (1998) when he stated that 'there is no moral basis for treating one-on-one harm as criminal and indirect harm is merely regulatory.' This is a powerful statement that perhaps highlights arguable failings in the ways in which violence in the workplace is viewed. Tombs (2007, p.531) makes the distinction between 'safety crimes' (where people are harmed due to a failure in an organisation to meet their duty of care) and 'conventional' violence and discusses the ways in which occupational harm from violence is excluded in criminological violence definitions. Citing his earlier work with Pearce (1998), Tombs states that the UK Health and Safety Executive 'consistently' finds that more than two-thirds of injuries to staff are caused as a result of management failure to meet duties of care under criminal law (2007, p.531). Violence needs to be considered with equal seriousness, whether it occurs intentionally between individuals or whether it occurs unintentionally as a result of the organisational structure or culture. The point to be made is that intentional harm is usually directed at one or more specific individuals, whereas a generalised threat to safety that may be presented by an organisational failing presents a greater threat to a wider number of people (Tombs, 2007, p.541). This observation supports Garver (in Buffachi, 1996, p.181) who suggests that institutional violence plausibly causes more harm than personal violence. It is clear then, that violence within organisations is a *management* problem. Organisational support from management is essential in relieving individual concerns about violence, thereby making its management an organisational responsibility (Farrell & Cubit, 2005, p.51).

The contract of employment can be seen to contain two implied obligations on the employer, these being the provision of a workplace with minimal exposure to risk and the consideration of 'mutual trust and confidence' (Leighton, 1999, p.25). The implication is that employers should provide support to employees who have a concern about the risks of violence that they may face. Leighton (1999, p.26) is unequivocal when she states 'The law is therefore clear. The employer who either fails to respond to the reality of violence or to be supportive of those who fear it, is, in principle, breaking the employment contract.'

A further legal consideration is that of negligence. In the UK, an employer is expected to reasonably foresee the risks to their staff, and then would be assessed as to whether they have taken reasonable care to protect against those risks ('reasonable care' is described as the actions that a competent hypothetical employer would have taken) (Leighton, 1999, p.29). The US has a further emphasis regarding employer negligence, this being the liability for the hiring of a violent employee, which is

referred to commonly as 'negligent hiring' (Leighton, 1999, p.29). This concept is unproductive, virtually absolving an organisation of all responsibility for the management and treatment of an individual who then becomes violent with the exception of hiring them in the first place. This highlights a common theme that violence is viewed as all about 'them' (the perpetrator) when in fact it is about 'us' (society) and is our problem to resolve.

Spector, Coulter, Stockwell & Matz (2007, p.117) make an interesting observation in relating the role of leadership in the creation of a 'safety culture' through management emphasis and support, and whether or not something similar is possible to produce a parallel 'violence climate' (where people are attuned to and proactive in its prevention). To clarify, 'climate' refers to meaningful patterns of behaviour and interaction between people within organisations (Spector et al, 2007, p.118). This cannot happen without dedicated and professional management. There is some merit in senior managers taking formal responsibility and accountability for violence in their workplaces. In the NHS, individual healthcare organisations must appoint a board member who has overall responsibility for reducing violence against staff, and this position is referred to as the security management director (NHS Protect, 2015, p.9). This is a positive step forward, even if it is a legal requirement rather than a decision made by the organisation itself.

One possible effect of weak senior management engagement with the problem is discussed by Rippon (2000, p.454) who noted that some student nurses failed to report incidents due to a perceived lack of support at this level, combined with a lack of confidentiality. Bowie (2000, p.19) cites Baron (1996) who identified 13 factors that it was felt promoted workplace violence:

Personal problems are ignored	Chronic Labour/management conflict	Preferential treatment for some staff and managers	Employees feel used, dehumanised and undervalued
Grievances are frequently and ineffectively dealt with	There is a lack of mutual respect among teams and departments	Communication is ineffective	Actions and decisions by senior management seem inconsistent
Workloads are increasing with greater expectations, decreasing resources and fewer rewards	The work environment is repetitive monotonous and filling	The management style is overly aggressive and authoritarian	The physical environment is poor and security management measures are ineffective
Pre-employment screening measures are ineffective and organisational policies and procedures are inconsistently applied			

**Table 2: Factors that promote workplace violence. Baron (1996) in Bowie (2000, p.19)**

These clearly reflect failures of management (and therefore organisation). The blame attribution is not all one way, however. A study into violence management on the railways discovered a common point of view in local and middle management that the problem was usually the fault of individual staff members and therefore not worth spending the time and effort on resolving (Dickinson & Bevan, 2005, p.734). The concept of blaming staff for workplace violence is also reflected in the previously discussed ‘profiling’ of employees as the source of aggression rather than accepting that the organisation itself may contribute to such an atmosphere (Bowie, 2000, p.9).

Clearly, more focus must be placed on changing organisational cultures and management practices to be less abusive or violent (Bowie, 2008, p.10). On this theme, Zollers & Callahan (2003, p.14) discuss the creation of a corporate ombudsman, who would remain neutral while receiving complaints from members of the organisation and which demonstrates a corporate willingness to hear criticism and dissent. Giving staff the opportunity to tell their stories may be at the very heart of stress reduction and therefore contribute to lower violence levels (Zollers & Callahan 2003, p.15). Provided the process is followed authentically, it may result in the provision of solutions rather than blame shifting or fault finding (Zollers & Callahan 2003, p.16).



Galtung (1969, p.172) states that where organisations take steps to reduce direct, intentional violence:

‘ethical systems directed against *intended* violence will easily fail to capture structural violence in their nets – and may hence be catching the small fry and letting the big fish loose’.

This suggests that preventative measure designed to reduce physical violence are likely to fail to address the violence that the organisation itself causes, and therefore miss the biggest issues.

### The risks of violence to organisations

Given our definition of ‘risk’ as previously discussed from an organisational perspective, there can be little argument that an organisation where acts of violence and hostility are common (in any of the forms discussed) is going to face substantial challenges to achieving its objectives. Organisations lacking in momentum for initiatives to improve their working conditions relating to violence and hostility may find it by focussing on violence as an organisational risk, which will affect the ways in which the problem is perceived. Management commitment is essential to reducing violence in the workplace (OHSA,2015, p.6) and begins with the acceptance that violence is a risk and that there is value in creating a safe and healthy, violence-free organisation. Barling (1996, p.43) makes the point that organisational functioning is negatively affected by workplace violence, manifesting as reduced attachment to the organisation, reduced commitment, increased absenteeism and increased staff turnover. These may lead directly to reputational harm, increased costs, reduced productivity, and increased potential for litigation (Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004, p.130, Scarborough et al., 1997, p.4). Staff who are exposed to violence may need time to process the trauma of the event in terms of their personal, moral, ethical or cultural codes, and the time this takes may result in a disruption in corporate function (Clements, De Ranieri, Clark, Manno and Kuhn, 2005, p.120). The ongoing harm that violence and hostility create for the organisation are certain to be significant, and the human cost is arguably incalculable including stress (Di Martino, 2003, p.2), depression and anxiety (Aytac and Dursun, 2012, p.3030). Barling (1996, p.35) discusses the effect of violence on ‘secondary’ victims, identifying these as people who were not themselves involved in the incident however may have experienced a change in their perceptions, fears and expectations as a result of having been vicariously exposed to violence (such as an increased fear of becoming a primary victim). Such individuals may have a legal claim against the organisation where it can be evidenced that it failed to protect them.

Johnson & Indvik (1994, p.516) describe the critical relationship between employee and employer as essentially being a 'psychological contract', and where this is violated the employer may be liable. They describe the expectation that the employer will act in a just manner, and the failure to do so may lead to significant issues with morale. The harm can even extend to client groups, which in turn will carry back over to the organisation in the form of lost business, complaints, and litigation (Mayhew, McCarthy, Chappell, Quinlan, Barker & Sheehan, 2004, p.130). It is also clearly within the interests of organisations to take the risks of violence seriously, something emphasised by Waddington et al. (2006, p.5):

Workplace violence is serious not only for the victims, but also for those responsible for the workplace. In Britain and most other developed countries employers are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of their employees and must assess the risks to which workers are exposed and take all reasonable measures to eliminate or diminish them. This is a costly obligation in itself, which if not properly discharged can result in hefty legal damages and loss of reputation for public and private institutions.

An example of this is the newsagent chain Martin McColls Ltd, who in 2014 were fined £150,000 for failing to protect their staff from a string of violent robberies (BBC News, 2014). Companies that have failed to implement effective countermeasures have even been found legally liable for injuries caused by their own employees (Johnson & Indvik, 1994, p.517). An example of an employer being liable for employee actions is the case of UK supermarket Morrisons where one of their staff violently assaulted a customer in 2008. A civil case was brought against Morrisons for vicarious liability which took several years to reach the Supreme Court. In 2016 a decision on appeal was reached that Morrisons was vicariously liable for the actions of their employee, given that there was a close connection between what the employee was hired to do (interact with customers) and that they were representing the employer at the time of the incident (Supreme Court, 2016). This reflects other cases where employers were found to be liable for employee assaults, such as *Lister v Hesley Hall Ltd.* (2001), *Mattis v Pollock* (2003) and importantly *Everett v Comojo (UK) Ltd. T/A The Metropolitan* (2017). In this case the company was not held liable at the Court of Appeal for violence performed by a third party *not* in their employ while on their premises, however this was due to the specific facts of the case rather than a principle of law (2011). Another case of interest is that of *Dennis v Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)* (2016). In this case, the Oslo District Court found in favour of Dennis who had sued his previous employer following his kidnap in 2012 in Kenya while performing aid work (during which he was injured). Despite being compensated on his release, Dennis made the further claim in court and NRC

were found to be liable both for further compensation but also to have acted with gross negligence in failing in its duty to adequately protect him. The decision has been referred to as 'landmark', 'a game-changer', and a 'wake-up call' for the aid industry (Hoppe & Williamson, 2016). A final example is that of an enquiry at the University of Sussex into a violent assault against students performed by a lecturer which found that the university had failed in its duty of care to the victim. The report discovered significant weaknesses in the way the University prioritised legal risks posed by the lecturer (who was later found guilty) over its response to the risks of violence, weaknesses in the investigation process, and a generally permissive culture that was dismissive of other complaints of abuse and harassment (The Guardian, 2017). While the findings of this enquiry were not legally binding, it does create a potential opportunity for the litigation that the University was trying to avoid, as well as significant reputational harm for the University which makes its money attracting young and potentially vulnerable people through its doors.

Courts have also recognised employer liability under the tort of negligence for failing to provide a reasonably safe workplace (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.27) and liabilities have in the past been discovered over negligent hiring, negligent supervision and negligent retention of individuals who were sufficiently unfit enough to present a viable threat to their colleagues and others in the workplace (Johnson & Indvik, 1994, p.517). Organisations certainly have some responsibility for the people that they choose to hire and employers have even been found liable for failing to warn employees of known or suspected dangerous propensities of their colleagues (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.27). This creates a significant challenge for employers who are treading a fine line between protecting their staff from each other while also protecting their privacy and employment rights. A company with concerns about the behaviour of a particular employee will need to take extreme care. If there is a strong connection between the information that is possessed or available to the employer and the harm that is ultimately suffered, there is a greater chance the employer will be found liable of negligence (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.27). This said, they must ensure that they do not take a wholly negative approach which would see all customers, service users, and indeed staff as potentially violent threats. Any judgements that are made relating to the personal safety and well-being of individuals by an organisation must therefore need to be evidence-based (Denney, 2010, p.1309).

Further than the legal ramifications of failing to manage violence and hostility within the workplace, it can be argued that violence in the workplace presents a crisis level situation for the organisation to contend with. Barling (1996, p.31) draws a parallel between the outcomes of an incident of workplace violence with those of acute workplace stressors or disasters. The idea that an incident of workplace

violence is a crisis situation for an organisation is entirely appropriate, and, since an incident of violence can be considered a 'man-made disaster', this allows us to introduce interesting thinking from this field of study.

Pidgeon & O'Leary (2000, p.16) describe a disaster in terms of a manmade event 'not by its physical impacts at all, but in sociological terms, as a significant disruption or collapse of the existing cultural beliefs and norms about hazards, and for dealing with them and their impacts'. Such a description is perfect for acts of workplace violence. Citing Turner (1972) who was a leading thinker in the field, they go on to describe how organisational cultural beliefs often contribute as a barrier to recognising events that deviate from their ideas of the 'norm'. This leads to what Turner (1972) described as the *disaster incubation period* where underlying systematic vulnerabilities are concealed or poorly understood, creating a perfect environment for a more serious incident. Pidgeon & O'Leary (2000, p.17) describe this build-up of 'latent errors and events' as being 'accompanied by a collective failure of organisational cognition and 'intelligence''.

As eloquently stated by Weick (1998, p.74):

Organisations are defined by what they ignore – ignorance that is embodied in assumptions – and by the extent to which people in them neglect the same kinds of considerations.

To align this quote with violence in the workplace, organisations may have assumptions about the nature, frequency, likelihood and severity of violence and the top management are likely to share these, leading to them ignoring or denying the problem in similar ways.

Clements et al. (2005, p.121) cite Chavez (2003) who reported that workplace violence continues because some employers fail to adequately address the problem. Rather than being deliberate, this was felt to be as a result of a lack of awareness coupled with common workplace and business pressures that would draw corporate attention. This has, they argue, resulted in organisations being oblivious of the organisational factors that are most commonly recognised as contributory towards violence in the workplace. Some of these factors are described as weak or non-existent policies, poor recruitment, supervision and staff retention practices, poor training on violence issues, an absence of clear behavioural standards, poor staff awareness of violence management initiatives, managers who are unable to assess threats, weak reporting mechanisms and failures to take immediate direct action against people who threaten or commit acts of violence (Clements et al.,2005, p.121).

This introduces an interesting consideration that is discussed by Borodzicz (2005, p.35) in the form of 'risk homeostasis'. This term was coined by Simonet and Wilde (1997, p.235) and refers to the idea that risk reduction methods in one area may well lead to an increase in (or acceptance of) risk in other areas in order to effectively 'rebalance' the risk appetite. In this case, the delivery of training and the creation of bullying policies might serve in some cases to create the illusion that the risk is being addressed, however in the worst cases they may even provide the corporate perpetrator with additional mechanisms for victimization (such as the use of bullying policies to accuse their victims). This is important to note, because the roots of violent behaviour are unlikely to be addressed with the publication of a corporate policy, and a half a day of training in control and restraint are unlikely to equip a staff member with the skills needed to physical manage a violent incident. The appearance of such mitigations on a risk report may lead the organisation to believe it is doing what is required, leading to a risk homeostasis influence.

It is understood that the costs of violence to an organisation are widespread and persistent, yet despite this there are no national figures available that are sufficiently reliable to confidently reference. This is due to a complex range of factors not limited to inconsistent definitions and under-reporting. As a result, organisations (certainly in the health and social care sectors) have seemed to adopt either denial or ignoring as responses (Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller, 2005, p.746.) A survey performed by Bentley, Catley, Forsyth & Tappin (2014, p.846) discovered that half of their respondents formally recognised violence as a workplace hazard and only twenty eight percent had a specific hazard management plan to address workplace violence, despite half of the sample reporting cases of violence in the twelve-month period of the analysis. This clearly indicates a problem with organisational perception of the problem, and it can be suggested, based on the literature, that organisations are unclear on what violence means and therefore disconnected from its costs and effects. It is poignant at this point to introduce a quote from the philosopher Žižek, cited in Sharpe (2016, p.10) who said:

Sometimes doing nothing is the most violent act possible.

## Discussion

To this point, we have established that the term 'work-related violence' refers to a range of behaviours that may in some way violate the person or rights of an individual. Despite this, we have seen that there are myriad definitions for the term, none of which are uniformly accepted within the literature.

As a result, concern is raised around the quality of much of the research into the problem to date, which is increased by critical examination of the literature which reveals a trend for referring to statistics that are well out of date or used without critical consideration. This may indicate a tendency to overlook the currency in the data in favour of supporting whatever argument it was being used to present. Amongst this literature, this lack of critical analysis further extends to accepting the findings of these research papers without questioning the definitions and research methods that were in use. As a result, it can be argued that the thinking on the issue of violence at work has developed into something of a rut, with further studies referencing this literature in a linear and uncritical way, leading to it being even further embedded into research on the topic.

We have also seen discussion in the literature around the role that organisations play in relation to violence, both as victims and as perpetrators. The discussion in the literature suggests that organisations themselves are often the source of conflict, either due to the way that they are structured and managed or the ways in which they interact with their staff and customers. This is reflected in the current events at the time of writing in relation to the #metoo and Time's Up movements that seek to highlight and remedy sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and racial inequality in the entertainment industry, as well as media reports of managerial (if not organisational) deviance in the charity sector. Such cases highlight gross failures of governance, which in turn allow violence (using the wider definition) to become a cultural norm that is tolerated and even accepted rather than challenged. Such situations indicate that the problem of violence at work *is* a problem of management.

This is further supported by discussion around the legal obligations that face employers in relation to their duties to protect their staff from harm, which in turn reflect pure risk back at the organisation in the form of regulatory fines, compensation payments and negative publicity. This is in addition to the reduced productivity and increased costs that violence can introduce to an organisation. Given the range and scale of potential impacts in all its forms, violence is certainly something that senior management and business leaders need to pay attention to.

To this end, this thesis will offer a new term: '*organisational violence management*' which is defined as the accountabilities, responsibilities, governance and management structures and methods that an organisation formally employs to manage its violence related risks, whether these are a result of

external factors, internal factors or violence perpetrated by the organisation itself. Organisational violence management as a terminology is intended to clarify thinking about violence at a strategic organisational level.

With this established, we shall now examine the models and methods that are discussed in the literature to support management in addressing the problem of violence in the workplace.

## Chapter Three: Workplace violence risk management in practice

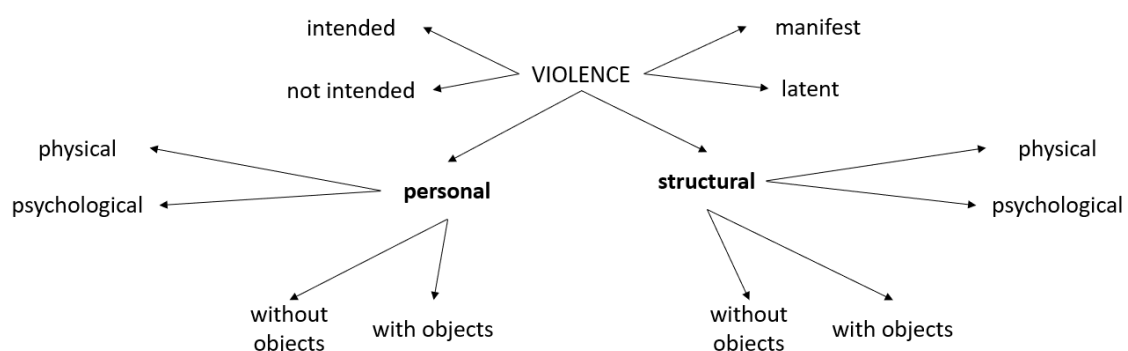
### Introduction

Having established the context of workplace violence in the literature, the second aim of this research was to identify the risk management models and methods that are currently in use for the management of violence in the workplace. This leads directly to the third research aim which sought to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current mitigation approaches.

### Formal violence risk management models

The search for a 'model of violence risk management' with discussion in an organisational context returned no results from searches in any of the databases, although there were many results discussing clinical models and assessment of risk for victims of domestic and sexual violence, and for incarcerated persons to assess their likelihood of violent reoffending prior to release. In designing the literature review for this thesis, it quickly became clear that there is no literature that refers to established risk management approaches that can be applied to the problem of violence in the workplace.

That said, models have been designed to clarify how violence is underpinned in an effort to understand the problem more fully. A significant contribution in this regard comes from Galtung (1969, p.170) who proposed a typology for violence, separating it primarily into personal (direct) and structural (or indirect) violence (as seen in Fig. 1). Galtung (1969, p.171) prefers to refer to this latter type as 'social injustice' to avoid overworking the word 'violence'.

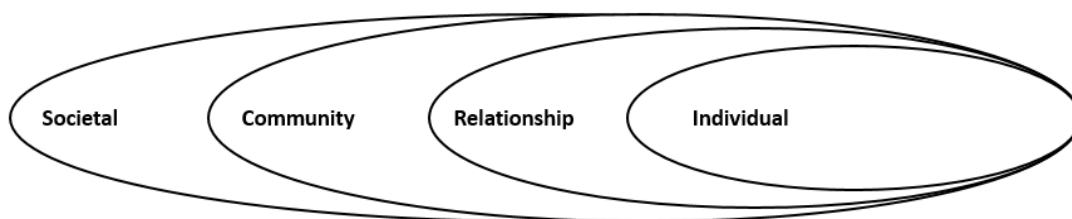


**Fig. 1. A typology of violence (Galtung, 1969, p.173)**



The model distinguishes between whether violence is intentional, whether it is 'manifest' (observable) or 'latent' (potential) and whether it is physical or psychological. The model also discusses the concept of 'objects' which refers to 'whether or not there is an object that is hurt' (Galtung, 1969, p.170).

Another notable contribution comes from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the form of their Social-Ecological Model (Fig. 2) (CDC, 2017). Whilst not aligned with any formal risk management frameworks, this model considers that violence is a result of a complex interplay of factors, and that prevention can be focused across multiple levels simultaneously. It is suggested that this is more likely to create an ongoing approach which is more likely to be effective than any single, solitary intervention. The four factors considered in the model are Societal, Community, Relationship and Individual. It is believed that appropriate engagement at each of these levels will reduce the chances of an individual resorting to physically violent conduct. There is much to credit in this model and it can both direct and support wider corporate activities that promote a healthier, fairer and safer working culture, however it fails to address the effect that organisational structure and culture can have. This model was supported by Gillespie, Gates & Fisher (2015) who use it as a basis for making specific recommendations.

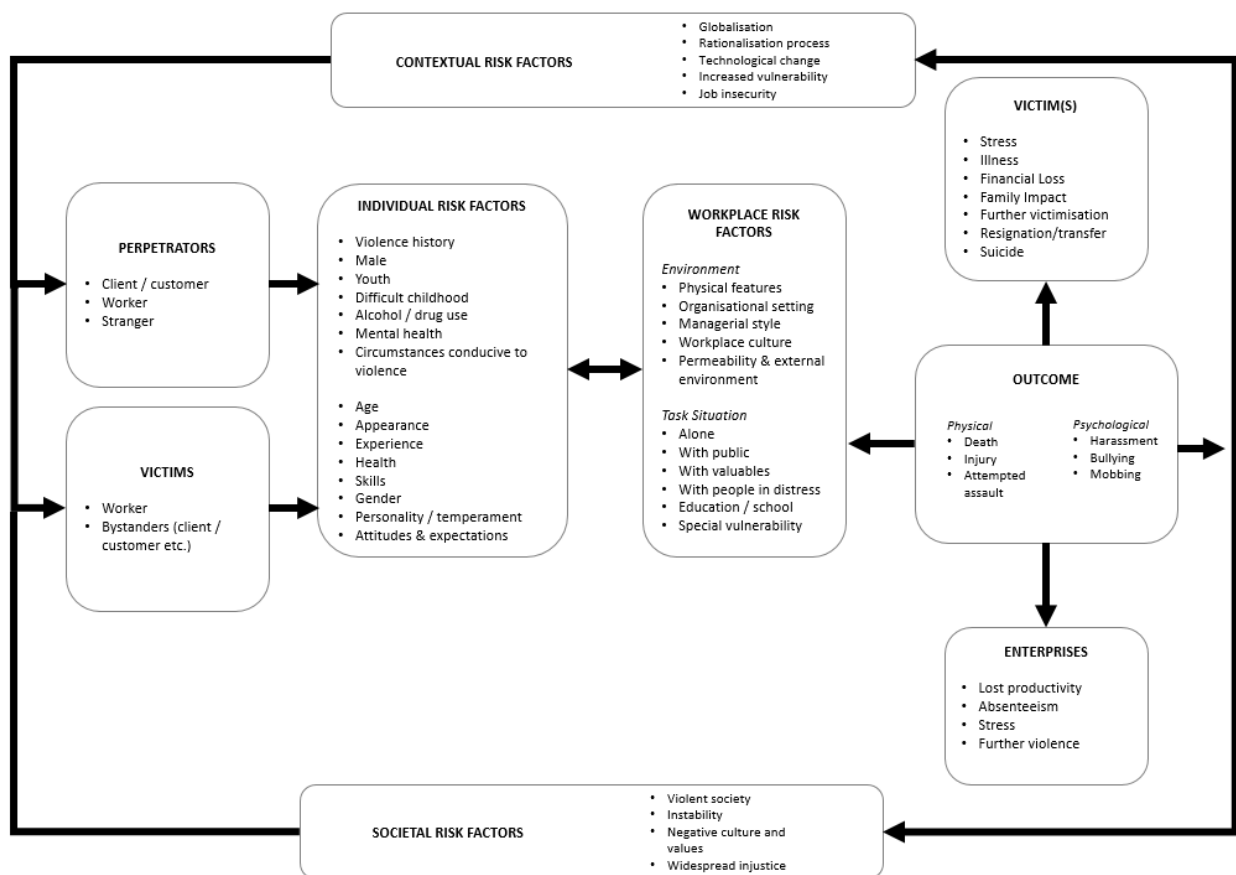


**Fig. 2. Social Ecological Model (CDC)**

While not exactly a 'model', it is worth introducing the work of Zollers & Callahan (2003) who offer a new dynamic, discussing workplace violence and the part that organisations play in the context of 'peacemaking', building on the earlier work of Galtung. Differentiating 'negative peace' (where efforts are directed towards the prevention of conflict) from 'positive peace' (where measures establish life enhancing values and structures), they discuss the latter from a strategic perspective. This includes open communication, training, transparency, free expression and forthright communication which nevertheless preserves employee dignity (Zollers & Callahan, 2003, p.13), all of which can be aligned to the previously discussed concepts of corporate social responsibility. They consider what they suggest is a 'major question' relating to employers who, in the effort to ensure workplace safety, implement aggressive 'negative peace' structures which have the unintended consequence of promoting structural violence. The authors suggest that the security monitoring of workspaces and

worker conduct may directly contradict notions of openness and dignity, especially where the monitoring is covert. This introduces debate around the balance between providing secure, safe spaces in line with an organisations legal duty of care and the philosophical considerations of freedom and dignity. The authors concede that in response to violence that originates externally, physical safeguards and surveillance are appropriate (2003, p.27). The fact that the authors are attempting to view the problem of violence and its associated solutions from a different perspective is praiseworthy.

Wider reading beyond the limited search results revealed one notable exception which suggests that work related violence can benefit from being viewed using a systems perspective (Bentley, Catley, Forsyth and Tappin, 2014), indicating a potential shift in the way that the issue is being perceived in some quarters. They recognise that violence in the workplace is related to a broad work system rather than being strictly a matter of interpersonal conflict, and that it can be understood in terms of the interaction between individual, task, environment and organisational work system elements (2014, p.839). They propose that analysis of these factors is key to effective violence reduction (2014, p.839).

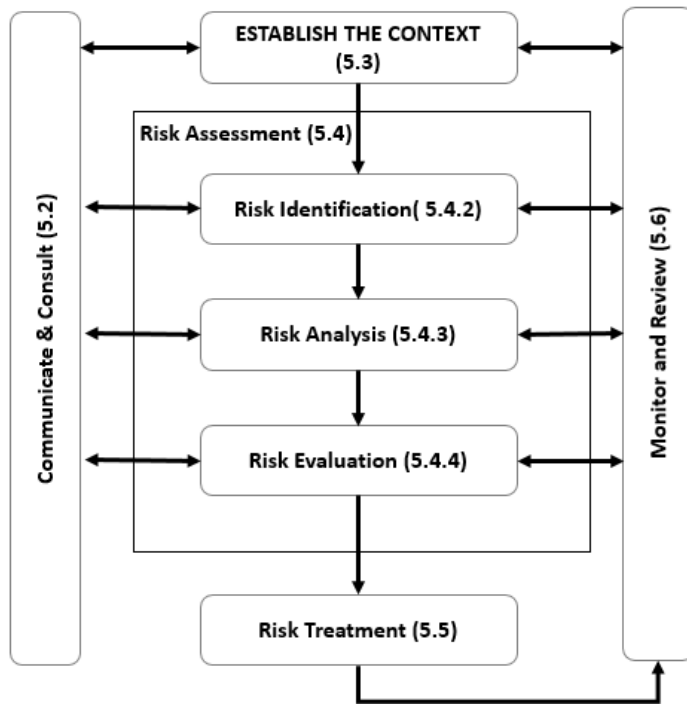


**Fig. 3. Interactive model of workplace violence, Chappell and Di Martino 2005 (based on Poyner and Warne 1988)**

The model proposed by Chappell and Di Martino model (Fig. 3) is based on an interactive analysis of all the elements that may be present in a workplace, including personal, occupational and environmental (Di Martino 2003, p.11). This model is a reasonable starting point however it is missing numerous components already identified in the literature. Vidal-Martí & Testor (2017, p.1359) analysed 28 studies on healthcare violence in Spain and compared these to this model to attempt to establish whether it helps to explain the phenomenon, however the results were inconclusive with the authors recommending further study. Despite this, it provides a useful starting point for considering how to contextualise the violence risks that an organisation faces.

While not a defined model, Leather et al. (1999, p.12) discuss the concept of three levels of intervention that are open to organisations, these being preventative, timely reactive (in response to a situation) and rehabilitative (to support staff members following an event). Going further, they suggest that these levels of intervention are also shared at organisational, team and individual level. There is much to commend the practicality and breadth of this approach, however there is still a space for a more formal risk management approach.

If we refer to clause 5.3 of the ISO31000:2015 (ISO, 2015, p.15), the organisation is required to contextualise its risks, both internally and externally, a requirement which is mirrored in the British Standard for security management (BS16000:2015) (British Standards Institution, 2015, p.6). In the ISO31000:2009, contextualisation of risk is embedded into the risk management process as the first stage (Fig.4).



**Fig. 4. Risk Management Process (ISO31000:2009. P.14)**

Viitasara and Menckel (2001, p.117) refer to an intervention model developed by Chou, Kaas and Richie that recognises that violent behaviour is a part of a process, providing a number of opportunities for intervention along the continuum that consists of three behaviours called baseline, pre-assaultive and assaultive. Viitasara and Menckel (2001, p.120) suggest that such an approach should seek to understand the structural, situational and specific factors that contribute to violence, with recognition that these provide the context for what takes place. This is entirely in keeping with the formal risk management approaches such as ISO31000:2015 (ISO, 2015, p.15), that seek to establish the context of risk before the risk management process begins. While the model they reference is grounded specifically in healthcare environments, there is merit in considering whether it can be applied generically.

Stepping away from standards directly related to security and risk management to broaden our perspective, the ISO 9001:2015 (which is the ISO standard for quality management systems) places a requirement on all organisations seeking certification to ‘determine, maintain and provide an environment for its processes that allow it to achieve conformity of products or services’ (Clause 7.1.4) (ISO, 2015, p.6). This clause specifically mentions social, psychological and physical factors that can affect the quality of outputs, such as calm, non-confrontational, stress-reducing and emotionally protective. While violence is not mentioned directly as a factor, it can be inferred that a working

environment where it is a risk to quality of service there is a major non-conformity with the standard. In the search for literature discussing how to contextualise workplace violence risks, there is nothing that directly addresses the topic with the clarity of a risk management model. It is worth considering that if a working and widely agreed upon definition of violence at work is a difficult starting point, we may instead make progress by studying what is being measured and categorised to establish whether this can provide an opportunity to 'reverse-engineer' a definition based upon what is actually being experienced.

Before examining how organisations measure violence, it is worth understanding how it may be categorised, however a framework that brings together multidisciplinary scholarship and public-sector perception of workplace aggression remains elusive (Fredericksen & McCorkle, 2013, p.228). One key commentator on the issue is Stanko, who proposes the issue is viewed with consideration to four component elements (2003, p.11):

Four elements are crucial in grappling with the meanings of violence: (1) the act itself; (2) the relationship of the participants to each other; (3) the location of the act; and (4) the outcome or the resultant damage.

This statement is important because it takes us from a purely one-dimensional position of describing either the act or the perpetrator and recognises the complex interplay of different situational variables. It could be argued that 'the act itself' can be further dissected to understand the triggers, motivations and states that the perpetrator experiences, however it is important to appreciate that understanding all these variables is essential in the management of violence as a risk. Of these elements, the relationship of the participants to each other has attracted particular attention. A model of categorisation for workplace violence incidents has been provided by the Californian Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) and this has become accepted internationally (Richards, 2003, p.2). The model relates to the second point raised by Stanko, defining violence in the context of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, providing four types (Bowie, 2002. p.2).

- Type I is *intrusive violence*, where there is no legitimate relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. This is exemplified in situations such as robbery.
- Type II is *consumer violence*, which refers to aggressive act perpetrated by customers or clients. It is recognised that this type has a second aspect, that being for those in care and control professions such as police, security and social workers. Denney (2010, p.1301) makes

the point that knowledge that service users constitute a threat of violence does not assist organisations in knowing *which* service users are dangerous, and therefore provides little of practical use.

- Type III is *relationship violence* which involves aggression by current or former employees or other people with unemployment-based relationship with the organisation. This can also include domestic violence, such as stalking by a former partner.

An aspect of type III violence is 'group acts' such as workplace bullying and harassment. Hinchberger (2009, p.38) describes violence that originates with colleagues as 'horizontal', defining this as a consistent pattern of behaviour designed to 'control, diminish, or devalue another individual' and which creates a risk to health or safety. She goes on to describe this horizontal violence as a symptom of an organisation where there is oppression and a sense of powerlessness. Bartholomew (2006, p.10) cites a study that indicates that approximately sixty percent of new nurses leave their first position within six months as a result of this type of violence. Despite this, many appear to accept this as a 'rite of passage', going on to repeat this cycle of behaviour themselves later in their careers (Hinchberger, 2009, p.43).

The OHSA classification system was later amended with an additional type by Bowie (2000, p.13); Type IV which represents *organisational violence* which emphasises the role of the organisation as the principal aggressor. This refers to situations where the organisation knowingly places their workers in dangerous or violent situations or allows a climate of bullying and harassment. Also included in this type is the threat or reality of downsizing or job layoffs. This is by far the most popular categorisation model for violence and it dominates the literature, however it can be argued that it provides little that supports the active, practical management of violence risks.

Tombs (2007, p.544) refers to the work of Salmi (2004) who offered four broad categories of violence which may be considered more practical. These are direct violence (where there is deliberate harm), indirect violence (which refers to the lack of support for persons at risk), repressive violence (which is a deprivation of fundamental rights) and finally alienating violence (which represents the deprivation of higher rights, such as denying psychological, emotional, cultural, or intellectual integrity). These types seem to be defined by either action or inaction, making them more identifiable and therefore measurable. Poyner and Warne (cited in Viitasara and Menckel, 2002, p.118) developed their own framework which established five violence -related elements: the characteristics of those directly

involved, the interaction itself, the specific work situation and the outcome of the event. What is missing from this framework is reference to the organisational influences on the event.

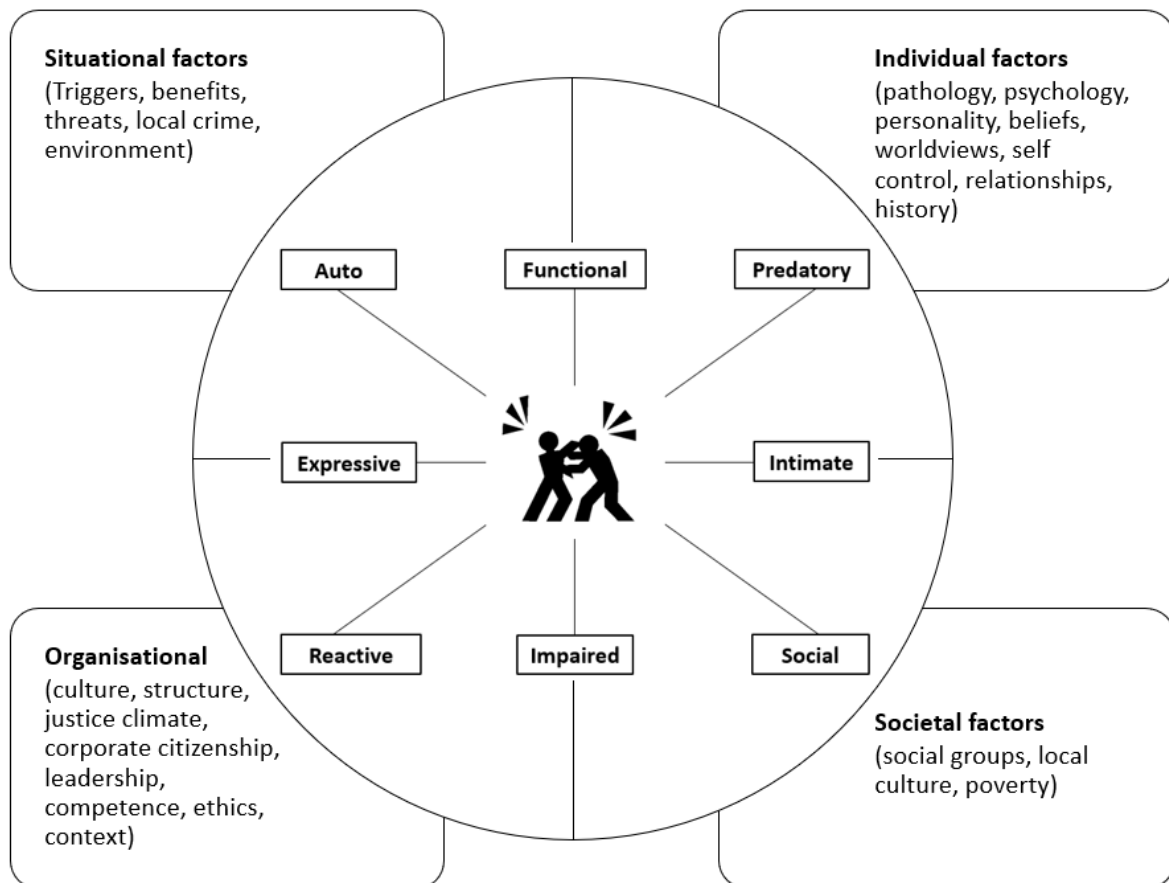
With these different attempts to classify violence, it is clear that there is a need for a universal structure for better understanding the *causes* of violence (Denney, 2010, p.1304) which would allow (or at least support) effective preventative measures. Across the breadth of the literature there is a tendency to contextualise violence in ways other than that in which it actually takes place. Instead of looking at violence in its own context as a risk event (that being of an interaction between people where personal harm is the consequence of a behavioural trigger or set of circumstances), these perspectives instead focus on factors such as the occupational settings in which it takes place such as prisons (Gregory, 2007), the occupations involved (Leino, Selin, Summala and Virtanen, 2011), types of violence (Neuman and Baron, 1998), categories of violence based on perpetrator (Bowie, 2002, p.2), and the consequences for victims and organisations (Aytac and Dursan, 2012, Rogers and Kelloway, 1997, Dillon, 2012). Such methods of contextualising violence in the workplace provide little scope for practical risk management responses.

This is reflected in a simpler approach suggested by Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron & Schultz (2003, p.317) who assert that violence in the workplace comes as a result of either external forces (related to societal violence) and internal forces resulting from the organisations culture and procedural justice climate. This binary classification seeks to examine causation, which is arguably a much more reliable foundation for preventative measures. Neuman & Baron (1998, p.395) consider that a failure to consider the motives of the people committing violence in the workplace is likely to impede progress in the prevention and management of such acts. Despite this, the typologies that are often cited are all based on something other than the obvious key motivations behind the behaviours.

In the search for a typology that provides a practical foundation for risk management activities, it is worth considering the words of Sharpe (2016, p.12) where he makes the observation that violence is rarely mindless:

Most violence takes place for a reason: it normally has meaning, even if that meaning is obscure or distasteful to many outside observers.

This thesis will therefore propose a contextual typology for work-related violence, which will be referred to as the WRV8. Following extensive examination of the wider literature, it is possible to identify seven different key types of interpersonal violence that are broadly discussed, defined by what appears to be the primary motivating factor for each type. The model then places these types into the centre of the recognised influencing factors that are believed to contribute to an incident of violence, expanding upon the contextual risk factors in the Chappell and DiMartino model.



**Figure 5: WRV8 Contextual typology of interpersonal violence**

The first type of violence is **functional** and can be used to describe acts of violence where it used as a tool or a ‘means to an end’, such as in the case of a robbery. This is followed by **predatory** violence, in which violence is perpetrated as its own end, such as in the case of rape, murder or terrorist acts. **Social** violence describes violence that is used as social currency, such as in gang culture to enhance reputation and credibility. It can also be used to describe incidents of workplace bullying or attempts to harm professional reputations. **Intimate** violence describes violence where there is an existing or previous intimate relationship between the perpetrator and the victim that triggers the behaviour.



This relates to situations with co-workers as well as those where partners or ex-partners of employees arrive at the workplace, triggering an incident. **Impaired** violence describes violent acts that are performed under the influence of alcohol or drugs that would not be likely to be performed by the person when in a sober state. **Reactive** violence describes situations where violence is the response to some external stimulus, such as a customer outburst or a situation where self defence is required. The next violence type is **expressive**, where the person presenting violence behaviour lacks the language to express their feelings, either as a result of an injury, disease, special learning need or loss of mental faculties (such as dementia). The final type of violence is that of **auto**, where a staff member self-harms (including attempts at suicide) either in the workplace or elsewhere, where their actions may be related to some aspect of their work (or the level of support that they have received). This typology of violence recognises that some incidents may well have more than one 'fit' within this model, however as a starting point it helps raise the question of *why* an incident could occur within the context of a chain of behaviour.

The WRV8 can be described in a similar way to the different types of fire that are categorised. Fire always appears the same and always has the same result, however the approaches that are taken to mitigate one type of fire may be entirely inappropriate for tackling another. Such is the same with violence in the workplace. The responses for functional violence may be considered monstrous in response to an incident of expressive violence, for example. Using this model to begin to contextualise what is happening and why allows a more focused mitigation strategy, more transparent reporting and recording and more alignment with the incidents that are being experienced.

The WRV8 contextual typology of interpersonal violence refers specifically to the seven primary motivations for violence between individuals. It should be noted that organisational violence sits separate from this model because it does not relate to violence that occurs as an interaction between individuals.

### **Approaches to workplace violence mitigation**

In the absence of any literature that examines violence in the workplace from a formal risk management perspective, the literature review moved on to examine the third research aim; examining the strengths and weaknesses of the current violence management approaches from a risk management perspective. Once an organisation has defined what it considers to be 'violence' within its areas of operation, this presents it with a 'moral imperative' to take action to prevent it

(Waddington et al. 2006, p.147). The primary tool that organisations have in this regard is the creation of policy.

Engineering out the organisational problem at the source usually proves much more effective and less costly than increasing the coping capacity by means of protective intervention at the individual level.

The above quote from Di Martino & Musri (2001, p.21) intelligently addresses the power that organisations have to overcome the issue of violence, saving themselves time and money by utilising effective risk management. The ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management Standard requires certified organisations to establish a risk management policy (ISO, 2009, p.10). Since policies are a core mechanism for reducing risk in organisations, many risks are subject to their own specific policy, and so a workplace violence policy is commonplace. A well-crafted policy will define the organisation's position and practices relating to any behaviour in a work setting by one or more individuals against other persons that intentionally threaten, attempt to or actually inflict harm (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.26). Hunt, Hughey and Burke (2012, p.48) state that it is essential for organisations to prepare themselves for the potential of violence in their workplaces, and the primary mechanism for this will be the establishment of policies, procedures, crisis management plans and ideally an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Bruce & Nowlin (2011, p.297) discuss a risk management approach to policy formulation, identifying themselves as perhaps part of a minority group that are open to viewing the problem from a formal risk perspective rather than that of occupational health and safety. For the formulation of policy, Bruce & Nowlin (2011, p.297) recommend that management should develop unambiguous definitions of both acceptable and unacceptable workplace behaviours, as well as outlining consequences of breaching the policy. They further state that once the policy is in place, it must have managerial support and there should be direct action taken for violations. The establishment of safe working culture needs to begin with employee induction into the organisation. It should include information on the systems in place for reporting workplace frustrations, opportunities to vent dissatisfaction in a controlled environment, engagement with suggestion programs and the benefits and processes associated with any Employee Assistance Programs (Dillon, 2012, p.19).

One common aspect of organisational violence management is that of 'zero tolerance' policies. Bruce & Nowlin (2011, p.296) suggest this as the first step in the formulation of any organisational policy for

the management of violence, and that management should review relevant legislation and regulations that may influence the direction and implementation of the policy. These can be described as a policy that confirms that 'violence will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action' (Stouffer & Varnes, 1998, p.141). Some commentators have suggested that zero tolerance policies have been misused by employers and applied to the removal of troublesome staff (Bowie, 2000, p.9) while others have simply questioned its efficacy (Hutchinson, Jackson, Wilkes & Vickers, 2008, p.61).

It is open to debate whether a zero-tolerance policy actually contributes to a safer workplace, considering that all it does is promise punishment for violent behaviour rather than preventing it. This is certain to be of little comfort to the victim. Bruce & Nowlin (2011, p.305) take the position that there should be no leniency in the application of zero tolerance policies and that any that is shown would negate the policy. This fails to recognise that violence occurs in different contexts and may, in some situations, be an appropriate response to stimuli. Citizens have a common law right to protect themselves, which is further enshrined in the UK in the Criminal Law Act 1967 section 3.1 which outlines the situations in which force may be used lawfully. Any workplace policy that states that 'all violence without exception will not be tolerated and is liable to punishment' does not reflect situations where citizens are legally entitled to use force, either for the protection of themselves, protection of others, or the prevention of a crime. As a result, zero tolerance policies may in fact be unlawful. It could be argued that such policies stem from a mis-appreciation of the law and may be formulated by well-meaning but ill-informed managers who do not possess a clear understanding of the problem. However they are formulated and applied, zero tolerance policies often appear to be a view taken from the organisation outwards, and do not address the root causes of violence that may be incubating within (Merchant & Lundell, 2001, p.138). What is clear is that organisations need to take care in the formulation of their policies in relation to violence to ensure that they are lawful and appropriate.

One well-meaning but ill-informed decision that some organisations made was to ban all uses of force in their workplaces. Their rationale was that if staff were not using force, there could be no liability. Waddington, et al. (2005, p.156) refers to two cases where two trainee social workers worked in an institution with an understanding that all physical restraint on the part of the staff was forbidden. They also reference a similar restriction believed by staff in an accident and emergency department. Such a policy contradicts the right of a staff member to self-defence as well as reasonable force as defined in the UK Criminal Law act 1967 section 3.1. In another example, they refer to a case where a

policewoman was threatened by a man with a loaded shotgun and explained her failure to use CS spray because 'it would have got her into trouble' .

Clearly, a badly written and poorly communicated policy can potentially create more risks than it resolves. An organisational over-reliance on policies and procedures may result in a culture that denies personal judgement when it comes to dealing with complicated situations, leading to a feeling of powerlessness (Denney, 2010, p.1310). Certainly, simply having a policy is not sufficient, and there needs to be a robust initiative to raise awareness of it across the organisation (Di Martino & Musri,2001, p.16). If staff are ignorant of organisational policies then incidents are much more likely to be unreported or poorly managed (Farrell & Cubit, 2005, p.51). Beyond the immediate considerations for violence and aggression, attention clearly needs to be paid to wider organisational policies which are the foundations of the organisational justice climate. This includes establishing policies that are fair and appropriate for a range of organisational processes, including hiring, compensation, evaluation, promotion, discipline and dismissal. An appropriate workplace violence policy alone provides little protection itself, however it does provide a foundation upon which to build a safer workplace.

Workplace violence policies are sometimes associated with or incorporate directly a workplace policy on bullying. This may be viewed as a positive step in the creation of a more respectful, productive and harmonious workplace, however Leck & Galperin (2006, p.94) identified that even in organisations with anti-bullying policies and infrastructure, victims may still prefer to remain silent. There may be numerous reasons for this, ranging from the fortitude of the victim (who may simply see the event as 'no big deal'), a desire not to make an issue out of the incident and therefore prolong it (preferring instead to 'put it behind them'), a fear that reporting may lead to investigation of their own involvement, a fear that reporting may make matters worse (in the case of bullying cases) and a belief that reporting will not change anything. This is supported by Hutchinson et al. (2008, p.68) who feel that because bullying is perceived at the lower end of the violence spectrum, it is afforded less importance. It has been suggested that organisations may not consider violence as a problem until there is a critical incident (Magnavita & Heponiemi, 2011, p.204) and it seems common that organisations focus on reactive strategies based in secondary and tertiary preventative measures rather than tackling the issue from at primary level. (Paterson et al. 2012, p.1).

Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the lack of a clear and agreed definition of work related violence, organisations have further obstacles to overcome in identifying the scale of the problem.

Assuming, for a moment, that a widely agreed upon definition is not required for an organisation to establish its own understanding and contextualisation of the problem, we then encounter a range of issues with measurement. A lack of clarity in the definition of violence will naturally contribute to issues with reporting (Rippon, 2000, p.454), and so a clear local policy detailing what constitutes violence and what falls within the reporting requirements is essential.

Profiling as a mitigation has been suggested for use at pre-employment stage to identify candidates for employment who may present violence risks and this may include psychological testing, background checks to validate claims made on resumes, reference checking, employment history checks, integrity interviewing and written performance tests (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011, p.297). While some of these suggestions are sensible (and even required before being employed in certain roles) some are clearly impractical, contentious or morally and legally flawed. Psychometric testing can be costly and difficult to implement, and the use of the pre-employment screening testing may invade the applicant's right to privacy, opening the organisation to a potential civil or employment law claim (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.28). Apart from a significant increase in employment costs for new personnel (including training staff to undertake or administer these checks), the organisation is only likely to be confirming the information that has already been provided by the applicant which is naturally going to support their application. Pre-employment screening has been made more difficult as previous employers may only provide dates of service rather than more detailed references in an attempt to avoid litigation from their ex-employees (Zollers & Callahan, 2003, p.20). The use of the pre-employment screening test may invade the applicant's right to privacy, opening the organisation to a potential civil or employment law claim (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.28). In truth, profiling employees as a part of the selection and screening process is only likely to identify past aggressive or violent behaviour if it has been officially reported and legal action taken (Neuman & Baron, 1998, p.407).

It is also worth recognising that human beings are complex and attempting to predict human behaviour in any given situation is virtually impossible, even given a historical precedent. Further, if profiling is performed at the pre-employment stage and then not maintained, there is less likely to be a record of a spiralling working relationship that can lead to the kinds of violence that the employer is trying to prevent in the first place. It is worth mentioning that the development of psychological profiling was not performed on 'normal' populations (having been developed using prison populations for the most part) and the results may have negative impacts on organisational culture as well as presenting legal and ethical problems for the organisation employing it (Bowie, 2002, p.8). Further, psychometric testing can be costly and difficult to implement. Mayhew and Chappell (2001, p.13)

argue that relying on profiles is a dangerous practice as a wide range of people under a myriad of circumstances have all resorted to forms of violence and a typical offender profile is yet to be constructed (citing Standing and Nicolini, 1997, p.44).

Some attempts at profiling have suggested that perpetrators of violence are commonly believed to share certain demographic characteristics such as being young males, having poor impulse control, low tolerance of frustration, risk taking behaviours, substance abuse, fragile ego and being either unemployed or under-employed (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007, p.329). Others suggest that the typical perpetrator of violence will be Caucasian, aged 35 or older, have a history of violent and aggressive behaviour, are socially isolated, engage in blame culture, suffer from low self-esteem, constantly complains, possesses an arsenal of weapons (or has access to one), and demonstrates paranoid behaviour (Hunt, Hughey and Burke, 2012, p.47). Such a profile seems very specific and difficult to apply. Further, an individual may demonstrate many or all of these aspects and yet not present a threat to the workplace.

Profiling in general at some level may well have a place in organisations that deal with regular service users who are known to present factors that might make them violent (substance abuse, history of violence, mental health issues, narcissism) but it offers little support to other types of organisation where a pre-existing relationship is not present (such as with retailers). Zollers & Callahan (2003, p.19) recognise that profiling may include many people who pose little or no threat, and that the process itself is 'inexact'. Further, they suggest the practical usefulness of profiling is limited to pre-employment screening with relation to worker on worker violence only. As a part of the risk management process, attempts may also be made using profiling to identify potential victims instead of potential perpetrators. Such profiles commonly indicate that females are more likely to be targeted (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007, p.330), however this may be an artefact of the higher reporting in industries like healthcare which see predominantly female workers. Aside from this observation, there is a great deal of value in organisations recognising those within it who are more vulnerable to violence than others and so allowing for more effective protection to be provided. Interestingly, Zollers & Callahan (2003, p.20) make a point the employee profiling may itself be seen as a form of structural violence on the part of the organisation, given that it may invade privacy and personal dignity. Further, profiling can become a pretext for discrimination, especially against minorities who may have a disproportionate percentage of criminal arrests and convictions, or against individuals who are disabled through mental illness (Zollers & Callahan, 2003, p.19).

Where the characteristics of individuals may be problematic to identify, categorise, and analyse, organisations themselves present a richer and potentially more reliable source of information. Organisational theory focuses on social structures and their effects on organisations and the people within them, and there is substantial evidence that organisational structure and practice influences the behaviour of its members (Tobin, 2001, p.93). Care needs to be taken, however, as processes designed to make the workplace safer may directly infringe on individual privacy and inadvertently create additional legal and cultural risks for the organisation.

A key piece of research indicated that instrumental support provided by organisations to victims of workplace violence positively affected their emotional well-being, physical health, and commitment to the role. Support in the form of information was also seen to mitigate the negative effects of violence on emotional well-being (Schat & Kelloway, 2003, p.121), demonstrating that organisations with robust response mechanisms that make staff feel 'cared for' are making great strides in reducing their own organisational risks. Evidence indicates that staff may perceive themselves to be either safe from violence or 'at risk', totally independently of their actual risk of harm (Blando et al., 2012, p.7). While this may be an interesting research result, it does not clarify how the researchers measured the 'actual risk of harm', something that would be a significant contribution to the field. The finding does, however, indicate the importance of effective risk communication on the part of the organisation, something that is a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in the UK (HSE, 1974).

It has been stated that organisations need to maintain clear and open lines of communication between staff and management (Perrone, 1999, p.77), and it is clear that effective communication is a key factor in the management of violence within organisations. One example of the benefits of this is the provision of information that can be applied to help a person cope with personal and environmental problems (Schat & Kelloway, 2003, p.112, citing House, 1981) which is referred to as 'informational support'. Informational support can take the form of training, and workers thus empowered feel that they had more control over events at work; something recognised as demonstrating improved emotional wellbeing as a result of a reduction in fear (Schat & Kelloway, 2000, p. 400, Rogers & Kelloway, 1997, p.69). Where an employee feels that they can predict a violent encounter and are suitably prepared to deal with it, there has been a suggestion that they may not experience the negative effects of exposure to violence with the same severity or duration as those less prepared (Barling, 1996, p.38). This suggestion may reflect a degree of personal resilience and explain the effects of violence against security staff, for example, which are believed to be more robust than perhaps some other professions.

When it comes to mitigations for violence, Di Martino & Musri (2001, p.10) present a four-stage process relating to their study on the part stress has to play in triggering violence. These are stress recognition, stress assessment, anti-stress intervention and monitoring and evaluation. They recommend commencing with a stress/violence audit that focuses on identifying stressors at organisational and personal levels and this is accompanied by an assessment of working practices against a checklist of situations known to present a higher risk of violence (Di Martino & Musri, 2001, p.13). Emphasis is made that action needs to be taken at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (Di Martino & Musri, 2001, p.14, Paterson, Leadbetter and Miller, 2005, p.747). We have already discussed policies, which can be considered at primary level, however there is a requirement for a strategy that approaches the risk from secondary and tertiary perspectives as well (Schat & Kelloway, 2003, p.112). An incident of violence should be mitigated at three levels. Primary interventions are steps that are taken to avoid an incident, secondary occur at the point of violent conflict (which relies on training in conflict management and ultimately may require physical intervention) and tertiary measures can be considered those that take place after an incident to mitigate any harm.

Where there has either been a high or serious instance of physical violence, or where there is felt to be a greater risk of this occurring, organisations are recommended to include physical security countermeasures in their pre-incident strategy. These are clearly reflective of what should be in the wider organisational security strategy and include site surveys, security screening at entry and exit points, electronic and physical surveillance and removal of reward by removing inducements (such as reducing cash and valuables held on-site) (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011, p.297). This supports the implementation of key security management processes such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and there is evidence that this has a significant effect on reducing workplace violence in retail establishments (Wassell, 2009, p.1051). This approach (also known as 'target hardening') has proven effective at reducing crime in a range of diverse locations, however there are concerns that with regard to violence it may lead to displacement, increases in the amount of force being used and potentially may make staff members feel more vulnerable as well as being trapped in what can become an oppressive environment (Bowie, 2002, p.8). Consideration of the environment and the ways in which it can affect behaviour can go further than this. Di Martino & Musri (2001, p.18) list environmental factors which may affect stress levels such as noise, odours, lighting, temperature, humidity, ventilation, comfort, access to toilet facilities, crowding, technology and more. The recognition of the importance of these factors in the design of workplaces and work processes is a significant advance in the removal of factors that can contribute to a violent reaction.



Training is often the primary response of an organisation to violence risks. For front-line personnel, it should include interpersonal communication skills, conflict identification and resolution techniques (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011, p.297) and there should be separate programmes for managers that include crisis management responses (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011, p.297) to violent situations. Early training programs were based on police training with a focus to the physical management of individuals and the protection of self (Farrell & Cubit, 2005, p.44). Much of the training that is available in the market today appears to be 'off-the-shelf' which may reduce its efficiency (Bowie, 2002, p.8). There are concerns that training is generally of a low quality and training as a mitigation is low down on the hierarchy of controls. Wassell (2009, p.1054) cites Gates et al (2005) that a study where one hundred and thirty-eight nursing assistants undertook nine hours of group training that made no statistical difference to the incidence of assaults. Bowie (2000, p.9) states that training as a violence mitigation may be perceived to blame staff members as the cause of aggression in the first place. He also suggests that much of the training was 'of dubious quality and effectiveness' (Bowie, 2000, p.9). This is reflected in a study performed by Rogers, Miller, Paterson, Bonnett, Turner, Brett, Flynn and Noak in 2007. Their findings led them in particular to question the thinking that contributed to what seems an arbitrary decision on the frequency of refresher training;

...the issue of how long the skills and knowledge taught within such training are retained has yet to be established. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the rationale as to why England, Scotland and Wales have chosen a timescale (for refresher training) that is at best unspecified and at worst every two years, is difficult to understand in the absence of any evidence.  
(Rogers et al, 2007, p.6);

Their research also challenged the effectiveness of the training overall (2007, p.11), stating;

...we have allowed breakaway training to become the main form of dealing with violent assaults over the last 30 years without any credible evidence.

This was supported two years later in a further study on violence management training by Dickens, Rogers, Rooney, McGuinness & Doyle (2009, p.778 citing Parish, 2007);

...there is little evidence that breakaway training actually works...Nurses are being sent on 70,000 training days a year because it seems like a good idea.

There is a risk that training may be perceived to be shifting the blame for violent encounters onto the staff members, and that conflict management or stress management training may reflect shortcomings on part of the staff member (Bowie, 2002, p.8). Despite this, training (at the time of writing) remains the most common secondary mitigation method that organisations employ. Taylor and Rew (2010, p.1083) make this comment;

Little progress has been made in developing research supported best practices for mitigating and addressing workplace violence in emergency departments. The current practices in clinical use today to deter and control violence have very little, if any, evidence base to support for or against their use.

It is worth clarifying the problems directly associated with using training as a means for managing violence risks. The development and delivery of such training requires strict ethical controls because we cannot deliberately inflict harm on staff. There is a temptation to make the training 'realistic' (this is often a marketing angle used by training providers) however real-world violent interactions are unbound by ethical constraints and it is virtually impossible to develop and deliver training that will replicate real situations. People in training are not under any adrenal or emotional stress, and their lives are not at risk. Resultingly, their performance of the training when these conditions are changed cannot be effectively or consistently measured.

Beyond physical intervention training, aggression management training has been described as being often inappropriate for different staff groups and rarely evaluated (Beech & Leather, 2006, p.41). Tertiary mitigations that follow an incident may be unable to prevent the incident from occurring however they may reduce the risks of further harm to victims, allow understanding for future prevention and promote recovery in some cases. Post-incident debriefs may support an organisation in identifying factors that make contributed to the intent of the aggressor (Rippon, 2000, p.458). De Puy, Romain-Glassey, Gut, Pascal, Mangin & Danuser (2015, p.219) identified that employer support is likely to be critical to the recovery of victims of physical violence in the workplace, irrespective of the nature of the work being undertaken. This is supported by DeFraia (2016, p.84) who states that traumatic workplace events are often unpredictable and unpreventable and therefore the organisational response is critically important. It is certainly better to approach the problem from a prevention perspective (Stone & Hayes, 1995, p.30) and likely to be less costly in the long run. As employers began to appreciate the effect of violence in the workplace on the staff, some implemented counselling and then later critical incident stress debriefing (CISD). Such post-incident support has, in some cases, been demonstrated as effective as well as cost-effective. Further, it can be used to

demonstrate that the organisation is fulfilling its obligations to the employee (Bowie, 2000, p.9). Support may consist of a phone call and the follow-up for moral support, assisting with medical care, legal and administrative support, and actions taken to prevent re-occurrence (DePuy et al. 2015, p.220). De Puy et al (2015, p.220) also discovered that staff members who did not receive sufficient support felt strongly disappointed and distressed. What has been clearly established is that the organisational response is critically important (DeFraia, 2016, p.84).

Antai-Otong (2001, p.127) takes the position that violence within an organisation should be considered a critical incident and responded to as such. This seems sensible considering that she describes a critical incident as:

A powerful and overwhelming event that lies outside the range of usual human experience. The clinical significance of a critical incident is its potential to exhaust one's usual coping mechanisms, resulting in psychological distress and disruption of normal adaptive functioning.

An act of violence certainly seems to meet this criterion. Responses to such incidents may be distorted thinking, fear, intense anxiety, depression, self-blaming or denial (Antai-Otong, 2001, p.127) which may all be considered in the spectrum of responses where there is a perceived threat to survival. It is in the interests of the organisation to implement strategies to support staff following such experiences. A crisis response plan for a violent incident is therefore extremely desirable, however it is important to provide time for those involved who may need to interpret the event and process it in their own ways. This may well lead to a disruption in the corporate function (Clements, DeRanieri, Clark, Manno, Kuhn & Wolcik, 2005, p.2). There is a suggestion that this should include the creation of a multidisciplinary team to include human resources, security, legal affairs, health and safety and employee assistance, all of which should be freed from the usual reporting hierarchies (Zollers & Callahan 2003, p.17).

What may be apparent is that people become blinded by the problem (or rather by their solution). As a result, mitigations may well increase risks. Richards (2003, p.26) relates an interesting example where a response to risk had unintended consequences. In this case, concern was raised in a hospital that curtains and handrails could be used as ligature points by suicidal patients and this led to their replacement with rails that were attached magnetically. While this would prevent their use in self-harm by hanging, it allowed them to be easily removed and used as potential weapons instead. Richards (2003, p.26) makes the point that the proposed solution should have included engagement

with frontline staff who may have identified the further risk that the risk management solution presented. The following quote from Zollers and Callahan (2003, p.6) sums this up.

Insufficient understanding of workplace violence may cause businesses to mis-spend resources on prevention techniques that have little or nothing to do with the reality of actual or likely risks.

This idea is further reflected by Bowie (2008, p.10):

Most workplace violence management programs are severely deficient in their understanding in the types of violence that need to be addressed.

A final note on mitigation can be provided by Hegney, Plank & Parker (2003, p.267) who recognised the importance of contextualising not just the risks but also the mitigations, stating that 'a 'one size fits all' education programme or policy would not be effective'.

## Discussion

The literature was reviewed with respect to the first three of the four research aims, and it became clear that there is little if any research that discusses the issue in terms of its formal management in relation to its impact as a wider organisational risk. Despite the existence and maturity of a vast body of research literature on the topic of workplace violence, the field cannot be considered theoretically rich.

Much the academic literature is focused on examining violence in the same contexts. These include contextualising violence using the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, contextualising it by the occupation of the victim, the location or based on certain attributes of the victim (such as gender). For example, much of the extant research relates to healthcare environments and many of the findings may be specific to the organisational environment in which it took place and therefore of little use to the wider global workforce. The prevailing methods of contextualisation do not support a clear and systematic approach to the management of workplace violence, with the most popular model focussing on relationships between aggressor and victim rather than the underlying causes of the incident. While they highlight important considerations, they do not provide practical insights that organisations can use to prevent violence or mitigate its risks. Given that formal risk management methods as described in the ISO31000:2015 require organisations to contextualise their

risks at the start of the process, a lack of direction on how this needs to be done is likely to undermine any violence prevention efforts.

Much of the literature appears to be focussed on physical violence, despite evidence that this is a rare event in the workplace compared to other forms and that more organisational and personal harm is inflicted through corrosive cultures and poor management. This is understandable to some degree, given that an act of physical violence is shocking, easily identifiable and attracts significant attention as opposed to day-to-day workplace hostility. As well as being more easily identifiable, it is more likely to attract agreement that it is unacceptable, and it is easier to prevent using traditional security management methods. This narrowing of the topic to primarily achieve a reduction in physical harm does nothing to advance the mission to reduce the underlying factors that contribute to far greater harms and increased organisational costs. There is a clear need for a further call for a distinction to be made in the ways we describe the behaviours discussed on the violence spectrum, since the term 'violence' as a 'catch all' is little understood beyond its physical connotations.

It is noteworthy that only one piece of literature examined in this review actively sought the opinions and experiences of those people within the organisations who are actually responsible for managing violence in their workplaces, instead of focussing on the experiences and opinions of front-line workers (despite that this research identified that the attitudes of the managers themselves were part of the problem in that instance). This can be argued as an imbalance in the literature and potentially a contributor to the ongoing issues of violence at work. If the people who have the authority to take action within organisations are not being engaged with through research, they may be unlikely to engage with that research when it is completed, and progress on the issue is unlikely.

The second research aim sought to identify risk management models and methods that are in place for the management of violence risks. It was discovered that there are no formal risk management models for violence that could be utilised in most organisations. Indeed, there is a total absence of discussion of violence using formal risk management language. There are several concepts in the literature that are worthy of merit, however little of practical application from a formal risk management perspective. This suggests that the research in this thesis is timely, has currency and provides a contribution to the field that identifies a gap in the existing knowledge.

The third research aim sought to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current mitigation methods from a risk management perspective. Much of the information on mitigation is specific to

the research that each paper relates to, and, considering the previously recognised weaknesses in this area, there is little that can be confirmed as 'effective' to the wider workplace. Common mitigations such as de-escalation training and physical intervention training have little academic support for their effectiveness in the literature, and it would appear that initiatives such as 'zero tolerance' are likewise poorly founded. These comments notwithstanding, the weakness of the literature may also conversely present a strength. Given the diverse range of locations and with such a number of specific areas of attention in the literature, there is much to be gained from taking a higher-level view. There may be no definitive answers to the problem, but the breadth of thinking is sufficient to provide more helpful ideas about its different aspects.

Since violence within organisations should be considered a 'pure risk' (Borodzicz, 2005, p.3) as it offers no positive benefits to the organisation or its stakeholders and can only lead to harm or loss, a formal method of managing this risk is perhaps desirable, together with practical mitigations that have a rational application and are supported by risk-based, evidence-based thinking.

## Chapter Four: Research Design

### Introduction

Given the established weaknesses in the body of literature in relation to work-related violence from a strategic risk management perspective, it was important to ensure that this research avoided similar pitfalls. This chapter begins with a brief discussion on the philosophical perspective taken for this research before establishing the rationale for the design decisions that were made. Following this, it discusses the challenges that the research encountered, culminating in a critical reflection of the study experience.

### Research methodology

The topic of violence in the workplace poses a significant research challenge. If one were to take a positivist epistemological perspective, studies would be focussed on events that are observable, detectable or measurable (Cresswell, 2014, p.155) and use the methods typically employed in the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012, p.174). As observed in the literature, reliable studies of violence in the workplace are never going to be so simplistic, given the issues relating to definition (at both personal and organisational level), subjectivity and the broad spectrum of behaviours that are considered in the literature to be workplace violence. The use of positivist research methods such as quantitative analysis may well provide a variable for measuring the number of easily identifiable instances of physical violence but would become highly complex if attempted to measure those events on the spectrum of violence that are more subjective in nature. Further, the meanings that these events are given by those involved and the wider organisations they occur within are potentially of far greater importance than their frequency, especially in consideration of their risk effects on organisational culture. Given the nature of the research topic, quantitative data on incidents of violence in the workplace (even if it were collected reliably given the issues with definition and under-reporting) would be viewed independently of the context of each incident (Punch, 2013, p.237), something that arguably misses the most crucial point. Silverman (2013, p.6) supports this notion and suggests that the 'pursuit of variables' is 'too mechanistic' and there is benefit in examining more than simply the prevalence of phenomena. A further argument against the use of quantitative methods for this research was the requirement for larger sample sizes which are required to provide the opportunity to generalise the results to a larger population (Punch, 2005, p.237). Such a large number of participants was something that, without a host organisation, would have been unfeasibly difficult to achieve within the research timeframe. A pragmatic approach to the research (Cresswell, 2014, p.11, Punch, 2005, p.3) was therefore required.

An objectivist viewpoint of violence would suggest that it has meanings that are independent of those involved (Bryman, 2012, p.33) which does not necessarily respect the perspectives of the actors involved. Since it is an extreme form of human interaction, it is arguably more accurate to discuss violence in constructionist terms, where meanings are constantly being created by those involved (Bryman, 2012, p.33). This would provide the opportunity to examine the ways in which violence was perceived by managers who had been involved in the issue throughout their careers, and through them their experiences of how the organisations that they were familiar with perceived the issue. This was central to all four of the research objectives, making the constructionist ontological perspective the most appropriate choice, as described by Silverman (2013, p.107).

Consideration was given to which theoretical positions on violence at work may inform the research. Criminology presents numerous theories of criminality that are useful for examining violence in general however there are few that specifically address it within the confines of the workplace. Specifically, criminology offers benefit to perhaps two of the WRV8 types of violence, the functional and the predatory. Its application is less clear when considering reactive, impaired or expressive forms of violence in the typology. Martinko and Zellars (1998) attempted to apply cognitive appraisal perspectives to the issue to attempt to formulate a theory in 1998, which followed a similar approach by Cox and Leather (1994) four years prior, however neither document was accessible for this research.

As a result, the research began without a clear hypothesis however one began to form during the literature review. The themes that were gradually revealed during the process of sourcing and examining such a wide body of literature indicated that organisations are generally failing to perceive violence as a strategic organisational risk, are unaware of its effect on their corporate aims and are unaware of how to best manage these risks. The creation of hypothesis during the research is not uncommon (Silverman, 2012, p.37) and I felt that developing one in this manner after reflection on the literature was more appropriate than attempting to formulate one at the start and then pursuing a deductive approach. Such an approach meant disregarding grounded theory (which deduces a hypothesis from data) in favour of thematic analysis, following an inductive approach to the research (Bryman, 2012, p.578).

## Research method

The choice to use qualitative methods for the research developed as a result of the decision to follow a constructionist perspective. After consideration of the ways in which violence is discussed in the



literature, I felt that a semi-structured interview would be the most appropriate research instrument. This would allow me the flexibility to explore the understanding of the participants and follow the themes that developed throughout. It also allowed the participants the opportunity to express their experiences, thoughts and opinions in their own ways (Byrne, 2012, p.209), and is useful when dealing with sensitive topics such as violence. Following an idealist position, the interviews provided not hard facts but rather the participants own accounts of one possible version of their experiences (Byrne, 2012, p.211).

I decided at the outset that I would strive to perform twenty-five interviews as the target for this research and because the research took place without a host organisation, I was relying on my professional network to provide me with access to participants. Since such a large proportion of the literature on the subject of violence is situated in healthcare settings, I was keen to engage with managers from other occupational areas where violence might have been an issue. To this end I sought out managers who had the responsibility for the management of violence (either in their current or previous roles) in healthcare, higher education, retail, security guarding, aviation and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's). I also sought out security professionals who offered either consultancy or training related to the field of workplace violence, and this led to the opportunity to introduce participants from other parts of the world such as Canada and the USA where it would be interesting to see if perspectives were different. The nature of the sample can be argued to be representative of the kinds of people who are usually involved in the management of violence within organisations, and who were capable of discussing it at a more experienced level. There were concerns about homogeneity of the sample (given that 'security people' tend to share certain perspectives on the world based on similar experiences), however this concern proved to be unfounded given the range of opinions and experiences discussed.

One challenge with qualitative methods such as interviewing is the requirement for physical access to participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.210). Early consideration was given to running focus groups, however this was quickly dismissed for operational reasons. The participants were all management professionals in disparate geographical locations and organisations, which immediately made focus groups unfeasible. This was further compounded by scheduling factors as well as potential ethical issues where participants may not have wished to speak freely in a room with others present. Consequently, interviews were conducted on a one to one basis remotely, either by phone or Skype (without a camera) and recorded digitally. The decision to perform remote interviews was primarily one based on operational necessity and cost control. Further, face to face interviews where the

participant is presented with recording equipment can be off-putting (Bryman, 2012, p.482) and so remote interviewing and recording resolved this potential barrier. Consideration was given to running e-focus groups using remote meeting software, however this was dismissed with scheduling considerations being the main objection.

The interviews commenced with a broad invitation for the participants to describe their professional background with relation to the management of work related violence. This open question allowed me to collect valuable demographic data that would support the analysis of not just the rest of the interview, but also help to place it into context with the information from other interviews. The participants for the research came from a wide variety of environments and backgrounds, and all were management level practitioners in their fields. The current occupations of the participants are listed in table 3, together with their previous sector experiences and their location.

<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>Current Occupation</b>	<b>Previous sectors experienced</b>	<b>Current Location</b>
<b>1</b>	Security management consultant	Retail, guarding, loss prevention, investigations	Canada
<b>2</b>	Personal safety instructor	Police	UK
<b>3</b>	Security management consultant	Healthcare (acute), education, media	UK
<b>4</b>	Security management consultant	Night time economy, hospitality, public spaces	Ireland
<b>5</b>	Personal safety instructor	Mental health	UK
<b>6</b>	Security management consultant	Military, healthcare	UK
<b>7</b>	Loss prevention manager	Retail	UK
<b>8</b>	Head of security	Military, healthcare	UK
<b>9</b>	Violence prevention consultant	Security guarding, healthcare	UK
<b>10</b>	Violence prevention consultant	National critical infrastructure, corporate	USA
<b>11</b>	Head of security	Diplomatic, banking	UK
<b>12</b>	Personal safety instructor	Mental health	UK
<b>13</b>	Violence prevention consultant	Postal service	USA
<b>14</b>	Security management consultant	Military, oil & gas, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing	UK
<b>15</b>	Security guarding director	Security guarding	UK

16	Personal safety instructor	Police	UK
17	NGO manager	Healthcare	UK
18	NGO manager	NGO	UK
19	Security director	Military	UK
20	Head of security	Healthcare	UK

**Table 3: Participant occupations, experience and location**

While many of the participants were currently directly employed in security management roles within their different sectors, others were not but still bore some responsibility over the issue of workplace violence in their organisations. During the interviews, emphasis was placed on the wider historical experiences of the participants to further broaden their answers and attempt to reduce any specific focus on their current employer. Of the three participants who primarily worked as violence management consultants, two were based in the United States, and one of the security consultants was based in Canada. Of those participants with a security background, many were able to reflect on a wide range of sectors that they had experienced throughout their careers, such as retail, licensed premises, events, diplomatic security, manufacturing and corporate organisations. This provided a much broader context for their answers and potentially increased the robustness of the research.

In the first instance, participants were directly approached based on their professional status and background. This was supported by a snowball approach where after they were interviewed I requested them to consider people who they knew who they might wish to invite to participate, and in this way, I gathered several more participants than I would otherwise have had access to. The other method that I used to engage participants was to publicise the research to my professional network on the LinkedIn website. I regularly posted updates and requests for participants from specific fields, and this too brought me some participants that I would otherwise not have reached. As a result of both approaches to recruitment, participants could be considered to be self-selecting. While I was concerned that this might homogenise the sample, this proved to be unfounded given the diversity of the participants at the end of the research phase.

The interviews were transcribed soon after they were performed, in accordance with the advice provided by Bryman (2012, p.482) relating to both workload and the development of the research. Additional considerations were that I wanted to ensure that the interviews were fresh in my recollection and to allow me to begin the process of analysis early. Initially, I attempted to use Dragon Naturally Speaking software to transcribe the audio files directly, however the initial results were unusable due to limitations with the software. As a result, the interviews were transcribed by me using

a process of listening to them through headphones and dictating them into a Microsoft Word document using Dragon Naturally Speaking software. This was a far from perfect solution given that not all of the interviews took place with clear connections, and there were some instances where the voice of the participant either broke up, was cut off or else spoke in a way that made them hard to understand in places.

I initially committed to transcribing the interviews verbatim, however there were some challenges with this approach. The first attempt to exactly replicate an interview was challenged by transmission issues, which were compounded by the manner of expression of some of the participants. These issues combined to make creating an exact transcript that was usable for analysis highly problematic. Nevertheless, I did not wish to take an overly selective approach to transcription that may have resulted in lost data that may later have become important. I decided that since I was using a small sample size, I would persevere and transcribe them verbatim (as far as practicable) initially and then make copies of the transcripts that I would then sanitise only for readability, analysis or ethical reasons. Fortunately, exactness in transcription is somewhat less important than the meanings that the participant was trying to convey (Flick, 2009, p.300). The sanitised versions of the interviews were then prepared and formatted to ensure that they were ready for analysis.

Considering the nature of the research topic, the ethical implications for participants, organisations and myself as the researcher personally were considered carefully. Participants were emailed an information sheet about the research which formed a part of the ethical approval process for the University of Portsmouth. They were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and following this they were provided with a consent form, also a part of the ethical approval process. Once these consent forms were returned to me, I was then able to schedule the interviews.

An early decision was to commit to anonymising the research data that was collected. This would protect participants from any adverse effects of comments that they may have made (or been perceived to make) about their current or previous organisations during the interviews. I also committed to redacting any organisations or third parties who were inadvertently named during the interviews, or any information that was provided that may have made the participants easy to identify (such as their position, for example). A further consideration was to actively direct questions away from personal experiences of violence in the workplace. This decision would avoid the potential for participants to 'relive' any trauma that they may have experienced in the past. The research was

grounded in their experiences at managerial and organisational level, and this was emphasised in the discussions and information that was provided prior to the interviews taking place.

Early analysis of the data as the research progressed (following the advice of Bryman, 2012, p.484) was decided as opposed to waiting until I was in possession of all the data. This was a useful decision, as I was able to identify when I had reached a saturation point and was not uncovering anything substantially different from the participants. While the initial target was twenty-five interviews, I felt that after twenty I had reached a point of data saturation. I was not gathering any new perspectives from the interviews beyond the first fifteen and felt that the collection and analysis of further data would not provide any additional benefit. The ongoing analysis also indicated areas of the interview schedule where additional clarification on the questions may have been required, and so shaped the development and performance of the later interviews.

After importing the sanitised and redacted versions of the interviews into NVIVO, several different analytical approaches were taken using the functions within the software, however it became apparent that the data was beyond the ability of the software to derive any but the most basic interpretations from. Because the participants expressed themselves in such a wide variety of ways, I decided to manually code the data in the software and perform the data analysis thematically.

Aronson (1995, p.1) describes thematic analysis as a 'focus on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour'. Braun & Clarke (2014, p.60) identify five stages in the process of thematic analysis, these being:

- Familiarisation with the data,
- Generation of initial codes,
- Searching for themes,
- Defining and naming themes,
- Producing the report.

Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006, p.84) suggest six different stages, however. These are:

- Develop the code manual
- Test the reliability of codes
- Summarise data and identify initial themes

- Apply codes and perform additional coding
- Connect the codes and identify themes
- Corroborating and legitimising the coded themes

In execution, I performed a hybrid of these suggestions, starting with the collection of data, with the familiarisation process occurring beginning during the transcription process. The transcripts were then reviewed, and a list of experiences were created, either from direct quotation or else through the paraphrasing of common ideas. This included identifying and recognising common topics, vocabulary, phrases, opinions and feelings. Once this list of patterns was completed, the transcripts were then coded to draw out the relevant data. Aronson (1995, p.2) explains that these themes are then 'pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience'. Because this analysis process was performed soon after each interview, common themes became much clearer at an earlier stage in the research.

Aronson (1995, p.2) then describes how the themes can be validated by referring to the literature, stating that 'when the literature is interwoven with the findings, the story that the interviewer constructs in one that stands with merit'. While he suggests that this should be done at a later stage in the process, I identified an initial set of themes at the literature review stage and used these to inform the design of the interview schedule and the topics covered. A code manual was constructed consisting of seven broad thematic codes which were:

- Definition – how is violence defined in organisations?
- Recognition – how is it recognised as a risk?
- Commitment – is senior management engaged with the issue?
- Ownership – who owns the risk?
- Responses – what is currently done?
- Effectiveness – do the responses work?
- Expertise – who is responsible or engaged with on this issue?

These codes created were then examined alongside the themes that were coded from the interviews to establish whether the collective experience of the sample was reflective of the literature, and whether any further themes had emerged. For consistency, further themes from the interviews were noted using a further iteration of the coding process, and then added to the coding manual before

confirmation against those created from the literature. The additional themes drawn from the interviews were:

- Risk assessment – how is violence assessed as a risk, what tools are in use and are they appropriate?
- Risk methodology – which risk management methodologies are widely understood or applied in the management of workplace violence risks?

Braun & Clarke (2014, p.57) make the point with thematic analysis that while a theme may be common, this might not make it 'meaningful or important' and so aligning and contrasting the themes from the interviews with the existing themes from the literature was an important step to overcoming this risk.

There existed a challenge in sifting the sample to ensure that the people that I interviewed were able to discuss the topic to the extent required by the research objectives. To that end, I attracted several people who generously offered their time to be interviewed, only to discover in informal conversations beforehand that they were unable to meet the requirements of the research. As it would have been unfair to place them in a position where they may have experienced embarrassment, I elected not to pursue their offer of interviews. This was a difficult decision to take, especially considering the challenges with finding sufficient numbers of participants, however because the decision is ethically based, I felt that this was the correct action to take.

### **Research experience**

Reflecting on the research experience overall, I feel that the choice of a qualitative methodology was the appropriate decision. It is worth noting that as a researcher, my previous research projects were quantitative and so I was relatively inexperienced with qualitative research methods. Given the limitations of the literature, I felt it would be important to conduct the research with as diverse a group as possible. The decision to conduct the research without a host organisation was likewise felt to be appropriate, despite the challenges that this presented. By discussing the perceptions of the participants on the range of organisations they were familiar within unspecific terms allowed a higher-level perspective than would be possible in the examination of a specific organisation. This also served to avoid any potential reputational harm that may have been possible.

As the researcher, I was aware of the effect that I could have on the research. As discussed in the introduction, I have broad experience of the field of study, from both operational and academic perspectives, and so reflexivity was a key consideration. I felt it important to remain as impartial to the research as possible during the conduct of the interviews, since I was interested in the genuine experiences of the participants without influencing them with my own perspectives. This said, I was aware that the research was not being conducted in a vacuum, and that the measures I had taken to avoid undue influence of the participants would only remain effective until I began the process of evaluating the data, where my own perspectives might result in a different analysis than if someone other than myself had done it. As a result, it is accepted that it would be difficult to remain entirely neutral throughout the research. My own influence began with the choice of topic and continued with the development of the research objectives and aims, as well as the design of the interview schedule. The acceptance that my perspectives and assumptions on the subject were inextricably linked to the research was an important one. My concerns around this influence were moderated following the data analysis where it was evident that the experiences of the participants largely reflected those themes evident in the wider literature on the subject.

I was keen to avoid any undue influence that I might inadvertently have on the interview process through my body language or facial expressions and so all interviews took place either remotely by phone or using Skype without a camera. I was also careful not to try and 'lead' the participants and there were situations where some of the participants attempted to engage me in debate instead of answering the questions, leading to gentle reminders from me that I was more interested in their perspectives than my own.

During the interview and transcription stage I encountered something interesting that I was previously unaware of. I was paying so much attention to the participant that, where they said something that was of significant interest, I sometimes missed what else they said. It was only in the transcription of the interviews that I realised there were asides and contextualising comments that added value to the interview that I had not registered, having been entirely focussed on a previous comment. While I certainly cannot state that I enjoyed the process of transcribing the interviews, I feel that this realisation may have escaped me if I had used a professional transcription service instead.

## **Conclusion**

There are a number of limitations to this research that require recognition, although some of them conversely can be viewed as strengths. Perhaps the largest limitation is arguably the small sample size,



although it is recognised that qualitative research allows for smaller samples than quantitative research. The fact that the sample self-selected for the study is another potential weakness, and there is a recognised degree on homogeneity in the sample in respect of their professional backgrounds, which may result in demonstrably similar worldviews and experiences. It is possible that the research may have led to different conclusions had it included a more diverse professional sample. It can also be argued that my own relative inexperience in qualitative research is also a weakness in the research. In conducting the interviews and after reflecting on some of the transcripts, I identified there were situations where I would have preferred to probe further on certain answers that I was provided on some of the topics. It also appeared that some participants would have benefitted from more clear direction in the questions so that they broadened their answers beyond discussion around their current organisations in some cases. I did have some concerns in relation to the levels of knowledge on risk management with some of the participants, however their professional experiences provided rich research data that overcame this. Despite these considerations, I feel that the research was suitably robust.

The decision to conduct the research without a host organisation was a result of both operational circumstances and purposeful evaluation of the research aims. Certainly, a lack of a host organisation made the recruitment of sufficient participants more challenging, however it also freed the research from the potential constraints that may have been present in such circumstances and allowed a wider perspective to be taken across a wider range of participant employment experiences. The choice of semi-structured interview provided sufficient direction for the research objectives while still allowing participants their own 'voice', and the decision to undertake the interviews remotely remains appropriate when considering the time and resource implications of alternative methods. If I were to perform the research again, I would have preferred more time to engage with professionals from a wider range of sectors. This would have provided the opportunity for a richer research experience and a stronger position from which to discuss findings. I would also have preferred more time to perform pilot interviews to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the interview schedule, however with the time constraints that were experienced, this was not practical.

## Chapter Five: Practitioner perceptions of workplace violence risks

### Introduction

This is the first of two chapters that will set out the research findings. The focus of this chapter is the perceptions of workplace violence risks and their assessment among the 20 practitioners who were interviewed, and it is laid out as follows. It begins with an examination of how the participants felt that organisations that they were familiar with perceived the risks of violence. It then attempts to understand how they perceive the issue is compared to other risks that these organisations may have faced. This is followed by a wider examination of where the organisations experienced by the participants sought advice on the issues of violence at work and how it is commonly assessed as a risk.

### Organisational definitions of workplace violence

The wide variety of organisations that the participants had experienced provided a suitable starting point towards achieving the first research objective, examining how they felt that the organisations they were familiar with perceived the risk of violence, especially in relation to other risks that the organisations that they were familiar with may face. Given the lack of clarity over a formal definition for workplace violence as discovered in the literature review, it was of interest to try and examine how organisations that the participants were familiar with identified the phenomenon, this being of primary importance to the research aim.

The responses on the subject of organisational definitions of violence provided a range of insights where there were striking similarities in organisational perspective, regardless of the sector. Perhaps the biggest area of commonality was in the overwhelming focus on violence as a predominantly physical problem, as reflected in the following comments.

I think the definition of violence from their perspective – the majority – is typically a physical assault on staff or service users. **Personal safety instructor (1)**

Predominantly they would define it as a physical act against a member of staff or individual and or a customer or member of the public within their domain. **Security management consultant (6)**

I think a lot of them, coming from a low level of (...) expertise in understanding what violence is in the first place, [they may see it] as being 'I get attacked' and 'I get hurt' and 'unless I break

my leg, cut my hand or unless I get attacked with a screwdriver, then it's not violence is it?'

**Security management consultant (4)**

The language used in the latter statement indicates that the perception being considered is a personal one from a victim perspective rather than an organisational one. This suggests a perception of violence from a senior manager within an organisation, which in turn would influence the culture. This focus on violence in its physical form is also referenced by another participant, who states:

I think it's somewhat limited to the issues around physical assault and the verbal abuse doesn't get perhaps the attention it may. **Head of security (8)**

This participant demonstrates a wider understanding of the spectrum of behaviours that are widely considered 'violence' within the literature, while apparently suggesting that their organisations may not. This was not the experience of all participants, however.

My experience of incident reporting and incident classification, anything that is verbal, any sort of verbal assault, shall we say towards a staff member, contractor or security staff would be classed as an assault or as violence, so verbal and above. **Loss prevention manager (7)**

For most of the organisations where I've been their definition of violence coincides with the police definitions as in ABH, GBH, so they are aligned to policing definitions for what constitutes violence. **Head of security (11)**

These statements mirror the legal definitions of assaultive behaviour in the UK and demonstrate that there is awareness in some sectors that violence can be more than a physical issue. Despite this, organisations may choose to define violence using the extreme end of the spectrum, as exemplified in the following comments:

I would say violence would be defined by an organisation as physical violence, so actually where someone is getting hit. They wouldn't look so much at the aggression or the build-up potentially as violence. So I think violence would traditionally be ABH, GBH, along those lines, that is how they see it. As soon as you put the word 'violence' in, they go straight to the top end of the scale. **Security management consultant (14)**

It is not unreasonable to suggest that organisations that employ ex-police or long-term security managers may consider violence in these legal terms as an offence rather than taking a more risk-based view. If violence was commonly perceived by the organisations familiar to the participants as mainly physical in nature, with this understanding underpinned from the perspective of the law, this led to conversations about how they were formally defining violence themselves. This led to another common sentiment among the participants, that organisations across a range of sectors were struggling in defining violence internally in ways that support its management as a risk area:

To my knowledge we don't have a clear definition in place that I could say 'we've defined violence as *this*'. **NGO manager (17)**

When asked, 'how do you think that organisations that you are familiar with define violence?', one of the violence consultants (who was based in the US) answered succinctly:

Poorly. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

When asked to expand on this rather blunt analysis, he added:

They think it's one person physically assaulting another person. What they don't think it is, is all the ancillary activities associated with that they can be acts of intimidation, the threats, domestic violence, interpersonal violence. It's such a dirty little secret that just doesn't get a lot of attention and can be one of those activities that generate the most actual violence so I think they take almost a theatrical view of violence in that is what they see. It's that guy walking in the front door with the gun but often that is not the case, it's everything else, all the lower level stuff. They define it by what they see, what they hear, and it's the big stuff.

**Violence prevention consultant (10)**

This statement provides valuable insight and encapsulates the views of many of the other participants accurately. It suggests that organisations are preoccupied with the more dramatic forms of violence, which are easier to identify, measure, legislate against (with policies) and arguably prepare for. Since those incidents are thankfully rare, the issue of violence within an organisation gains less attention and resources than it deserves.

When the participants were questioned further on how they perceived that organisations defined violence, many expanded their answers to suggest that a common baseline was either the HSE definition (for the UK based participants) or other official definition relevant to their location.

They define it in the same way as the HSE...the HSE definition which is totally inadequate if you are involved in risk management, to be honest. **Personal safety instructor (2)**

They did not, however, expand on this opinion regarding the adequacy of the HSE definition from a risk management perspective, however some organisations use perhaps a clearer definition.

There are definitions that were actually set out by an organisation specifically created for healthcare protection. It differs slightly from the health and safety definition, so it's split into physical and nonphysical. Physical is just where unwanted contact is made, so any form of contact that is unwanted is defined as a physical assault and then the nonphysical is basically 'alarm and distress or harassment'. **Head of security (20)**

This appears to be a more constructive approach to definition; however there was some uncertainty of how this definition is actually applied:

Within (my organisation) there are some clear definitions around physical assault and nonphysical assault, so that should pick up the stuff around violence in general, but I think the terms sort of get used interchangeably. I think it's any behaviour that puts at risk or threatens staff. **Head of security (8)**

If this statement is taken at face-value, the definition being discussed is then open to subjective local interpretation and applied variably ('interchangeably'). This will undermine the organisational definition and potentially present significant problems when it comes to incident reporting and consequent analysis. The lack of clarity on what constitutes violence within an organisation was also discussed by another participant.

On the lower levels of workplace violence, it's the workplace harassment and bullying that I think is much more hidden and I don't think that companies see that as an example of workplace violence. **Security management consultant (1)**

An interesting point was raised about how verbal violence is contextualised from the perspective of the action that the organisation might take:

So you end up with an almost two-party system whereby an individual abusing an academic would be treated as almost a violent act but that same level of abuse directed at a security officer would be unlikely to be treated as an act of violence. **Head of security (11)**

This is noteworthy for the implication that verbal violence and aggression against some staff members may be viewed as more acceptable than against others and reflects some of the literature already discussed around the concepts of violence being 'a part of the job' for some occupations.

Overall it would appear that the organisational experiences of the participants in this study suggest that many organisations have an unclear understanding of what can constitute violence within their domains. This has a direct influence on the first research objective, that of how organisations generally perceive violence as a risk compared to others that they may face.

### **Organisational violence risk perception compared to other risks**

Following the discussions around how violence was perceived and defined by organisations, the interviews sought to answer the second part of the first research objective; that of how violence was perceived compared to other risks that organisations may face. One of the most common issues discussed in this respect was that of organisational denial.

...a lot of them wouldn't perceive anything below physical contact or verbal aggression (as violence). I would say a lot of them don't see it and possibly without being too cynical a lot of them choose not to see it. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

In 'choosing not to see it', the organisation is adopting a denial position. One participant offered the following by way of explanation:

A lot of businesses, unless the staff have had to actually deal with it, I do think a lot of it is taken at lip service and 'it will never happen to us'. **Security management consultant (6)**

This position may have a number of explanations, ranging from a lack of understanding of the spectrum of violence, a lack of awareness of the costs of such behaviour in the workplace or perhaps is a reflection of their risk appetite. It seems that the approach is not uncommon.

I would say 'stick your head in the sand and hope it don't happen'. I think that's a more accurate way of describing it for the business. It is an accepted risk in the environments that I worked in, in retail certainly. **Loss prevention manager (7)**

This seems to refer to significant acts of physical violence and suggests that within the retail environments familiar to this participant that this falls within their risk appetite. The impression that senior management take a denial approach to workplace violence is further supported with this comment:

With one client I had, the immediate management were very concerned and they wanted to do things about it but the board were very much 'head in the sand'... If you totally ignore it it's going to get bigger, it's going to get worse and you're going to get injuries and fatalities and that kind of thing... in a lot of the areas that I've worked they bury their head in the sand and it's very difficult for people like service providers that are contracted to those industries to do their jobs. **Security management consultant (3)**

One participant offered a potential reason for a denial approach:

Intelligent leaders bank on the expectation that their investment of \$30,000+ in hiring an employee shouldn't generate the kind of 'disgruntledness' that contributes to homicidal threat so there is a tendency of applying the denial principle. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

This clearly refers to the lethal threat perceived to be presented in the US workplace by disgruntled employees, which is reflected in some elements of the literature. This statement can, however, be read in a wider context to include the harm that such employees can inflict on an organisation through the other behaviours on the violence spectrum.

Another suggestion is that where organisations are not perceived to be existing in a state of outright denial about the issue of violence, they may instead underestimate it in comparison to other risks.

Honestly in the big picture, I don't think they really think about it...It's perceived to be quite low, actually... I think the lower end of the spectrum, I don't think that's paid attention to, quite frankly. **Security management consultant (1)**

I think that when we look at the risk of violence, in the profile of a risk, it certainly falls far lower on their risk matrix than health and safety related risks, you know like slips, trips and falls, head bumps or cuts from security tags for example. It isn't something that in my experience would feature highly. **Loss prevention manager (7)**

Compared to the other risks they face in the business I view it is regarded with the attitude 'it is minor and we will put the bare minimum in'. **Security management consultant (14)**

If these statements are accurate, they present further evidence that organisations are unaware of the real organisational costs or the impact that violence can have for them. There is also an argument that organisations that are experiencing a high risk (or high levels) of violence and choose to 'put the bare minimum in' in relation to mitigation are actively contributing to the situation.

I was doing some work with a colleague recently, trying to work out what the council was doing in terms of de-escalation in terms of policy and practice and what we found was that the council wasn't doing very much at all. **Personal safety instructor (5)**

This suggests that organisations were not making 'tangible efforts' on violence, and observed that this may be because they felt that the general approach to organisational risk management is less than optimal:

Across-the-board, almost universally, what I see with few exceptions is some version of 'whack a mole'. Whatever problem is creating the most energy, gets the most attention and awareness. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

This statement clearly indicates that organisations are taking a reactive approach to risk management, which indicates a wider issue in the governance of risk in organisations. Given the lack of clarity on what constitutes violence, together with the diversity of the costs associated with a violence-tolerant organisation, it is arguable that an organisation may never truly understand what its exposure to



violence risks are. Reflecting a previous observation, the result will be a failure to ever successfully address the issue. This prompted discussion of the motivations of the organisations that fail to consider the risks fully.

I think a lot of them are concerned about it but in fairness I think it's a bit like Pandora's box. If they pull back too many layers they might be concerned about what they find. Don't get me wrong, I can partly respect that but it doesn't mitigate them from doing as much as they should do, but they are just not psychologically or operationally prepared for it. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

Given the complexity of violence in the workplace, this can be interpreted as suggesting that the issue is easier to live with than to try and resolve. Of particular interest is the language chosen where organisations are described as 'not psychologically or operationally prepared' for looking into violence in a meaningful way. This statement was not expanded upon, however does provide some food for thought in terms of how an organisation needs to be prepared before trying to tackle the issues that violence in the workplace presents. The idea that organisations are not attentive to violence risks was further reinforced:

If you've got an organisation where violence is prevalent on a day-to-day basis, then they will start to diminish the risk and see it as an operational objective to overcome, whereas if it is something that never happens then violence is often seen as an emergency. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

This statement is worthy of consideration as it provides focus to an important consideration relating to organisational perception. As the quotation suggests, an organisation that never experiences acts of physical violence may respond to an incident of physical violence with more concern than an organisation that has regular occurrences. In this respect, the organisation may well take the view that the risk is an operational matter to be managed rather than an organisational risk and, in some respects, this is the crux of the problem. If we refer once more to the work of Turner as discussed in the literature review, incidents of violence (of whatever form) should be perceived as indicators of future system failure and be responded to accordingly instead of being normalised. In situations where violence is viewed as an operational risk, it can be argued that there is a risk of it being viewed as 'a part of the job', an opinion that became apparent in some sectors in the literature review. It does not

seem unreasonable to suggest that the organisational perspective on violence that is held by top management may in fact shape this opinion in their staff.

Often the security risks (...) are not necessarily incorporated within that programme design so what happens is it tends to be an add-on. I think this comes from a historical perspective around a lot of humanitarian aid workers where 'violent attacks against me as an individual is a price I am willing to pay in order to achieve the greater good of delivering what is needed to the most vulnerable communities.' **NGO manager (18)**

This suggests that the risk of violence is considered an operational risk in the design of overseas aid programmes, and that it may not be considered as a primary factor in their design in some organisations. The quote also indicates that violence is considered a problem of security. This, along with the other comments, in some ways supports the suggestion in the literature that violence is either viewed as a problem of security, occupational health and safety or HR rather than being an organisational problem for top management. Discussing the issue of whether violence is perceived as an operational or organisational risk, the following observation was made:

...if you were to look on the corporate risk register of any university you would not find workplace violence listed in that corporate risk register. **Head of security (11)**

This suggests that violence in this example is not viewed at corporate level. This was confirmed this with this statement:

The CEOs do not invest in workplace violence prevention because they have no idea of how it affects their organisation. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

If organisations understood the different kinds of violence that can be perpetrated against them, by them, within them and in their name, and were able to calculate accurately the costs of this and the effects it has on their organisational objectives, it is possible that a more corporate perspective would be taken. The question as to whether they thought violence was viewed as an operational or organisational issue led to this comment;

Operational. The reason I say 'operational' is because I think if they viewed it as organisational, and just my own thinking out loud here, I think that there would be more tangible efforts to try and prevent and manage it. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

Of the twenty participants, six used language that made direct reference to organisations that they were familiar with viewing violence as a primarily operational concern, and it was a position suggested indirectly by many others.

I think the current climate with healthcare, and I suspect some other employers, it is seen as a risk but it's probably financial risks facing organisations (that) probably gain significantly more attention and actually some of the other health and safety risks and operational risks probably gain more senior level attention than violence does. **Head of security (8)**

...in terms of the legal dimensions which are imposed in the UK, in particular through law and the charity commission, organisations have to be very risk averse when it comes to money however we are less aware of managing risks when it comes to our people. **NGO manager (18)**

These are interesting statements, suggesting that organisations are more attuned to business-based risks with clear financial implications than to those relating to people.

A lot of times security risks (which is where violence would fall under) are approached as a separate issue so it's not necessarily embedded with the overall organisational enterprise risk management. **NGO manager (18)**

Here, the participant highlights a disconnection between formal enterprise risk management structures and those for security management.

...not many organisations go down an enterprise risk management route. A lot of times security risks, which is where violence would fall under, are approached as a separate issue so it's not necessarily embedded with the overall organisational enterprise risk management. **NGO manager (18)**

This can be interpreted as conveying that most organisations, according to the participant's experience, are either not embracing enterprise risk management, or they are not integrating their security requirements within it.

While many of the participants generally felt that violence was viewed by organisations as an operational risk problem, there were some notable exceptions who felt that, in their experience, the issue of violence was treated at organisational level.

Yes, it's absolutely an organisational risk. For airlines it's a very serious organisational risk for them. It's an organisational risk from the safety of the aircraft, from the safety of the personnel particularly the cabin staff who tend to bear the brunt of it, but also its passenger experience.

**Security director (19)**

During this interview, the emphasis was placed by the participant on the risks presented purely by physical violence perpetrated by passengers on aircraft. This is clearly a significant concern, which the participant expanded on:

... the corporates that I work with are acutely aware of reputational risk. **Security director (19)**

This reflects just one effect of an unmanaged incident of serious physical violence, which was also noted by another participant, albeit discussing a different sector:

...in care services there is a significant reputational risk associated with violence as a liability issue. **Personal safety instructor (5)**

Reputational risk is clearly a risk that a board *can* understand, and in some respects, this is closer to an organisational consideration for the effects of violence in the workplace. To attempt to gather more information on the perception of violence within organisations, it was decided to approach the topic from more than one direction.

## Ownership of violence risks in organisations

As well as direct questioning on how the participants felt that violence was perceived, they were also asked who was usually accountable for this risk area. This was an important question as the answers may provide clear indications on perception which could be measured by how accountability was

assigned. Given that the literature suggests that there is a range of responsibility for managing violence in the workplace, it was appropriate to ask the participants who they had experienced as being responsible in the organisations they were familiar with. This led to some robust opinions from several participants on the capabilities or mentalities of the people that they had experienced who hold such a responsibility.

I think is managed by individuals that don't have the knowledge or experience or are open to getting the knowledge or experience in managing it. **Security management consultant (4)**

This is a scathing comment, suggesting that, in their experience, the people with the organisational responsibility for managing violence were not competent to do so, and worse, were not interested in developing that competence. The participant in this instance is a highly qualified security professional with many years of varied sector experience, which adds some weight to their opinion. It was an opinion that was further supported by one of the NGO managers who recognised the problem from a hiring perspective:

We don't necessarily employ the right people for the security risk management roles so we continue to reinforce the gap between program and security by some of the people we employ. **NGO manager (18)**

This is arguably a HR issue, as stated below.

It's a HR function, they own the workplace violence prevention policy because it's a people-oriented program, but with all the other programs that they manage it doesn't get the level of attention that it would get from a program manager whose responsibility is workplace violence prevention. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

In many cases its human resources and it falls under human resources but it's been my experience in dealing with a lot of human resources people that this is not an area that they're comfortable with and so they do typically end up calling on their security people to help them out. **Security management consultant (1)**

The suggestion that a HR practitioner will call upon their security department to support them in managing an incident of violence suggests that the situation has already escalated to a point where harm has already been inflicted.

In some cases is part of the HR directors role, in other cases, other organisations, it might be part of the ops director role. **NGO manager (18)**

Generally, it is suggested that ownership of the issue varies.

I mean I've worked with one trust where it's the head of learning and development, I've worked with another trust where it's the local security management specialist, I'm working with another trust where it is the associate clinical director, so it depends, it depends who picks it up. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

The suggestion that the problem is 'picked up' suggests that there was not a process for assigning responsibility by top management, and that arguably a situation could exist where nobody therefore took responsibility.

Probably most recent was a college where the head of facilities and estates took ownership of violence and aggression, purely because it was so bad. **Security management consultant (3)**

Expanding on this answer, he felt that the issue should be owned by health and safety:

For me that would sit with the health and safety. But they are not a lone entity in dealing with it because obviously if you have security there then for me they should both work in tandem. At the end of the day with violence and aggression if somebody gets hurt in the workplace I would expect it to flow through the health and safety chain. **Security management consultant (3)**

The logic here appears to be that while violence is a 'people problem' which are usually owned by HR, responsibility should shift to the health and safety department because of the presence or potential for harm. It is hard to argue with this logic from a departmental perspective, however it can be argued

that the issue is actually one that should be owned by all management. The behavioural example of management is something that is reflected in the literature, supported by this statement:

Until they wrap their arms around leadership and the leadership responsibilities that are intrinsically connected to workplace violence prevention, and they can call it 'workplace violence', they can call it 'civility', they can call it 'containing the angry beast in me' , but they have to understand that when a lady leaves the ladies room and it appears as though she was crying, it behooves the leader not to say 'get your ass back to the workplace' and instead say 'can I help you'? **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

The suggestion here is that violence reduction is a responsibility of leadership and management, and that there is a need for more empathy and civility in the workplace that should be led by managers.

Violence in the boardroom creates violence in the hearts and minds of the subordinates who look at what the boardroom does as an acceptable norm. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

I often see how senior management are probably the biggest contributors of this workplace violence culture and it gets ignored and it gets swept under the rug. **Security management consultant (1)**

On the topic of management, the theme of ultimate accountability for violence within organisations introduced some interesting responses.

It's normally a convoluted chain of accountability that is so diffused and devolved that no one is accountable. **Personal safety instructor (2)**

I think there is probably a disconnect in that those departments in whatever organisation will be dealing with it but unless it is specifically picked up I don't think it will get escalated to board level, whoever is at board level who is responsible for those departments. **Head of security (8)**

This can be read to suggest that boards may not be aware of the issues that their organisations are facing because they are disconnected from the departments that are dealing with the problems. He clarified;

Board level acceptance that this is a real issue for them and then, even within healthcare, it's actually a challenge and the board has a lot of issues on however it's extracting a particular board member or making sure that the board have a real understanding of the issues. **Head of security (8)**

On where ultimate responsibility for violence sits within an organisation, the answer was clear to one of the security management consultants:

I would say it lands with the board and whichever positions they have there because it should be a culture within an organisation and if it's not culturally owned at board level it's probably not going to get fully adopted across the organisation. If they put a health and safety manager without the full board approval in charge of this, they are ticking a box. So the board has to be behind this one 100% and own the responsibility so if something happens, if a member of staff was killed, and the policy was negligent or they haven't put anything in place to cover that, then does that fall under the Corporate Manslaughter Act, did they display a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for their staff? So that it ultimately, the board would not be away from any questions on that scenario or ultimately if it went to court they would be in there. **Security management consultant (14)**

Here, the participant makes a number of significant points. He stresses the importance of the board taking ownership of the problem of violence, including their impact on the organisation culturally. He then makes reference once more to 'box ticking' and devolving responsibility to subordinates without providing sufficient support. Importantly, he then discusses the potential impact (in the UK at least) of the provisions of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 which was created to specifically punish organisations whose negligence at senior level led to loss of life.

### Sources of advice for violence risks

To try and add some perspective to the discussion surrounding the perception of violence as an organisational risk, it was pertinent to ask where that advice comes from and so was a direct question that was presented to the participants, and the answers were perhaps unsurprising.



Some tend to go into their shell and think 'it's not going to happen' or that it's not their problem whereas others will go down various avenues and look at what they can do and where they can get their information from. **Security management consultant (3)**

Here it is suggested that organisations either go into denial about the problem of violence, consider it someone else's problem or else take action and seek out advice. When asked directly where organisations go for advice, one participant stated:

They don't... While I offer a consultancy service, I've never been asked to offer any consultancy at all. I work mainly in the NHS and with local authorities, and someone else has already done a risk assessment from which they've identified a training need. **Personal safety instructor (12)**

The subject of how violence is risk assessed will be discussed shortly, however the suggestion here is that organisations are (in the experience of this participant, at least) not seeking specialist external advice. There may be other factors present that contribute to this comment, however whether a physical intervention instructor constitutes 'specialist advice' on the issue of violence management and reduction at organisational level is open to debate.

My experience is that these organisations that I work with focus their advice on violence and aggression from PMVA instructors as experts. **Personal safety instructor (12)**

It is worth noting that the barrier to becoming a PMVA (Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggression) instructor is as low as a one-week course (in many cases), which mainly focusses on common conflict management and physical restraint / self-defence content. Without a formal education in risk management and engagement with the literature, whether such people can be considered to hold expertise in the field of violence risk management is doubtful.

A common suggestion outside of healthcare was that organisations were tending to look internally for advice on violence, something supported by several participants.

I think they are looking at their own resources. **Security director (19)**

I would say most people would look internally and they would see what they could do within the skill sets of the management team. **Security management consultant (14)**

It is fair at this point to suggest that violence risk management requires a specialist skillset that most managers are unlikely to possess.

I think [they go for help] to the wrong people... I don't think they go to real security management consultants. I think what happens with a lot of them is they go to the service provider. **Security management consultant (4)**

The 'service provider' in this instance referred to the company providing a security guarding service, once again focussing on violence as being both primarily physical in nature and a specific issue for security departments.

Larger organisations they will either go to (depending on how it's recorded) go to a health and safety person or to security. **Security management consultant (6)**

This provides an interesting line of enquiry that relates once more to the organisational perception of violence. The ways in which it is perceived will influence how it is reported and therefore which department should take ownership of the problem. They continued:

Obviously if there's been a physical assault and it's not really been an area they've been involved in then they will probably go to the local police. Do they bring in consultants? Maybe if it's an ongoing or persistent threat. Predominantly I would say health and safety first depending on the organisation set up, then maybe security and then maybe advice from the police if they haven't had any incidents in the past. **Security management consultant (6)**

It is worth questioning whether the police are also the best source of risk management advice for the problem of work related violence, given the complexities of the issue.

I really think that they might have local acquaintances with a police background, which is how it all started anyway. 'Let's get the police in' and the police started personal safety training without realising that the things that reduce violence or the prospect of violence significantly are nothing to do with personal safety training. **Personal safety instructor (2)**

This statement demonstrates a clear understanding of the issues surrounding how inadequate advice leads to inappropriate and inadequate mitigations. The suggestion that personal safety training (while potentially a requirement of employment or health and safety legislation) is a solution to wider violence issues within an organisation is akin to the use of a blunt instrument to solve a complex problem and is something that was encountered in the literature.

I don't think people go looking for competent risk managers, people that actually understand it from a business perspective and how it affects the wider business and interrelates with other business areas. **Security management consultant (4)**

This statement is worth examining from the perspective of the participants who make their living as specialist consultants in the area of violence management.

A lot of times we are the fourth or fifth call. Sometimes they will go to their attorney and seek legal advice on what their risk is of taking action or not taking action. That tends to be one of the big driving factors, what the legal risk is. Sometimes then they will go to their insurance provider if they are trying to understand their liability and then probably lastly they seek out some of their HR partners. One of the last places I find them going is to security. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

In this statement, the suggestion is that organisations are more attuned to their liability risks and use this to incorrectly assess the effects of their risks of violence. Another security consultant who also had a practical outlook on the people who seek out his professional services:

I only work with clients to give a shit about this stuff, pardon my language. They are the only ones who care about this and I naturally gravitate towards companies who recognise there are issues out there want my expertise. The companies where it's not on their radar don't know about it and don't care about it, they don't call me. **Security management consultant (1)**

I don't think that there's in my case that there is enough belief. It's an incredulous decision on their part to hire me because what they are reading (in the media) they can't connect to being a realistic need for them and they tend to resort to what I call 'the fad', and right now the fad

is 'active shooter'. Looking at active shooter as a prevention and the people who are pursuing active shooter are trying to make it a prevention when in reality it's a response to a failed workplace violence prevention initiative. So I am found as a last resort to be honest with you.

**Violence prevention consultant (13)**

This statement supports the earlier comment made in reference to organisational denial in relation to violence. The suggestion here is that organisations cannot connect the cases they see (and read about) in the media with their own vulnerability, and therefore cannot believe that that they need his specialist services. He continues to discuss what he considers to be fashionable at the time, depending on whatever has attained the most media attention, adding further support to the previous quote about which risk problems 'create the most energy'. It is worth clarifying that where he is referring to 'active shooter' as a 'failed workplace violence initiative' this is discussing situations where the perpetrator is a current or previous employee and is not appropriate to apply to other situations. With this made clear, it is entirely fair to consider such specific situations as an organisational failure.

When discussing organisational failures in relation to the management of violence risks, of particular concern was the perspective shared from within the NGO sector.

Now a lot of them (*referring to sources such as the UK Foreign Office*) will say 'don't visit', so for example it will just say 'don't go to South Sudan, don't go to Democratic Republic of the Congo unless you absolutely necessarily have to' but what we have tended to do is less heed that advice but then also speak to our partner organisations on the ground and get their perspective of security. **NGO manager (17)**

This answer was then expanded upon:

The key, the most important source, because we will always be going to visit organisations that are working there already, so we'd ask them what their perception is of the security and risk in that area at that point in time and we're very reliant on that, actually. **NGO manager (17)**

This is extraordinary high-risk and suggests that the organisations being discussed are not doing their own risk-based thinking. By basing their decisions on the undefined risk appetites and perceptions of other organisations and choosing to ignore Governmental advice, they are taking an immense risk

with the safety of their staff. This naturally leads to examination of the ways in which the risks of violence are assessed and leads to the second research aim; identification of risk management models and methods that are currently in use for violence risk management.

### How violence is assessed as a risk

Aside from the violence risk assessment methods discussed in the literature review that focus on assessing known subjects in clinical environments for predicting the likelihood of violent reoffending, there are no practical risk assessment methodologies for wider organisational application. As a result, it was necessary to understand the methods that organisations use to assess their violence risks.

It's almost certainly insufficient and inadequate. They just kind of say 'there is a risk of violence so we need personal safety training for the staff'. **Personal safety instructor (2)**

This indicates an awareness of the potential for physical violence in an organisation, even if the risk assessment process that is followed appears to be lacking in consideration. It also suggests that the response to the assessment is also not well considered. This comment highlights the lack of engagement with expertise on the problem:

So whatever model they use, and a lot of them are cut-and-pasted from old ones, have never been reviewed probably, or even updated or even have the input from subject matter experts. So I think they really tend to use a generalist risk assessment, whichever format or model they are looking to use. **Security management consultant (6)**

The suggestion that a generic health and safety risk assessment is commonly in use was further supported by a number of the other participants.

The problem we have at the moment, in most areas or sectors that I worked in, so that's banking, that's diplomatic, and that's educational security, the risk assessment for physical assault has basically been the same as the risk assessment for any other problem facing the organisation... There is no specific risk management policy framework for violence, it's tended to follow the same health and safety risk methodology as everything else. **Head of security (11)**

This suggests that the risk assessment is again only focussed on physical violence as a source of harm without considering the other harms from other forms. This was also the general impression that other participants gave.

It should be a health and safety risk assessment but my experience of it is that the risk assessment is so basic that it is just generic. **Personal safety instructor (2)**

I work with security companies that will be doing their health and safety stuff, and very often the health and safety stuff is a part of a purchased package that meets the needs of the approved contractor scheme (ACS), so they will go out and buy a package that fits the business management model and within that they will have some health and safety documents which includes your generic 5 x 5 risk assessment box, so some organisations will use that as a tool.

**Violence prevention consultant (9)**

Nobody has quoted any specific models and in conversation this is come up from time to time, then yes, we go to the health and safety, the generic five step approach. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

The formal health and safety risk assessment model is clearly better suited to (and designed for) static risks than to the complex, dynamic risks that violence present, and the suggestion that many organisations are using this model to understand their vulnerability to violence is concerning but understandable given the lack of anything specifically suited to the task. This information may well contribute to an explanation for why the organisations being discussed are disengaged from the wider problem. Not all organisations followed this method for risk assessment, however. When discussing the NGO sector, reference was made to a different approach:

GPR8 is an operational security management standard for work in violent environments. That would be the closest that there is to a standard within the humanitarian sector and everybody will do it slightly differently but it does normally go through threat assessment, vulnerability assessment, to give you a risk analysis, the risk matrix, impact versus probability, mitigation measures, and if I can remember, manage, transfer, avoid, accept and then the recognition, and the residual risk that you then have to live with. So that would be the basic framework.

**NGO manager (18)**

This is a positive statement and demonstrates some formal engagement with formal enterprise risk management models. The treatment of violence as a security issue in this context (that of foreign aid workers in potentially hostile environments) is entirely appropriate, even if in the wider organisational context requires far wider engagement. This raises an interesting consideration about *when* violence becomes a problem of security at organisational level, and one that was beyond the scope of this research.

This informed discussion around the risk management standards in use.

Well nowadays we would tend to go towards the ISO model, the risk management framework but we also look at doing a holistic approach on general security risk management, such as identifying your threats, the likelihood and severity, looking at the vulnerabilities of the site, so whether we can mitigate measures to reduce the violence. It depends what the site is, whether it's a hospital or university whether it's a corporate environment. **Security management consultant (3)**

This statement demonstrates the benefits of engagement with someone with specialist knowledge of violence, security and risk management, however indications suggest that such engagement is a rarity, possibly due to a limited number of specialists with this approach. Speaking in relation to the healthcare sector, the following statement is valuable.

So risk assessment can lead to radical change in terms of how we support people. At its best, I think it's transformative and at worst I think it's tick box. The key is not just collecting the data, it's actually interpreting and analysing the data. **Personal safety instructor (5)**

This is a powerful statement and progresses the discussion well beyond the mechanisms that are in use for assessing risk to a more thoughtful consideration of how the data that is collected is understood. Importantly, this participant invoked the phrase 'tick box', terminology which appears word for word in five of the other interviews directly and which is otherwise described in several others. It was suggested that the entire approach was based around 'lip service', which was also a term used by several participants:

The best way to put it is that they put lip service to it. They know they've got to do a risk assessment, they put it in, and say 'yes, working late, people getting agitated, threat of

workplace violence' and then they put a countermeasure in that probably actually isn't as effective but they tick the box with a risk assessment. **Security management consultant (14)**

Given that the UK Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA) makes it a criminal offence for an organisation not to conduct risk assessments or act upon them, this approach is clearly once more about liability reduction than risk management.

If they just do it as a tick box exercise then that is where things go wrong. If you don't talk to your staff about it and you don't involve them in it then it's always going to be a tick box exercise. **Security management consultant (6)**

In this, the participant has made an astute observation. If the start of a formal risk management process is contextualising and assessing the risks and this is done badly, this will establish a poor foundation for a working risk management system. He also refers to engagement with staff as a part of the risk assessment process, something that is also a legal requirement of HASWA. This leads to a compliance mind-set where people will do the bare minimum required to avoid sanction instead of addressing the issues proactively.

In general you tend to find people will plod on ticking boxes and getting away with what they can do until something significantly impacts upon their role... Other organisations will just have ones (risk assessments) that are historic or plagiarised from the Internet somewhere, and they don't actually understand how to use the tools properly, but 'it looks like what we should have so we'll just copy that and put it in'. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

This statement infers that organisations are not committing to the process of risk assessment for violence fully, and the suggestion is that some are merely seeking the illusion of compliance with legislation.

## Discussion

The themes examined thus far demonstrate a level of concern among the participants about the ways that the organisations they had experienced consider violence as a risk, something consistent with the findings in the wider body of literature. A summary of the responses based on the coding themes for this section are summarised in table 4, including additional themes that were uncovered during the analysis.



Research theme	Summary of responses	Reflected in literature?
Definitions	Mostly perceived as physical violence, usually in line with legal definitions of assault	Yes
Recognition	Typically, not seen as an organisational risk, with denial a common response. Outlier responses suggest it is only recognised where it may trigger other risks (such as reputational)	Yes
Commitment	Little management commitment demonstrated, regular use of terms 'lip service' or 'box ticking'	Yes
Ownership	No typical structure for who takes risk ownership. Either a HR, Health and Safety or security issue. Little accountability	Yes
Expertise	Usually managed by people unequipped to do so. Little engagement with external expertise and the wrong internal resources are involved	Not discussed in the literature
<b>Additional themes identified</b>		
Assessment	Commonly assessed using typical occupational health and safety tools, which are viewed as unfit for this purpose	Not discussed in the literature

**Table 4: Thematic analysis 1**

Foremost is the concern that these organisations seem preoccupied with violence as a physical act, which is at odds with the definitions presented by Garver (1973, in Buffachi, 2009, p.171), Galtung (1968, p.169), Southerland, Collins and Scarborough (1997, p.3) and many others who recognised violence as a spectrum of behaviours that can lead to various violations of the human condition. This focus on physical manifestations of violence misses the wider organisational risks that the broader definitions of violence present, such as higher levels of staff disengagement, higher attrition, challenges to recruitment, increased absenteeism and more (Jackson, Clare & Mannix, 2002, p.18, Barling, 1996, p.43). It can also be argued that failure to create a safe and secure workplace where staff are less exposed to violence is a failure of corporate governance (Abdullah and Valentine, 2009, p.93). Since so much of the literature discusses the spectrum of violence within workplaces, and there is recognition that the less dramatic forms are most costly and present a higher risk to organisational

objectives, it can be suggested that there is a clear lack of engagement with the literature. It may also serve to highlight that the literature does not discuss violence in business risk terms directly.

Verbal violence is mentioned, however the importance that is placed on the effects of this is less than physical violence. Comment was passed that verbal violence against some personnel is perhaps more acceptable than against others, linked to their job role. This presents an interesting area for further study to understand how organisations may view some kinds of violence as acceptable in certain contexts. It may be argued that the emphasis on physical violence links to the fact that it is clearly defined in law, is clearly identifiable, measurable and actionable. Organisations may therefore feel more comfortable in perceiving violence in this 'cut and dried' fashion, especially given that they are potentially liable if such incidents happen to their staff while in their employment. It may also be preferable for organisations to view violence in this manner to overcome the challenges presented by subjective perceptions of non-physical violence where there is limited case law holding them to account.

The emphasis on physical violence perhaps leads to the suggestion amongst the sample that violence in the workplace is an operational problem rather than an organisational one, and unlikely to feature in any formal risk management strategies that these organisations employ. Ironically, this is felt to be more likely in organisations that experience physical violence more commonly. Given the variety of costs associated with the spectrum of violence, and the potential disruption to organisational aims, this is a significant oversight. Further, it does not allow the organisations to effectively consider violence as a risk in relation to the other business risks that they may face. One positive comment came from the NGO sector where a security management standard was referenced, which aligns with formal, recognised risk management processes.

Ownership of the problem is a further challenge that the participants discuss, suggesting that it is often either down to the operations management team, the HR department or the occupational health and safety department. This responsibility appears to be either assigned or accepted on an ad-hoc basis. Comment is then passed as to the perceived capability of the people who are tasked with this responsibility, with the suggestion that they are ill-equipped or ill-prepared to manage the issue. There is a suggestion that such well-meaning but ill-informed people may resort to downloading or 'cutting and pasting' the work of others that they find simply to try and 'get something in place'. This links to a wider discussion about governance within these organisations and its impact and influence on organisational culture. Mirroring the literature, there is concern amongst the sample about the

standards, example and commitment demonstrated by senior management in relation to workplace violence. If organisations primarily think that violence only exists in its physical form, they may not appreciate how their culture, policies and procedures may in fact be considered as violence against their staff or customers (Galtung, 1969, p.173, Tobin, 2001, p.101). This is a further topic clearly discussed at length in the literature that appears to have been missed in organisations.

Opinions on the advice sources available on the topic of workplace violence were that they were also considered to be weak. Participants felt that organisations either attempt to use inappropriate internal resources or else they seek advice from external sources without appropriate experience or qualifications. Those participants who provide violence prevention consultancy services reflected upon the decision that is made to engage them, and that the kinds of organisations that do are more likely to be ones that engage with the problem in the first place. A statement from the NGO sector highlighted the extraordinary high-risk position that is taken with regard to ignoring government travel advice in favour of second-hand risk analysis from other parties because this is less likely to obstruct what they wish to achieve.

This invariably leads to discussion around the ways that violence is assessed as a risk within the organisations experienced by the participants. In the absence of a formal violence risk assessment process (notwithstanding the clinical models that are not appropriate) there was a common perception that what was in use for assessing violence risks is unsuitable or insufficient. Typically, this is based in health and safety processes and considered too generic for complex and dynamic risks such as violence.

A theme that emerged from this section of the interviews was that the organisations discussed seemed to some participants to approach the issues of violence in the workplace either with denial or else in manners described as 'box ticking' or 'lip service'. This represents a further potential governance failure, not unlike those discussed by Rippon (2000, p.454), Bowie (2000, p.19), Mayhew and Chappell (2001, p.13) and others in the literature. Suggestions are presented as to the reasons for this, primarily that the biggest, loudest and most obvious problems are the ones that get the most management attention. Another suggestion was that senior management may well prefer to remain blind and deaf to the issues, because if they begin to investigate them, they may not be prepared for what they discover. Such a response clearly fits with our previous discussion on governance failure and, according to Tombs (2007, p.532), constitutes a 'safety crime'.

The implications of all these indicators are that there are organisations that are failing to recognise the different forms of violence in their workplaces, failing to assign responsibility for them, failing to recognise them as a strategic risk to organisational aims, failing to risk assess effectively, failing to engage with qualified expertise and failing to recognise their part in the creation of violence, and as a result may be incubating significant internal risk.

## Chapter Six: Practitioner perspectives on the management of workplace violence risks

### Introduction

While the previous chapter focussed on the findings in relation to violence as an organisational risk, this chapter will go further to discuss how the participants have experienced the management of violence risks. The discussion begins with an examination of the levels of awareness around formal violence risk management models and methods before discussing common violence risk management methods that are in use, together with their perceived strengths and weaknesses. This chapter concludes with an examination of areas that require improvement before a final discussion on the relative benefits of a more formal risk-based approach to workplace violence management within organisations.

### Formal risk management models

It was found in the literature review that there is an absence of formal risk management models for the problem of workplace violence. Despite this, we have seen that there do exist models that illustrate how factors that influence violence interact, together with their effects (Galtung, 1969, p.173, CDC, 2017, Chappell and Di Martino, 2005, p.11). The participants agreed that there appeared to be a general lack of understanding within the organisations they had experienced about violence in general. None of the participants referred to any of the violence-specific models that were referenced in the literature, and none had experienced them in the organisations they were familiar with. This was stated most clearly by the US violence management consultant (13) when he said:

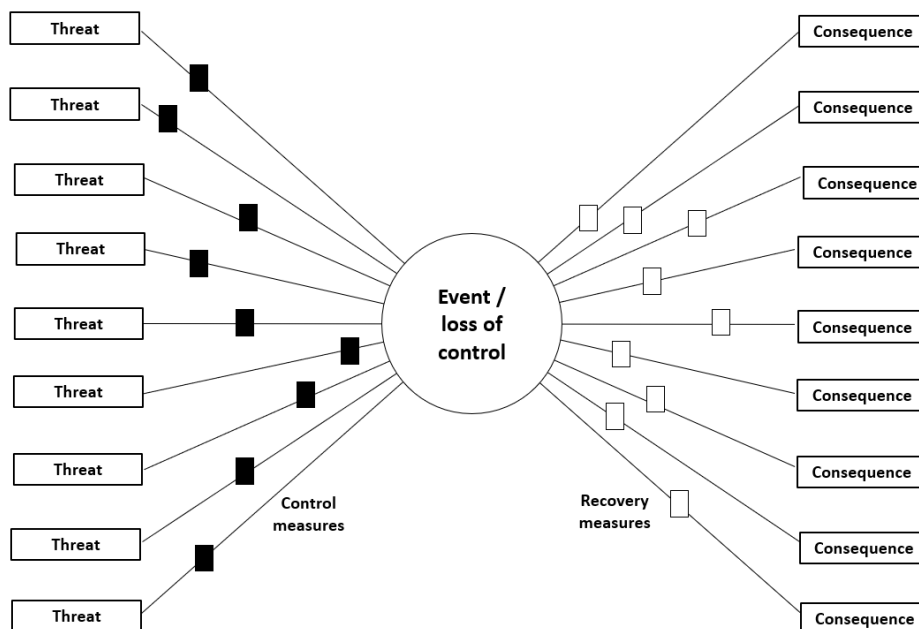
Most of the clients that I come in contact with have no particular risk model in mind. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

Instead, several references were made to the public health model, with treatments focussing on primary, secondary and tertiary levels of intervention. This is entirely in keeping with the clear emphasis already presented on violence (and violence management) as a health and safety issue. The notable exception to this came from the security director (19) who discussed the threat that violence presents to commercial aircraft when in-flight, and who suggested that the problem would be modelled using a 'bow-tie' approach.

I would be very surprised if there wasn't a bowtie model along that sort of basis because clearly you want to avoid the critical event rather than manage the critical event and that is about putting the barriers in place and understanding the effectiveness of the barriers.

**Security director (19)**

The concept of 'bow tie' modelling for risk events is one worthy of explanation. It is a risk modelling process that begins with a horizontal line, at the centre of which is a circle that represents a hazardous event or loss of control (Talbot & Jakeman, 2009, p.293). To the left of this event is 'pre-event' and represents the lines of threat that could create the event and points of control measures for prevention. To the right of the event is the consequence and recovery measures after the incident. This is demonstrated in figure 6.



**Figure 6: The risk bow tie model**

The bow tie model provides a useful way of visualising the different vectors that a threat may take, together with the control and recovery measures that can be implemented for each. It is clearly more desirable to be on the left side of the bow tie (in prevention) than in the right side (recovery and consequence management). It is this shape that gives the model its name. Participant 19 continued discussing this in relation to the frequency of violent incidents occurring in-flight:

Clearly at the moment barriers to the critical event (i.e. a drunken violent passenger on board an aircraft) are not sufficient to prevent that incident happening and we are into consequence management rather than critical incident prevention. **Security director (19)**

The application of such risk-based thinking in relation to violence was exceptional within the research and demonstrates its value, at least in terms of physical violence in controlled (and controllable) environments, such as within an aircraft.

Given the absence of any specific risk management models or frameworks for organisational violence risks, the research then sought to establish the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current mitigation methods that the participants have experienced.

### **Weaknesses of the current violence risk mitigation methods**

When discussing the mitigations for violence that the participants perceive to be ineffective, they once again appeared to support many of the concepts already existent in the literature. Concern around 'a tick box' approach was also expressed in relation to violence risk mitigations. One participant was open about his experiences of some organisations who attempt to engage his consultancy services:

So the organisations that basically want you to come in and give everything in one day because they've got to tick a box, so if you're going to go in and try to manage violence it will fail every time because you never manage it, all you do is push it somewhere else whether it is within that organisation or whether it goes out into wider society or back into the family home, you never manage violence all you do is push it somewhere else. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

This represents a fundamental understanding of the wider societal effects of workplace violence, and the importance of appropriate organisational action. He confirmed that when approached by organisations such as those he describes, he refuses to take on the work. One of the Heads of security (20) also made comment about training with regard to the 'tick box' approach that some organisations may take:

What doesn't work is the tick box exercise of saying 'they've done the course and therefore we have fulfilled our obligation'. **Head of security (20)**

I think they put the courses on to 'tick the boxes' but they don't actually recognise the day to day violent interactions that are taking place between staff and service users. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

This suggests that the training being provided is not necessarily reflective of the actual needs of the organisation or its personnel. Training is also often perceived as a reactionary measure, something that was also considered ineffective by some of the participants. This statement was offered on the typical training choice for violence management:

What doesn't work for me is the use of the reactive strategy of physical intervention. **Personal safety instructor (12)**

Some people have a one-hour or two-hour session and just say that that is all they can release their staff for. You can't absolve yourself of responsibility just by saying that. **Head of security (20)**

Training as a panacea for violence was questioned by one of the violence prevention consultants (13), specifically in relation to 'active shooter' type threats:

What good is it of training people on active shooter when there is no existing organisational investment in the things that they have to do - policies, plans, procedures, safe rooms, alert notification and communication systems? **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

This is an important point which highlights that training needs to be underpinned by appropriate corporate action at a number of levels. It was also suggested that training is sometimes provided as a reaction to an incident rather than a proactive measure:

Well, what we find is that we generally get drawn in on the back of a significant incident, so we'll get drawn in when they have had an emergency and we will come in to create a sense of safety. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

The 'sense of safety' that is being discussed is delivered through the medium of physical intervention and self-defence training, and while this may have benefits, the quotation indicates that this only



happens after something bad has happened already. It was interesting that one two of the participants discussed the place that technology has in supporting violence management solutions:

Security from the physical technology standpoint, they have a misconception that deployment of technology will solve the problem of workplace violence. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

The participant did not elaborate on this opinion and did not clarify which technology was being referred to. Others had a differing view on technology, at least in relation to body worn cameras, supported by some data:

We put body cameras on security officers in NHS hospitals, 10 years ago. That made a huge difference and obviously you see it more and more now generally out in the general domain. I think some findings were in the first 6 to 12 months there was a 61% reduction in verbal abuse, 65% reduction in physical assault, and these were placed on officers who would predominantly patrol the Trust or were based in the A and E. **Security management consultant (6)**

This supports evidence from the initial police trials of body worn surveillance equipment, and it would be unwise to dismiss technology solutions as a component of a far wider workplace violence strategy. It was observed that organisations (in their experience) usually did not, however, have a strategy for dealing with the issues of violence:

Twenty five percent of the people that I work with had a formal process for identifying and assessing the risk of violence. The balance of them, it's all ad hoc, it comes up and whoever is available will get together and talk about it and do that. The outcome usually be that they twiddle their thumbs and decide 'wow this is beyond our scope, I don't know' and reach out. It's rarer in my experience that they have a structured process. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

I work with three organisations, two of them on a consultant basis, and they don't have a strategy in place for dealing with violence and aggression. So it is just solely based on physical intervention, to be honest. **Personal safety instructor (12)**

The suggestion that these organisations are relying purely on their staff resorting to physical intervention training to respond to physical violence indicates that violence is not being managed. It can also be suggested that, if this is the extent of organisational thinking on the issue, that the response to violence is to violence of their own rather than seeking to prevent it occurring.

The primary mechanism within organisations for dealing with risk is the use of internal policies, and several participants referred to the use and quality of organisational policies in relation to violence mitigation.

They will go to organisational policy to establish what they are supposed to do but very often the policies are out of date, or not aligned to existing guidance frameworks so what you tend to find is staff have enough knowledge to go and look at policy but then when they get to policy, the policy is not clear, or the policy is inaccurate. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

When asked 'what doesn't work very well', the following response was provided:

Putting a policy in and then putting it in the cupboard. So 'ticking the box'. You can write a really nice policy on workplace violence but if it isn't adopted as a part of the culture within the organisation it's a waste. **Security management consultant (14)**

Another answer to the same question came from the healthcare sector in relation to the use of 'zero tolerance' policies.

It set up an expectation that was unrealistic and it also I think potentially almost legitimized staff antagonism. Staff can have quite strong feelings when it comes to inappropriate behaviour and that whole message created antagonism that wasn't there. **Personal safety instructor (5)**

A 'zero tolerance' policy is one that states that all violence (again focussing on physical) that occurs within an organisation will result unfailingly with administrative action against the perpetrator. The 'expectation' being described in this instance was that staff 'don't have to take it anymore' (meaning violence from service users) and that the concept of zero tolerance actually created and supported staff antagonism towards service users. He went on to describe them as creating an 'oppositional

dynamic' in the workplace that would fuel further instances of violence and aggression rather than reduce them.

It was suggested that some policies are designed by people who have an imperfect understanding of risk in general or the subject of violence specifically:

I had one hospital who have a 'no hands on' policy, so by the time I sat down with them and said that 'if your nurse is being attacked, and my officer has to just stand back and watch and call the police while she is being throttled, where do you think this is going to go?' After two meetings like this, the policy disappeared. **Security management consultant (3)**

This clearly reflects a previous discussion around the appropriateness of organisational policies as discussed in the literature, and the potential liabilities that poorly crafted policies can introduce to an organisation. Policy quality was further discussed:

Essentially what you tend to find in most organisations is that you go in and ask to have a look at a policy and the policies are weak, the guidance is weak, the way the policies are written is weak. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

This indirectly suggests weaknesses in the management layer generally, since this is where policy is usually formulated. This was a concept familiar to one of the US-based violence prevention consultants (10):

The common struggle that we have in most corporations is that the managers are often times are elevated not for their ability to manage people but because they were technically competent. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

The promotion to management positions of people who possess high levels of technical competence in their fields, but poor interpersonal and managerial skills is clearly a concern in the mission to reduce violence within organisations, especially where it impacts the ways in which the organisation relates to and supports its personnel. In the US, many employers provide something called an EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) which is intended to support employees who may need support. Viewed from the UK where such programmes do not exist, this seems like a positive step, however participant 10

was clear on their value in relation to supporting employees who are either potentially violent or potentially a victim of violence:

An employee that's going through something, 'send them to the EAP' but the problem is it literally is just a call centre and so when our employees reach out to them it's a generic call centre, and you could just as easily ask to speak to a counsellor or have them help you find a dog sitter or a weight loss program. It's very impersonal and not at all effective. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

The loss prevention manager (7) suggested that the traditional security response in retail (being the use of uniformed security operatives) was not an effective response and may in fact make matters worse:

A security officer in a uniform. I find very often it's a response to action rather than a mitigation. Putting a security officer in a situation that could easily have been handled by a well-equipped staff member, putting a security officer in that situation often escalates a situation far beyond where it needed to be. **Loss prevention manager (7)**

Another participant from the security guarding sector and has significant experience in retail environments. On this theme he said:

Within our environment we do get letters of complaint about our security officers, how they handle situations. Quite often when you've got staff within the store that don't handle a situation very well it then escalates when it could have been nipped in the bud fairly easily. We are exposed on a day-to-day basis to people that are intent on shoplifting and will take any means to get away and I think private security officers getting too involved in the situation because they want to 'get that result' often escalates into further violence than what would have been if he just walked away and said, 'right a pair of trousers worth 15 quid is not worth it'. **Security guarding director (15)**

This is an interesting position that refers in some way to the pressures that retail security officers are under to meet performance indicators, which may well lead to higher risk behaviours. The suggested cost /benefit analysis of a lost item of stock over the risks of harm from violence is also interesting, however it can be suggested that such honesty would not benefit the client commercially, especially

if criminals were to recognise this approach as widespread. It would also harm the security guarding sector, who would see a reduction in their contracts if they are perceived to be allowing criminals to steal unchallenged if there is a risk of violence.

### **Strengths of the current violence risk mitigation methods**

After discussing the weaknesses that the participants perceived in the current approaches to violence management within organisations, they were invited to share their thoughts on what they felt worked well and was especially effective in the prevention and management of violence. One participant established a common element that the rest of the participants agreed with:

I would say in my opinion what works well based on the number of projects that I've been involved in, is the proactive stuff...So the identification of causation, the causes of violence.

**Personal safety instructor (12)**

A useful point was also made by another participant which, while directly referring to healthcare environments, has currency in all other workplaces:

Something that we really tried to work on here is the feedback at the end of an incident about the learning curve. What do we do well? What didn't we do well? What can we put in place to stop that happening again? And when I say training I don't mean just conflict resolution training. It's about the training with the staff and saying, 'we need to learn from this' and that is about engagement with the patients. **Head of security (20)**

This recognition that 'something has gone wrong and we need to improve' is powerful, especially considering the previous comments indicating organisational denial and apathy on the issue of violence.

It was suggested that another key factor in violence reduction was environmental:

The best approach is always to focus on providing as high a quality environment as you possibly can and improving accessibility to and from the premises. I think if I was to be given a budget for violence prevention I would probably spend 9/10 of it improving the environment. **Personal safety instructor (2)**

This comment again refers to healthcare and perhaps is less relevant in combatting other forms of violence, however the benefits of using of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is undisputed. Notwithstanding the comments made about training in a negative context, some of the participants shared different opinions related to their experiences.

For me that's one of the key areas and if companies don't support training the staff will always be open to workplace violence. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

For me, the start point is educating the staff, especially in healthcare environments. **Security management consultant (3)**

It is worth noting that the interviews did not seek to clarify the nature of the training being advocated.

We do a lot of conflict management training which focuses on communication. We've got a real emphasis on that and how we should be communicating with customers. The majority of incidents that I see, I believe could have been avoided by more effective communication and seeking the win/win. **Loss prevention manager (7)**

Interestingly, effective communication but from a different perspective:

What tends to work best, and what we have got lots of evidence of, is that once staff become confident and competent in the use of physical intervention skills, because they know they can use them if they need to use them they tend to start to communicate more, and when they start to communicate more then we get into prevention. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

As seen in the literature review, there is no clear evidence that physical intervention training is effective. Despite this, the perception that it provides staff with the confidence to respond effectively to a physical threat and so reduce their fear to a point where they are better able to communicate in difficult situations is also worthy of further study. They continued:

Generally we go in with a five-year plan, so we start by saying 'make staff feel safe', which we will then follow up with giving staff on the local area based on risk, we'll give them particular skill sets, then what we'll start to do is up skill the whole of the staff team across the board

with the preventative stuff, so the communication skills, the risk recognition, the reporting and recording structures, and the debrief and supervision that they need to implement it across the organisation. **Violence prevention consultant (9)**

This approach is to be commended and indicates thinking well beyond the typical mitigation methods by using a staged, strategic approach that includes behavioural elements, organisational processes and managerial skills relevant to the problem.

The loss prevention manager (7) also recognised the importance of improved communication skills within the workforce:

I think communication is the bit, you know the training for us. We've seen since we've been rolling that out more and more, and more proactively, it's had a significant reduction or made an impact on the reduction of situations where customers have become aggrieved and become more aggressive, we've seen a reduction in those to some extent. **Loss prevention manager (7)**

When discussing ownership of the problem being down to the security department, it was stated;

What works well is when the security manager is actually empowered to make changes. **Head of security (20)**

This 'empowerment' leads to a common theme in the responses, that being the attitudes, engagement and support provided by senior management.

The organisations that are doing it well, I think it starts from recognition at the most senior governance level that the staff who are in the field are facing risks of violence and that they recognise that this is the case and they also recognise that it is an acceptable level of risk in terms of what the organisation is trying to achieve. **NGO manager (18)**

This was expressed more directly:

It's about perhaps getting people out of their ivory towers if you'll pardon the expression. **Head of security (8)**

Others also referred to senior management, specifically noting their influence on organisational culture:

One of the best ways is understanding the culture and as I say if there is ownership at board level, and they put a culture in, that is more valuing the team, valuing the staff, and putting things in place that will mitigate as much possible chance of workplace violence before they even get to be a problem, I believe that's one of the best ways of doing it. **Security management consultant (14)**

The common denominator tends to be if they have got very good reporting procedures and the chief executives recognise that the perception of the increase in the levels of the volume of violence when they've improved reporting procedures will go up. That for me is the bedrock of a) when it works well and b) it's the foundation of it all really for me. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

I think the other really good practice which is also growing is around informed consent which is making staff aware, again very openly and transparently of the risks that they will face as an individual where they are going, that the organisation is responsible for and is doing in order to look after those people, but also making people aware of their own individual responsibilities in terms of what will be expected of them to mitigate the risks as well. **NGO manager (19)**

What is of note here is the suggestion that violence reduction is a shared responsibility, something that has been entirely missing from the literature and contemporary thinking on the subject.

The biggest challenge is communication. It can't be perfunctory, it's got to be based on credibility, trust and confidence so that the employees make the connection too. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

On the topic of policy creation, it was suggested that policies would be more effective if there was an element of boundary setting within them:



Very interestingly companies can be very uncomfortable setting boundaries so that we know if they're being breached or not. Boundary setting is probably, if there is a mitigation tactic, I think the one thing that provides the most success, even if it escalates. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

This recommendation appears to be aimed at violence that is perpetrated internally by staff members and suggests that organisations are 'uncomfortable' with this. This may be an artefact of their cultures or perhaps be driven by concerns linked to employment law within their areas of jurisdiction.

Some participants were especially supportive of a formal risk management approach:

Accepting the fact that it is a problem, first of all. And accepting the fact that we not going to accept the problem. If we decide that we not going to tolerate this and we need to design this risk out, we need to give it time and we need to look at it from a wider holistic risk management point of view and look at how each business unit contributes to the one problem, and look at how the individuals that are doing the job themselves are contributing to the problem also. **Security management consultant (4)**

## Areas for improvement

After discussing the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to violence risks that the participants were familiar with, it was worth asking what improvements in general that they felt were needed. The responses were varied and mostly reflected what were felt to be weaknesses. One of the security management consultants (14) was eloquent on the subject, however:

I would say looking at as much preventative measures rather than reactive measures. If you are dealing with something after it will cost far more time and resources of the management team after an incident has happened than the prevention of it and the consequences can be far, far more severe. I think looking at more proactive measures that can prevent this so when it comes into management, trying to get a look at every red flag that you could possibly have within an organisation that will incite or aggravate or cause an incident to happen, and finding ways to mitigate that. Now I'm not suggesting putting everyone in little pods where they can sleep at lunch. On a factory line, things can be stressful, at board level things can be stressful, but looking at how the organisation works, I would go as far to say that the organisations that have been proactive in this are probably more productive organisations than the ones that

have just left it and wait for incidents to happen because if that's the culture, that's the same in every area of that business. **Security management consultant (14)**

The speaker here indicates that they have an appreciation of the challenges that organisations face and the reference to 'sleeping pods' suggests an acceptance that most organisations cannot run like some of those seen in modern technology start-ups. The suggestion that an incident is likely to be more costly and serious than the costs of mitigation is entirely appropriate, as is the recommendation for organisations to seek out their triggers and mitigate them before they become an issue. The closing opinion is perhaps most valuable, that organisations that are proactive in dealing with these issues are more likely to be more productive than those that do not and are more likely to have better risk cultures. The topic of communication as an improvement area was also raised.

Certainly, the lack of focus groups. For example, in no particular order a combination of chief executive representation, health and safety representation, union representation, workforce representation, learning and development representation, and/or any other people. I don't think enough of that discussion goes on with cross representation. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

Debriefing, which can arguably be related to communication, was considered an area for improvement.

The other bit is around debriefing and staff support, and again I think the literature is a little bit conflicting around the value of debriefing in staff support. It's not conflicting about value of debriefing for organisational learning, it's about how we support people pre-and post-incident I think still needs further work. **Personal safety instructor (5)**

A security management consultant (4) instead saw the issue of competence as an area for improvement, saying:

Competence. The right people need to be managing the risk in the first place, and then once you have identified the right person for managing the risk, that that right person is actually competent to manage the risks. So they have a proper blend of experience, qualifications, skills and attitude. **Security management consultant (4)**

This is potentially a key observation. We have established that violence in the workplace is a complex issue and one that is beyond the knowledge, skills and experience of many of the people who are tasked with responsibility for reducing or preventing it. A violence prevention consultant (13) touched upon the issue of competence and specialty in this statement:

Until the silos are dismantled and we both respect what HR and the non-security folks do and what security does, until we have that alignment and that cross functional dialogue there are always going to be silos that say 'it's my job and I'm the HR director to manage the workplace violence prevention programme. I am not going to invest any resources because statistically I don't have any internal data that says I have to do it'. The security guy says 'oh my God I'm getting all these calls from unhappy people, fights and verbal altercations and they don't see that as workplace violence. They see that as a misconduct issue'. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

This is referring to specific world-views that different organisational departments have and the accompanying difference in their competencies. He went on:

HR is HR, security is security and unless they communicate and dismantle the barriers they will never be able to mutually appreciate the interoperability of the integration of resources and aligning themselves as a unified team. **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

There is real value in this observation, linking to previous comments around communication and a positive, supportive culture. Another violence consultant felt that reporting was another area requiring improvement:

The biggest problem we have across the spectrum is not our ability to assess, it's the ability to know what we need to assess. **Violence prevention consultant (10)**

This reflects the earlier issues relating to how violence is defined and perceived, which create a vacuum in knowledge which undermines attempts at viable assessment.

### Formal structures for violence risk management

The interviews ended by asking the participants whether they felt that a formal model or framework for managing violence risks would be helpful to organisations, which directly reflects the final research

aim. The responses were very positive to this suggestion and resulted in some thought-provoking statements. The security director (19) recognised the value that a formal risk approach would offer, citing several risks from workplace violence:

Yes of course it would, it absolutely would. Why wouldn't you? It is a manifest threat to a business in all sorts of different ways from reputation, from personal injury, from duty of care, both for the individual and those they hurt so you've got potentially a very serious risk.

**Security director(19).**

I think a formal risk management process with appropriate governance and appropriate time at a senior management level and there working its way back down the chain is crucial.

**Security management consultant (6)**

Yes, [a formal violence model] it probably would [help], but again that's about senior level buy in for me, probably. **Head of security (8)**

This was expanded upon in this statement:

Yeah I do [think it would help] ...It's got to be simple, and it can't only be put in by possibly risk management professionals because then you are setting the bar for an organisation to put workplace violence in place they need someone like you will myself to go in and set this up as per a standard. If you put a formal process in place that can be operated by standard management team and then maybe bring a consultant into polish things up, and they adopted the culture, then great. If you look at the ISO 9001 or environmental policy, you can have that and you can have it as your culture, or you can have it and just find a way to pass the assessment every year, and you will have two very different organisations. One will have an international standard that it adheres to and the other that has just got it and does it for 'badge collecting'. You can have the same approach with formal risk management, but a good thing with a formal risk management process is it provides a baseline and a template so the earlier questions you said 'have you found one process that fits' and I find they vary from company to company. Take along the lines of an ISO, that varies from company to company that you have same standard or the same baseline and that's why think it would be good. **Security management consultant (14)**

There are a number of key elements in this quote worthy of further discussion. The first point raised is that any formal violence risk management model needs to be accessible and usable by a wider community than those purely working in risk management. This is entirely appropriate and would increase the penetration of any such model into the workplace. The next point relates to organisational culture and the differences between actively engaging with the principles of a standard or model as opposed to the 'box ticking' approach that was discussed earlier. The creation of a standard approach to organisational violence risk management to establish a baseline for implementation is a strong suggestion, without it becoming prescriptive. An NGO manager (18) was in support of a more formal guidance with the same caveat:

One of the criticisms that is currently levied at the security risk management is that it's too checklist and process orientated and sometimes discourages people to think. So guidance on dealing with it, yes, being too prescriptive, no. **NGO manager (18)**

I think we need to agree what processes we are using, and I think it would because you use it as a framework. It's not the mandate and it's not 'this is how you do everything' but a good risk assessment is a good framework and if you are honest about it, it can give you some steerage. **Head of security (20)**

This is an important suggestion insofar that it recognises that a prescriptive approach would be likely to be ineffective and inappropriate. It also suggests that a standardised series of processes that can be widely applied is desirable.

That would be incredibly helpful, it would give organisations and managers in organisations I think a lot of confidence that they had done the right thing and were behaving in the right way and that they have thought of all the right things as well because obviously you don't know what you don't know so it would be really useful for building confidence in that area but my only concern would be that it would need to be fit for purpose for a small organisation so that people had the capacity to do it, to complete it and put it into practice and to live it rather than it taking up huge swathes of time and being something that is just not achievable. **NGO manager (17)**

The development of a formal standard for the management of violence would naturally need to be suitable for organisations of all sizes and types, similar to the current standards that are published for quality and risk management, for example.

I think anything that puts it on a formal footing would be of use. **Head of security (11)**

The formalisation of a standard or model for violence management would provide a degree of clarity in the management of violence risks that appears to be lacking, however how much further 'of use' this might be was not expanded upon by the participant.

I would definitely recommend using [a formal risk approach] as an example. I think that's a very sound example in terms of, as with many areas, work-related violence and other subjects. I'm sure until they get national standards which people are expected to adhere to, then it's never going to go along as effectively as it could do. **Personal safety instructor (16)**

This comment suggests that a national standard would require compliance, which is not entirely accurate. National standards exist as guidance in the development of qualifications, however there is no requirement to comply with them. The creation of an international standard would present a different proposition; however organisations would choose as to whether to apply for certification for a given standard, which again makes the standards optional.

One of the US-based violence prevention consultants (13) was in support of a risk management standard for workplace violence however recognised that the traditional formal risk management approaches for this risk area may not be suitable due to the complexities of the issue:

I spoke at a risk managers association in Orlando a couple of months back and my first line was 'risk managers - wake up. You are using probability and likelihood in the assessment of potential and possibility and you're forgetting that these are people.' **Violence prevention consultant (13)**

This is an entirely fair point, although debate around the complexities and drawbacks of traditional mathematical risk management methodologies is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## Discussion

Table 5 presents the summary of responses in relation to these areas of the interviews, including the additional theme that was presented.

Research theme	Summary of responses	Reflected in literature?
Responses	Organisational responses commonly focus on policy (of varying quality), and physical intervention training. Again, numerous references to 'box ticking'. Mentions of physical security, environmental controls and technology, but little mention of these as a part of a wider formal strategy	Yes
Effectiveness	General agreement that this is predicated upon active management support and engagement	Yes
<b>Additional themes identified</b>		
Risk modelling	Widespread lack of engagement with the academic literature and wider risk methodologies. Support exists for a formal organisational violence risk management framework	Not discussed – models exist but not their usage

**Table 5: Thematic analysis 2**

As already discussed, there is no literature that addresses violence as a business risk using formal risk management principles. This may be relevant in relation to the second research aim which seeks to examine how organisations perceive the risks of violence in relation to other risks that they may face. Since other business risks are formally recognisable using established risk models and violence is generally viewed as either an operational security or health and safety issue, it may be argued that there is no comparison possible. Violence appears not to be viewed in the same way as other business risks.

Typically, business risk is managed following a structured process that requires establishing the organisational context for risk, identifying risk, analysing risk, evaluating risk and then selecting an appropriate risk response (ISO,2009, p.14). Throughout this process, communication, consultation, monitoring and review take place. Borodzicz (2005, p. 97) recognised four risk responses, these being retention (also known as self-insurance), transfer (using contracts or insurance), avoidance and

mitigation. Considering the costs of all forms of violence (including the legal liabilities discussed in an earlier chapter) it is not possible to transfer the risk of violence as companies have a duty of care to protect their staff and customers. Violence is impossible to avoid, and retention of the risks it creates presents concerns about failures of governance. The only lawful, ethical and logical approach for organisations to take in the face of violence risks is mitigation. Once this process is completed, organisations usually then include the risk on their risk register, which is a document that collects and defines the risks that the organisation faces as well as assigning them to accountable parties (Hopkin, 2010, p.87). This is the standard approach for strategic risks, however.

The perceptions of the participants on the current mitigation methods that they have encountered was worthy of examination. While the interview schedule attempted to separate the discussion between strengths and weaknesses of the approaches they had experienced, these seemed to blend during the interviews, such that organisational commitment and appropriately engaged management was seen as positive while its absence was seen as a critical weakness. The participants once again referred to 'box ticking' and the use of reactive strategies that are not aligned with any formal security or risk strategy for violence management. Concern was expressed around the appropriateness and effectiveness of organisational policies regarding violence which reflects an immature process in their design and implementation. There was positive opinion on technological safeguards such as body-worn CCTV which is supported by other publicly available data.

Another area that was felt to contribute positively to violence management was training, although the participants emphasising this opinion generally had a vested interest in its delivery and did not appear aware of the literature questioning its effectiveness (Rogers et al, 2007, p.6). Overall, however, the weaknesses in violence management were discussed most clearly as failures at management level. In the interests of giving senior management in organisations the benefit of the doubt, it is possible that the criticisms they face in this context stem from either a lack of awareness about the issues or a lack of understanding in how to address them.

To this end, there was clear support for a risk management model that clearly defines how organisations of all types can understand and mitigate violence risks using the same methods, models and language as other, better understood organisational risks, although there were some reservations about how this should be designed. It was suggested that such a model should not be prescriptive, nor should it be overly reliant on mathematical modelling that may fail to represent the human variables that are present or influential in violence risk. This is worthy of consideration, especially



considering the previous discussion around organisations who use standards as 'box ticking' exercises instead of as a process for meaningful organisational improvement.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion

### Summary of findings

Given the accepted limitations of this study, there remain some clear themes that have emerged between the extant literature and the experiences and opinions of the people interviewed. Foremost is the suggestion that the organisations being discussed lacked clarity on violence in any form beyond that which takes place physically. Violence of all types will negatively impact the achievement of organisational objectives and so should be considered a strategic organisational risk in the first instance. The harm that violence can inflict on organisations extends across almost all risk areas, including reduced productivity, lost opportunity, reduced engagement, increased absenteeism, increased staff turnover, tribunals, regulatory concerns, civil and criminal litigation, reputational harm and increased potential for insider threats (Paterson, Leadbetter & Miller, 2012, p.8, Baron & Neuman, 1998, p.458, Grubb et al. 2006, p.39, DiMartino, 2006, p.18, Jackson, Clare & Mannix, 2002, p.18). While organisations may commonly suffer from several of these problems (specifically in relation to engagement, recruitment, attrition and culture), they may not perceive these as artefacts of an unmanaged violence problem which is hiding in plain sight. Importantly, there is also the human cost of violence in the workplace, ranging from mental and emotional harm through to direct physical harm and, in some cases, death (Di Martino, 2003, p.2, Aytac and Dursun, 2012, p.3030). Failing to address the issue of workplace violence as a strategic risk is therefore a critical failing of the organisation in relation to governance, corporate social responsibility and risk management. Farrell & Cubit (2005, p.51) clearly state that the management of violence is an organisational responsibility.

In some respects, allowing the regularity of events of physical violence to influence organisational perception on the problem is a double-edged sword. Where such incidents are rare, this may support erroneous beliefs that violence within the organisation is not a serious issue, or that the mitigations present are working correctly. Conversely, regular incidents may be viewed as an operational, day to day issue to be overcome rather than as evidence of failing security and risk management systems, as suggested by Turner (1972) in his work on man-made disasters. Given this lack of appreciation for the nature of the issue, it is perhaps unsurprising that violence in the workplace seemed to be often viewed as an operational security problem rather than as an organisational risk.

Resultingly, it appears that the organisations being discussed in this study were not treating the issue with the same levels of concern that they may consider other risks of which they are likely to have a better understanding. These organisations appeared not to be considering the other forms of violence that exist on the spectrum, which the literature recognises as far more commonplace, far costlier and

far more corrosive to organisational aims than the (often) relatively rare events of physical violence. Upon reflection on the interviews, this may be related to the use of the word 'violence' for the entire spectrum of behaviours. For many participants, it appeared that the clear physical interpretation was the most commonly applied first, to the exclusion of the rest of the spectrum of behaviours unless prompted. The word 'violence' appears to have weight and immediate currency, which may detract from any discussion about the less dramatic or more abstract forms. Further to the issues of violence being poorly defined within these organisations, there are no formal risk management methods for assessing the risks, and so organisations are relying on existing health and safety risk assessment methods which are unsuited to this risk type. It is the premise of this research that the dynamic nature of violence defies this rigid form of control.

It is also reasonable to surmise that while violence may be of concern to some levels of management, top management in these organisations seem largely unaware of the issue in many of the sectors discussed. This may result from lower levels of management not perceiving violence as a strategic organisational issue and therefore failing to communicate effectively on the topic at board level, or it may represent a deliberate attempt at senior management level to ignore or deny the issue. The issue of top-level management failing to engage with violence risks has been a consistent theme throughout many of the interviews with accusations of denial being seen repeatedly. This reflects the literature on how senior management typically appear to engage with the issue (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p.36, Rippon, 2000, p.454, Bowie, 2000, p.19). This was further reinforced by several comments around organisational approaches to violence management that were considered to be 'box ticking' for regulatory purposes rather than meaningful efforts to provide safer, more productive and harmonious workplaces.

The connections between organisational culture and the issue of workplace violence are too significant to be overlooked, and yet it appears that this is often the case. It appears that mitigations typically attempt to address the problem at a superficial (or tertiary) level, rather than examining and seeking to influence organisational culture as a root contributor. The literature repeatedly makes reference to both the positive and negative effects of culture on areas as diverse as staff perceptions of violence, incident reporting, incident response, staff engagement and risk reduction. Negative organisational cultures where there is a climate of injustice, abuse of authority and permissive management are considered to be fertile grounds for violence and violative behaviours across the spectrum, including those perpetrated by the organisation itself. Positive organisational cultures with strong leadership, active management and commitment with the issue are recognised as contributing

to a reduction in violence risk. These assertions in the literature were supported repeatedly across the interviews, with participants discussing culture as a key factor in whether or not control measures for violence reduction were successful. The participants were positive on the effect that engaged senior management can have on the issue, however it appeared that such engagement is a rarity in the organisations that they experienced.

The research suggests that the organisations discussed appear to have a flexible approach to assigning responsibility for violence reduction and management, with those who take up the mantle suggested as being unprepared or unfit for the challenges of the task. It was suggested that responsibility for violence within organisations was not being taken at board level. Violence risk may therefore be viewed as 'just another risk to manage' for HR, security or health and safety practitioners despite it being a complex area requiring significant specialist knowledge and significant organisational influence to remedy. Larger organisations typically have a multi-disciplinary risk committee that is capable of identifying, assessing and responding to organisational threats, however this was not something mentioned by any participant. Certainly, some of the organisations mentioned are large enough to have such a committee, and their absence from the conversations suggests that they are not involved with violence risks in a way that the participants could refer to. This can be attributed to the fact that these committees focus on formally recognised organisational risks, leading us back to issues of perception.

There were repeated suggestions that the organisations experienced by the participants were not fully engaging with expertise in the subject and may be relying on uninformed advice which contributes further to their lack of clarity over the risks that are faced. This can be countered with the suggestion that the violence management consultants themselves appear to be (at best) disengaged from the literature and (at worst) little better than physical intervention instructors with a basic understanding of specific areas of criminal law and health and safety legislation. While the consultants who took part in the research all demonstrated a high degree of practical experience and understanding around the cultures of violence that they work with, there nevertheless appeared to be a lack of formal risk management knowledge, something that is essential if they wish to embed violence risk management within organisations more formally.

We have established that the body of literature on the topic is imperfect, with issues relating to inconsistent definitions and research methodologies that prevent any research being of value beyond the local environment in which it was conducted (Flannery, 1996, p.65, Wassell, 2009, p.1054).

Perhaps resultingly, there appears to be limited engagement with the existing research, making little to no impact on wider organisational responses to violence issues. This manifested as an almost complete disconnection from the literature at practitioner level, with no awareness of the models that are being discussed for violence management, as an example. It was even necessary to moderate my language away from formal risk management terminology when it became clear in some of the interviews that this was not understood. When the current body of literature was examined from a risk management perspective, there was nothing present that organisations could refer to for practical risk management implementation. The literature contextualises violence in entirely unhelpful ways in terms of practical risk management, such as the most popular model that categorises violence based on the relationship between the perpetrator and victim (Bowie, 2002. p.2). Knowledge of this information provides virtually no scope for practical, pre-emptive mitigation and again, only focusses on physical violence.

The organisations experienced by the participants appeared to be failing to appreciate the range of risks that violence presented them. Without significant senior management engagement and clear, qualified, professional risk management advice, it is unlikely that they will be able to identify the data required to accurately perceive the costs of the risks of violence within their operations and cultures. With the focus clearly on violence as a physical event, such organisations are missing opportunities to collect data on other behaviours that indicate other forms of violence, resulting in an inability to effectively calculate the costs. This is undoubtedly the key to raising organisational awareness and garnering the commitment of the top management.

The research then sought to examine organisational perspectives on violence as a risk, identify the risk models and methods that were in use, identify their perceived strengths and weaknesses and discover if a more formal risk management approach designed for violence risks might be beneficial. The first research aim has clearly been addressed, as well as evidencing the lack of formal risk management models sought in the second aim. There is a clear connection between the findings already discussed on the organisational perception of violence as a risk and the risk mitigation approaches that were commonly taken in the experiences of the participants. We have already seen the suggestion that (in general) the organisations were not perceived to be paying sufficient attention to their violence risks and are, as a result, applying mitigations of variable quality as a 'box ticking' exercise to limit liability under health and safety legislation as opposed to actively mitigating the risk of violence.

It was suggested that policies for violence reduction within these organisations were often poorly conceived, failing to reflect existing knowledge and expertise that is available in the sector. Reference was made to policies that actually contribute to increased organisational risk through their poor design and inappropriate content. Since policy is a key mechanism in organisational risk management, such issues may fundamentally undermine any other risk mitigation approaches that are taken.

There was general support for staff training as a mitigation, although whether this is because it represents a financial commitment to the problem by senior management or whether the training itself is effective is unclear. Certainly, the literature provides no robust evidence either way on the effectiveness of training as a violence mitigation. If conflict management training can be measured for effectiveness, first there needs to have been conflict in the workplace – an undesirable condition and a failure at the prevention stage. Secondly, there is no way of knowing whether the training worked to defuse a violent situation because it is not possible to measure effectiveness of training against something that did not happen. It was clear that training is only perceived as a positive mitigation method where it is delivered beyond a ‘box ticking’ approach, possibly meaning that it is needed in tandem with other mitigations. In general, the research indicates that a range of measures are employed by a variety of organisations, none of which could be considered to be wholly successful in isolation.

A common theme was that the commitment of top management was necessary, alongside competent people who were capable of managing the risks. This culminates in a recognised need for positive cultures that extend from the boardroom to the shop floor. Such cultures adopt a proactive risk approach to violence rather than a reactive one, however this appears to be a rarity. The research concluded with the suggestion that there is a need for a formal risk management model that directly addresses the issues relating to violence of all forms. The support within the research for this idea was widespread, although it was clear that such a model needs to be un-prescriptive and simple enough to implement without specialist knowledge.

## Implications of research findings

While it is not possible to generalize the findings of this research beyond the context of the organisations experienced by the participants and being discussed (a noted limitation of qualitative research), there are many points of discussion that reflected findings in the existing literature. Used

together, they may be viewed using *moderatum* generalization (Bryman, 2012, p.406) in that they may be seen as instances of a broader set of recognizable features that are 'transferable' to other contexts if not directly generalizable.

The implications of this research suggest that organisations do not conceive of violence as a strategic business risk to their objectives and are therefore unaware of the wider costs and the negative cultural and operational effects that it presents. Further, this suggests a lack of awareness around the wider risks that an organisation may be incubating that unaddressed violence may trigger. There is a lack of understanding around the spectrum of violence and the connections between the types. It appears clear that there is a lack of engagement with the literature and research on the subject, even amongst those practicing as violence prevention consultants. The failure to contextualise violence as a recognised organisational risk means that accepted good practice for risk management is not applied to this problem, such as the assignment of formal risk ownership. This perceptual gap may lead to increased risk of harm to staff (either physical or emotional) which can reflect on the organisation in financial, reputational, cultural and functional ways that the organisation is simply not aware of. Examples may include established costs associated with the more insidious forms of workplace violence, including increased absenteeism, staff attrition, recruitment costs, training costs, tribunals and operational instability. Each of these will clearly impact on the achievement of organisational aims. Organisations need to look beyond the formal, legal definitions of violence to establish what it means for them and use this to open discussion around the kinds of behaviour (and therefore culture) that they wish to define them.

Since organisations are unclear on what violence actually is (beyond easily recognizable incidents of a physical nature or direct threats of the same) there are unlikely to be adequate reporting mechanisms and therefore an inability to calculate its actual direct costs or impact on the objectives of the organisation. This lack of reliable and well-defined metrics is a further distinction between violence risk and the other, more established organisational risks that are commonly understood. Organisations need to look for the key indicators of violence of all types within their structures and link these directly to impacts on their established organisational objectives, the same as any other risk area.

Another byproduct of this lack of clarity is a lack of formal risk ownership, with differing opinions on which department should be responsible for addressing the problem. This begins at senior management level, who may not understand its impact, costs or their own responsibilities for

addressing it. As a result, responsibility appears to slide down the organisational tree until another manager finally takes ownership. This will likely result in a failure of governance as the individual will not have a formal mandate and therefore no resources or authority to take meaningful steps to address the issue. Responsibility for violence management is often devolved to specialists in other areas, such as occupational health and safety, security or human resources who are not equipped to deal with such a complex issue. Since such people who are often charged with this task are specialists in other fields, they may not possess the knowledge, experience or resources required to successfully engage with the issue. This can result in ineffective mitigations, increased risk and ultimately, increased costs. The failure to engage with appropriate external expertise on the subject is also a significant failing that can be far costlier in the longer term. Violence is a complex issue and one that requires more than an understanding of law, health and safety or self-defence. Organisations need to assign clear responsibility for violence risk management to a senior figure who has the mandate and resources to manage it, and they need to engage with appropriately skilled and knowledgeable people for support.

The lack of a robust risk assessment model for violence risks is another cause for concern. Organisations may well meet their legal obligations with the inclusion of a line about violence in their occupational health and safety risk assessments, but this is entirely insufficient for doing anything more than limiting legal liability and compliance issues. Such risk assessments focus entirely on the personal harm to individuals and not the effects of violence on the organisation in legal, cultural and reputational dimensions. Organisations need something more reliable upon which to base their violence management approaches.

There appears to be support for a formal risk management framework or standard specific to violence management, although it was suggested that this should be more than simply a 'box ticking' exercise and should be designed to allow implementation by non-specialists in the field of violence risk management. Given the sheer scope of losses that violence can introduce into an organisation, there is a strong argument for a 'total organisational response' as promoted by (Paterson et al, 2012, Beech & Leather, 2006, p.41) and a formal risk management approach to this may well support this aim. A formal approach may well contribute to broader organisational understanding of the problem, leading to more proactive responses from top management, leading to safer, more harmonious and therefore more productive workplaces, regardless of which sector they operate in. A recommended framework for organisational violence risk management that aligns with the ISO31000:2009 and established governance frameworks is laid out in figure 7.



## Recommendations

There is an urgent need for a new approach to violence risk management in organisations that takes account of the distinctive features of the problem of violence in an organisational context and applies formal risk management principles that are applicable in all employment environments. There is currently an absence of such guidance to organisations, meaning that a range of strategic risks are receiving insufficient attention. Given the potential financial and operational costs of staff attrition (and the training of their replacements), increased recruitment, obstructionism, insider threat, operational instability, legal fines and negative publicity, violence presents a significant risk that deserves discussion at the highest corporate levels. The other recommendations of this research all follow from this primary recommendation.

The first step is the adoption and use of the earlier proposed definition for ‘organisational violence risk’:

The impact of negative organisational structures and human interactions on the safety, operational stability, profitability, reputation, legal liability and culture of the organisation in relation to its strategic organisational aims and objectives.

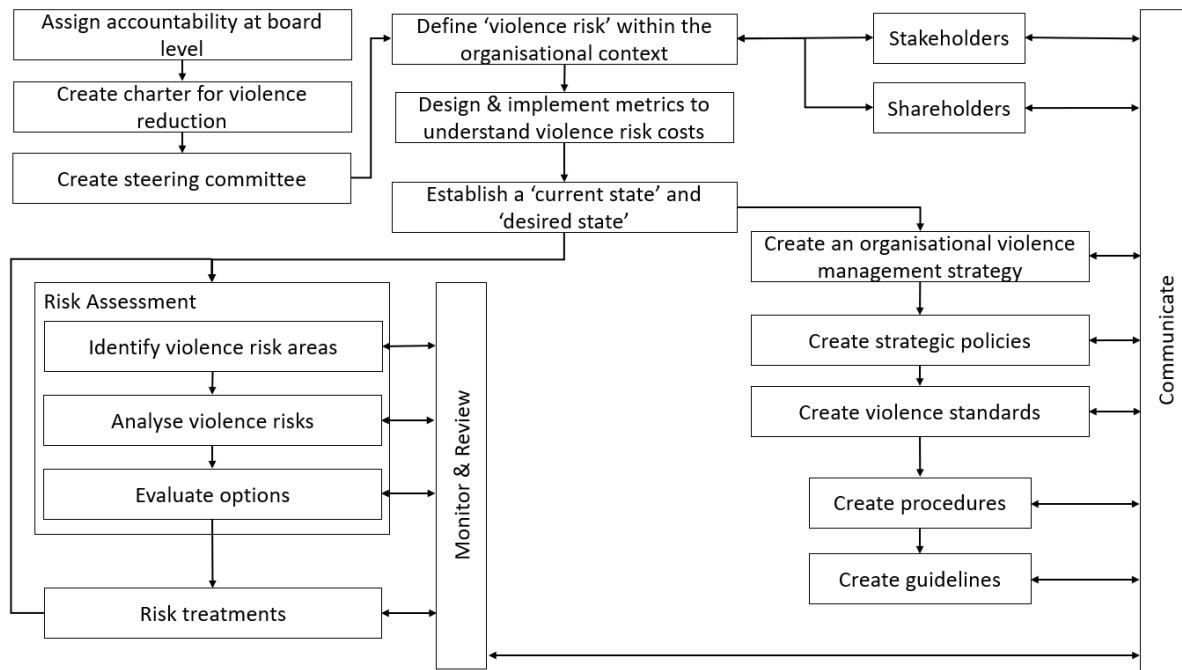
This definition highlights the negative effects of all types of violence on organisational aims, aligning them with existing business risk areas. Further, this definition provides direction for the creation of metrics in areas that may be affected by the different types of violence, giving a stronger basis for understanding the wider costs that are currently under-recognized. The inclusion of the term ‘organisational structures’ reflects the wider literature in relation to ‘organisational violence’, drawing specific attention to the ways that organisations may perpetrate or perpetuate certain types of violence themselves that may cause them reputational risk and cultural harm. Ultimately, the adoption of this definition would serve to shift the perspective of workplace violence to that of a significant governance issue and away from it being a purely physical operational issue.

The next recommendation in this research is for a change in the use of the terminology that is currently in use in relation to violence in the workplace. The word ‘violence’ is an emotive one and one that obscures the actual issues in the workplace by conjuring images of physical violence at the expense of other undesirable but organisationally costlier behaviours. The word ‘violence’ should arguably be reserved for acts of physical aggression, which appears to be how most organisations and personnel

understand it. Other forms of intentional harm (including non-physical types such as threats or bullying) could be better served by the word 'abuse', creating the necessary distinction. There is benefit in using a different terminology to describe the other, less dramatic forms of violence that are recognised on the spectrum, which perhaps can reflect the concepts of corporate citizenship that underpin many organisational culture and mission statements. Given the effects that non-physical violence can have on organisational aims, alternative suggestions for terms such as 'violative behaviour', 'anti-corporate behaviour' and even 'culturally unacceptable personal behaviour' may provide a clearer direction for cultural change. Such a recommendation would increase clarity on the spectrum of behaviours that are currently considered violence while avoiding terminological arguments.

There is also a need for the creation of a risk assessment method for workplace violence that reflects the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of workplace violence and violative behaviours to replace the compliance-based occupational health and safety method currently in use. There is a pressing need for a more viable method of assessing such risks that reflects the different types of violence, the different potential levels of harm and the broader causes as discussed in the literature. Such a tool would provide organisations with a more proactive and meaningful assessment of their risks and potentially do far more for their protection than the current 'box ticking' approach that is commonly felt to be in place. This would be supported by the use of the WRV8 model presented in this thesis to support organisations in understanding the different types of violence and violative behaviours that may be occurring, and aid in the direction of appropriate methodologies and resources for their mitigation in an effective and efficient way.

The final recommendation is for the implementation of a formal organisational violence risk management framework, such as the proposed model in figure 7.



**Figure 7: Framework for organisational violence risk management**

Since there is significant concern about senior management commitment, the framework begins with the assignment of accountability for workplace violence and violative behaviours at board level. This also aligns with the common structure of the ISO standards which require top management leadership and commitment (usually in clause 5). Once this is achieved, the board should create a charter for violence reduction that will trigger the creation of a specialist steering committee of informed senior managers and empower them to implement it. The next step requires the organisation to define what ‘violence’ means within their organisational context, in collaboration with stakeholders and shareholders. Once this is created, it supports the creation of metrics that will enable the organisation to understand its current violence risk profile and the potential costs that it is incubating. This will then inform the creation of a ‘current state’ and ‘desired future state’, leading to a gap analysis and the formal risk assessment process, specific to violence and violative behaviours. The risk assessment process would be aligned with the literature around the activities, locations and profiles that lead to increased violence risk at work and driven by use of the WRV8 as previously introduced. It will also support the creation of a high level organisational violence strategy which will distil into strategic policies, standards (or baselines), procedures and guidelines which are all communicated with stakeholders and shareholders.

This framework, if followed, will create the necessary architecture within an organisation to support clarity and meaningful progress towards the management of violence as a strategic organisational risk. It aligns with the common structure of the ISO standards in current use and follows the same general

corporate processes as currently applied to information technology, internal audit and other key business functions, potentially easing the way for acceptance, understanding and cost-effective adoption.

Ideally, this framework would inform the creation of a PAS (Publicly Available Specification) which is a sponsored consultation document, developed in association with the British Standards Institution (BSI) in order to inform standardized good practice and serve as a potential pathway to full ISO standard creation. An organisation that commissions the creation of a PAS for organisational violence management would set the agenda for this area and promote good practice. Further, this could then form the basis of a formal certification scheme for practitioners who provide advice and guidance in this area. This would be especially important considering the low levels of engagement with the wider theories and literature that this research uncovered. A certification scheme based on this framework would provide a benchmark for good practice at principle level, broadening practitioner ability while at the same time building client confidence.

The creation of such a document would not be without its challenges. As seen in this research, there appears to be a gap between practitioners and the wider literature on the subject, which could manifest in a PAS that reflects a negotiated solution limited by the wider subject knowledge of the participants. Further, given the nature of violence at work, organisations may well not wish to publicise their interest in such a document, given that this may be seen as admission that they have a workplace violence problem.

Since organisations typically remain unclear on the nature of violence that affects them, its costs and the best ways to address it as a governance issue, such a document would provide much needed direction and clarity. An organisation that uses this framework is more likely to recognise, understand and mitigate the risks of violence and violative behaviours that may affect its strategic organisational objectives, potentially enabling it to become a safer, healthier, more caring and more productive place to work. The ability for organisations to perceive violence as a strategic risk to organisational objectives (in all its forms) is an essential part of governance, corporate social responsibility and risk management.

## References

- Abdullah, H., & Valentine, B. (2009). Fundamental and ethics theories of corporate governance. *Middle Eastern Finance and Economics*, 4(4), 88-96.
- Andersson, L.M. and Pearson, C.M. (1999). Tit for tat? The spiralling effect of incivility in the workplace. *Academy of management review*, 24(3),452-471.
- Antai-Otong, D. (2001). Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: A health promotion model for workplace violence. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 37(4), 125-139.
- Aronson, J. (1995). A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *The qualitative report*, 2(1), 1-3.
- ASIS International. (2011). *American National Standard: Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention*. Retrieved from <http://www.fwscc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/American-National-Standard-WVPISTD.pdf>
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers. (2016). *Education staff facing physical violence from pupils - ATL*. Retrieved from <https://www.atl.org.uk/latest/press-release/education-staff-facing-physical-violence-pupils-atl>
- Aytac, S., and Dursan, S. (2012). The effect on employees of violence climate in the workplace. *Work* 41, 3026-3031.
- Barling, J. (1996). The Prediction, Experience and Consequences of Workplace Violence. In Vandenbos & Bulatao (Eds.), *Violence on the Job*. Washington: USA
- Barling, J., Dupre, K.E. & Kelloway, K.E. (2009). Predicting Workplace Aggression and Violence. *Annual Review of Psychology*. DOI 10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163629
- Baron, R.A. & Neuman, J.H. (1996). Workplace Violence and Workplace Aggression: Evidence on their relative frequency and potential causes. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 22, 161-173.
- Baron, R.A. and Neuman, J.H. (1998). Workplace Aggression - The Iceberg Beneath the Tip of Workplace Violence: Evidence on its forms, frequency and targets. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 446-464.

Bartholomew, K. (2006). *Ending nurse-to-nurse hostility: Why nurses eat their young and each other*. HC Pro, Inc.

Bhimani, A., & Soonawalla, K. (2005). From conformance to performance: The corporate responsibilities continuum. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*, 24(3), 165-174.

Security Guard cleared over shoplifter's death. (2010). Retrieved from BBC News website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-11443304>

Security Guard arrested in Trowbridge after 'shoplifter' dies.(2017). Retrieved from BBC News website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-38932180>

Secondary school staff suffer work attacks. (2018). Retrieved from BBC News website: <https://www-bbc-co-uk.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/education-43290587>

Beech, B. and Leather, P. (2006). Workplace violence in the health care sector: A review of staff training and integration of training evaluation models. *Aggression and violent behaviour*, 11(1), 27-43.

Bentley, T. A., Catley, B., Forsyth, D., & Tappin, D. (2014). Understanding workplace violence: the value of a systems perspective. *Applied ergonomics*, 45(4), 839-848.

Bing, M.N., Stewart, S.M., Davison, H.K., Green, P.D., McIntyre, M.D. and James, L.R., (2007). An integrative typology of personality assessment for aggression: implications for predicting counterproductive workplace behaviour. *Journal of applied psychology*, 92(3), 722-744.

Blando, J.D., O'Hagan, E., Casteel, C., Nocera, M.A. and Peek-Asa, C. (2013). Impact of hospital security programmes and workplace aggression on nurse perceptions of safety. *Journal of nursing management*, 21(3), 491-498.

Bowie, V. (2002, September). *Workplace Violence: A Second Look*. In Crime Prevention Conference. University of Western Sydney. Retrieved from: [http://www.aic.gov.au/media\\_library/conferences/crimpre/bowie.pdf](http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/conferences/crimpre/bowie.pdf)

Bowie, V. (2000). Current Trends and Emerging Issues in Workplace Violence. *Security Journal*, 13(3), 7-23.

Bowie, V. (2005). Organisational violence: a trigger for reactive terrorism. In Bowie, Fisher and Cooper (Eds.), *Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing

Bowie, V., Fisher, B. & Cooper, C.L. (2006). *Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing

Blando, J., O'Hagan, E., Casteel, C., Nocera, M., & Peek-Asa, C. (2012). Impact of hospital security programmes and workplace aggression on nurse perceptions of safety. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 21(3), 491-498. DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2834.2012.01416.x

Borodzicz, E. (2005). *Risk, crisis and security management*. Chichester, UK: Wiley

Bruce, M.D. and Nowlin, W.A. (2011). Workplace violence: Awareness, prevention, and response. *Public Personnel Management*, 40(4), 293-308.

Brace, N., & Byford, J. (2012). *Investigating Psychology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Terry, G. (2014). Thematic analysis. *Qual Res Clin Health Psychol*, 24, 95-114.

British Retail Consortium. (2017). *New figures reveal wave of cyber-threats and rising violence against staff*. Retrieved from: <http://brc.org.uk/news/2017/new-figures-reveal-wave-of-cyber-threats-and-rising-violence-against-staff>

British Retail Consortium. (2014). *Tackling Violence Against Staff: Best Practice Guidelines for Retailers*. Retrieved from <https://brc.org.uk/media/154207/tackling-violence-against-staff.pdf>

British Retail Consortium. (2018). *2017 Retail Crime Survey*. Retrieved online from [https://brc.org.uk/media/249703/2017-crime-survey-short-story\\_fa\\_63\\_v11.pdf](https://brc.org.uk/media/249703/2017-crime-survey-short-story_fa_63_v11.pdf)

- British Standards Institution. (2015). *BS16000:2015. Security Management – Strategic and operational guidelines*. Retrieved from <https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030285866>
- Brubaker, R and Laitin, D. (1998). Ethnic and Nationalist Violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 423-452. Retrieved from <http://www.ou.edu/uschina/gries/articles/IntPol/brubaker%20and%20laitin.pdf>
- Bruce, M., & Nowlin, W.A.(2011). Workplace Violence: Awareness, Prevention and Response. *Public Personnel Management*, 40(4), 293-308.
- Bryman, A., (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Budd, T. (1999). *Violence at Work: Findings from the British Crime Survey*. London: Home Office.
- Budd, J.W., Arvey, R.D. & Lawless, P. (1996). Correlates and Consequences of Workplace Violence. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 1(2),197-210.
- Bufacchi, V. (Ed.).(2009). *Violence: A Philosophical Anthology*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan
- Catley, B. (2003). Philosophy: The luxurious supplement of violence. In *Proceedings of the Third International Critical Management Studies Conference on Critique and Inclusivity: Opening the Agenda, Lancaster, UK*. Retrieved from <http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2003/proceedings/philosophy/catley.pdf>  
Conference paper
- Center for Disease Control. (2017). *The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html>
- Chappell, D. & Di Martino, V. (2006). *Violence at Work (third edition)*. International Labour Office: Geneva
- Clements, P.T., DeRanieri, J.T., Clark, K., Manno, M.S. and Kuhn, D.W. (2005). Workplace violence and corporate policy for health care settings. *Nursing Economics*, 23(3),119-129.



Cole, L.L., Grubb, P.L., Sauter, S.L., Swanson, N.G. and Lawless, P. (1997). Psychosocial correlates of harassment, threats and fear of violence in the workplace. *Scandinavian journal of work, environment & health*, 23(6), 450-457.

Cox, T., & Leather, P. (1994). The prevention of violence at work: Application of a cognitive behavioural theory. Retrieved from: <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1994-97474-007>

Dearden, L. (2018). *Oxfam prostitution scandal: Charities report over 1,000 sexual abuse incidents every year, says regulator*. The Independent. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/oxfam-crisis-latest-sexual-abuse-vulnerable-people-ngos-report-charity-commission-haiti-prostitutes-a8206431.html>

Defraia, G.S. (2016). Workplace disruption following psychological trauma: Influence of incident severity level on organisations' post incident response, planning and execution. *International Journal of Occupational Environmental Medicine*, 7, 746-775.

De Puy, J., Romain-Glassey, N., Gut, M., Pascal, W., Mangin, P., & Danuser, B. (2015). Clinically assessed consequences of workplace physical violence. *International archives of occupational and environmental health*, 88(2), 213-224. DOI: 10.1007/s00420-014-0950-9

Denney, D. (2010). Violence and social care staff: positive and negative approaches to risk. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(4), 1297-1313. DOI: 10.1093/BJSW/BCQ025

Dickens, G., Rogers, G., Rooney, C., McGuinness, A., Doyle, D. (2009). An audit of the use of breakaway techniques in a large psychiatric hospital: a replication study. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 16(9), 777-783.

Dickinson, C., & Bevan, J. (2005). Managing violence on the railways. *Applied Ergonomics*, 36(6), 729-738.

Dietz, J., Robinson, S.L., Folger, R., Baron, R.A. and Schulz, M. (2003). The impact of community violence and an organization's procedural justice climate on workplace aggression. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46(3), 317-326.

Dillon, B.L. (2012). Workplace violence: Impact, causes and prevention. *Work* 42(1),15-20. DOI 10.3233/WOR-2012-1322

Di Martino, V. (2002). *Relationship of work stress and workplace violence in the health sector. Joint Programme on Workplace Violence in the Health Sector. Geneva: ILO. ICN/WHO/PSI*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVstresspaper.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVstresspaper.pdf)

Di Martino, V. (2006). A cross national comparison of workplace violence and response strategies. In Bowie, Fisher and Cooper (Eds.) *Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing

Di Martino, V. and Musri, M. (2001). Guidance for the Prevention of Stress and Violence at the Workplace. *Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia and International Labour Organization, Kuala Lumpur*.

Diston, R.E. (2014). *Does the mandatory training for managing work-related violence and the use of force for front line security staff actually protect stakeholders from harm or create additional risks?* (Unpublished master's dissertation). Loughborough University, Loughborough.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. (2010). *Workplace Violence and Harassment: a European picture*. Publications Office of the European Union: Luxembourg. Retrieved from: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/reports/violence-harassment-TERO09010ENC>

*Everett v Comojo, Court of Appeal, 18 January 2011*. (2011). Retrieved from <https://www.brownejacobson.com/insurance/training-and-resources/legal-updates/2011/02/everett-v-comojocourt-of-appeal-18th-january-2011>

Fallahi-Khoshknab, M., Oskouie, F., Najafi, F., Ghazanfari, N., Tamizi, Z., & Afshani, S. (2016). Physical Violence against health care workers: A nationwide study from Iran. *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research*,21(3),232-238. DOI:10.4103/1735-9066.180387

Farrell, G., & Cubit, K. (2005). Nurses under threat: A comparison of content of 28 aggression management programs. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 14(1), pp.44-53.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5(1), 80-92.

Flannery, R. (1996). Violence in the workplace, 1970 – 1995: a review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 1(1),57-68.

Flick, U., (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd

Folger, R., Robinson, S.L., Dietz, J., Parks, J.M. and Baron, R.A. (1998). When Colleagues Become Violent: Employee Threats and Assaults As A Function Of Societal Violence And Organizational Injustice. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 1998, No. 1, pp. A1-A7). Academy of Management

Fredericksen, E., & McCorkle, S.(2013). Explaining organisational responses to workplace aggression. *Public Personnel Management*, 42(2), pp.223-238 DOI: 10.1177/0091026013487050

Furnham, A. & Taylor, J. (2011). *Bad Apples: Identify, prevent and manage negative behaviour at work*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of peace research*, 6(3), 167-191. Retrieved from [http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPD%202015%20readings/IPD%202015\\_2/Galtung\\_Violence,%20Peace,%20and%20Peace%20Research.pdf](http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPD%202015%20readings/IPD%202015_2/Galtung_Violence,%20Peace,%20and%20Peace%20Research.pdf)

The Guardian. (2017). *Woman behind 'inclusion rider' explains Frances McDormand's Oscar speech*. Retrieved online from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/mar/05/what-is-an-inclusion-rider-frances-mcdormand-oscars-2018>

Gill, M., Fisher, B., & Bowie, V. (Eds.)(2001). *Violence at Work: Causes, Patterns and Prevention*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing

Gillespie, G.L., Gates, D.M. and Fisher, B.S. (2015). Individual, relationship, workplace, and societal recommendations for addressing healthcare workplace violence. *Work*, 51(1), pp.67-71. DOI: 10.3233/WOR – 141890

Gregory, G. (2007). *An Investigation into Violence within Prison*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis).

University of Birmingham, UK. Retrieved from

<http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.521950>

Grubb, P., Roberts, R., Swanson, N., Burnfield, J. & Childress, J. (2006). Organisational factors and psychological aggression: results from a nationally representative sample of US companies. In Bowie, Fisher and Cooper (Eds.) *Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing

Gruenert, S., & Whitaker, T. (2015). *School Culture Rewired: How to define, assess and transform it*. ASCD.

Harvey, H.D, Fleming, P and Mooney, D. (2002). Violence at Work: an initial needs assessment for the environmental health department as a health promoting workplace. *Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 1(1), 41-49.

Hegney, D., Plank, A. and Parker, V. 2003. Workplace violence in nursing in Queensland, Australia: A self-reported study. *International journal of nursing practice*, 9(4), 261-268.

Hegney, D., Tuckett, A., Parker, D. and Eley, R.M. 2010. Workplace violence: Differences in perceptions of nursing work between those exposed and those not exposed: A cross-sector analysis. *International journal of nursing practice*, 16(2), 188-202.

Hershcovis, M.S., Turner, N., Barling, J., Arnold, K.A., Dupré, K.E., Inness, M., LeBlanc, M.M. and Sivanathan, N. 2007. Predicting workplace aggression: a meta-analysis. *Journal of applied Psychology*, 92(1), 228-238.

Health and Safety Executive. (1996). *Violence at Work: A Guide for Employers*. UK: HSE. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg69.pdf>

Health and Safety Executive. (2017). *Example policy on work related violence*. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/examplepolicy.pdf>

Health and Safety Executive. (2017). *Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and from RIDDOR*. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/violence/violence-at-work.pdf>

Hinchberger, P.A. (2009). Violence against female student nurses in the workplace. *Nursing forum*, 44(1), 37-46.

Hubbard, D. W. (2009). *The failure of risk management: Why it's broken and how to fix it*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Hutchinson, M., Jackson, D., Wilkes, L. and Vickers, M.H. (2008). A new model of bullying in the nursing workplace: Organizational characteristics as critical antecedents. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 31(2), E60-E71.

Home Office. (2015). *Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales*. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445977/3799\\_Revised\\_Prevent\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_\\_England\\_Wales\\_V2-Interactive.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance__England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf)

Hoppe, K. & Williamson, C. (2016). *Dennis vs Norwegian Refugee Council: implications for duty of care*. Retrieved from <http://odihpn.org/blog/dennis-vs-norwegian-refugee-council-implications-for-duty-of-care/>

Hopkin, P. (2018). *Fundamentals of risk management: understanding, evaluating and implementing effective risk management*. Kogan Page Publishers.

Hunt, M.L., Hughey, A.W. and Burke, M.G. (2012). Stress and violence in the workplace and on campus A growing problem for business, industry and academia. *Industry and Higher Education*, 26(1),43-51.

International Labor Office. (2003). *Code of practice on workplace violence in services sectors and measures to combat this phenomenon*. ILO: Geneva. Retrieved from [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_protect/@protrav/@safework/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms\\_107705.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@safework/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_107705.pdf)

International Labor Office, International Council of Nurses, World Health Organisation & Public Services International. (2002). *Framework Guidelines for Addressing Workplace Violence in the Health Sector*. ILO: Geneva. Retrieved from

[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVguidelinesEN.pdf?ua=1&ua=1](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVguidelinesEN.pdf?ua=1&ua=1)

International Standards Organisation. (2009). *ISO31000:2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines*. Retrieved from <https://www.iso.org/iso-31000-risk-management.html>

International Standards Organisation. (2015). *ISO9001:2015 Quality Management System Requirements*. Retrieved from <https://www.iso.org/standard/62085.html>

ISACA. (2015). *Certified in Governance of Enterprise IT (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Illinois, USA: ISACA

Jackson, D., Clare, J., & Mannix, J. (2002). Who would want to be a nurse? Violence in the workplace – a factor in recruitment and retention. *Journal of Nursing and Management*, 10(1), 13-20.

Jamali, D. and Rabbath, M. (2008). Corporate governance and corporate social responsibility synergies and interrelationships. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 16(5), 443-459.

Johnson, P.R., & Indvik, J. (1994). Workplace Violence: An issue of the Nineties. *Public Personnel Management*, 23(4), 515-523.

Khan, S. (2018). *More than 120 charity workers accused of sexual abuse in the last year alone*. The Independent. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/charity-workers-sexual-abuse-scandal-oxfam-save-the-children-christian-aid-red-cross-a8205101.html>

Karl, K. & Hancock, B. (1999). Expert Advice on Employment Termination Practices: How Expert is it? *Public Personnel Management*, 28(1), 51-62.

Kinney, J.A. (1997). The Dynamics of Threat Management. In *Violence on the Job*. Vandenbos & Bulatao (Eds.). Washington, USA: American Psychological Association.

LaVan, H., Lopez, Y. P., Katz, M., & Martin, W. M. (2012). The impact of domestic violence in the workplace. *Employment Relations Today*, 39(3), 51-63. DOI 10.1002/ert.21377

Leather, P., Beale, D., Lawrence, C., Brady, C. & Cox, T. (1999). Violence at Work. In Leather, P., Brady, C., Lawrence, C., Beale, D. & Cox, T. (Eds.) *Work-Related Violence Assessment and Intervention*. London: Routledge.

LeBlanc, M.M., Kelloway, K.E.(2002). Predictors and Outcomes of Workplace Violence and Aggression. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(3), 444-453. DOI: 10.1037//0021 – 9010.87.3.444

Leck, J.,D., & Galperin, B.,L. (2006). Worker responses to bully bosses. *Canadian Public Policy*, 85-97. DOI: 10.2307/3552244

Leighton, P. (1999). Violence at Work: The Legal Framework. In Leather, P., Brady, C., Lawrence, C., Beale, D. & Cox, T.(Eds.). *Work-Related Violence Assessment and Intervention*. London: Routledge.

Leino, T., Selin, R., Summala, H., and Virtanen, M. (2011). Work-Related Violence against Security Guards – Who is Most at Risk? *Industrial Health*, 49(2), 143-150.

Levi, M., Maguire, M., & Brookman, F. (2007). Violent Crime. In Maguire, M., Morgan, R., & Reiner, R.(Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology (4th Edition)* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Lister v Hesley Hall Ltd, House of Lords, 3 May 2001*. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.brownejacobson.com/insurance/training-and-resources/legal-updates/2001/05/lister-v-hesley-hall-limited>

Littlechild, B. (1997). *I needed to be told that I Hadn't Failed': Experiences of Violence Against Probation Staff and of Agency Support*. *British Association of Social Workers*, 27(2),219-240.

Magnavita, N. and Heponiemi, T. (2011). Workplace violence against nursing students and nurses: an Italian experience. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 43(2), 203-210.

Martin McColls Ltd shop chain fined over robbery safety. (2014). Retrieved from BBC News website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-30061496>

Martinko, M. J., & Zellars, K. L. (1998). Toward a theory of workplace violence and aggression: A cognitive appraisal perspective. Retrieved from: <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-06093-001>

*Mattis v Pollock, Court of Appeal, 1 July 2003.* (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.brownejacobson.com/insurance/training-and-resources/legal-updates/2003/07/mattis-v-pollock-court-of-appeal-1st-july-2003>

Mayhew, C., & Chappell, D. (2007). Workplace Violence: An overview of patterns of risk and the emotional / stress consequences on targets. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 30(4), 327-339. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijlp.2007.06.006

Mayhew, C., McCarthy, P., Chappell, D., Quinlan, M., Barker, M., & Sheehan, M. (2004). Measuring the extent of impact from occupational violence and bullying on traumatised workers. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 16(3), 117-134.

Mayhew, C., & Chappell, D. (2001). *Occupational violence: Types, reporting patterns, and variations between health sectors* (Vol. 139). School of Industrial Relations, University of New South Wales.

Retrieved from:

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/40164086/Occupational\\_Violence\\_Types\\_Reporting\\_Pa20151118-6323-1bnti1o.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1482081832&Signature=eew%2F%2F5szK8PL6wYmc5uYx3YROvE%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DOccupational\\_Violence\\_Types\\_Reporting\\_Pa.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/40164086/Occupational_Violence_Types_Reporting_Pa20151118-6323-1bnti1o.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1482081832&Signature=eew%2F%2F5szK8PL6wYmc5uYx3YROvE%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DOccupational_Violence_Types_Reporting_Pa.pdf)

Merchant, J. A., & Lundell, J. A. (2001). Workplace violence intervention research workshop, April 5–7, 2000, Washington, DC: Background, rationale, and summary. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 20(2), 135-140. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11165456>

Ministry of Justice. (2016). *Safety in Custody Statistics Bulletin*. Retrieved from

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/543284/safety-in-custody-bulletin.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543284/safety-in-custody-bulletin.pdf)

Murray-Webster, R. (2010). *Management of risk: guidance for practitioners*. Norwich, UK: The Stationery Office.

Neuman, J. & Baron, R. (1998). Workplace Violence and Workplace Aggression: Evidence Concerning Specific Forms, Potential Causes, and Preferred Targets. *Journal of Management*, 24(3), 391-419.



Retrieved from

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joel\\_Neuman/publication/271604879\\_Neuman\\_J\\_H\\_Baron\\_R\\_A\\_Workplace\\_violence\\_and\\_workplace\\_aggression\\_Evidence\\_concerning\\_specific\\_forms\\_potential\\_causes\\_and\\_preferred\\_targets\\_Journal\\_of\\_Management\\_24\\_391-419/links/566e20e608aea0892c5291c2.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joel_Neuman/publication/271604879_Neuman_J_H_Baron_R_A_Workplace_violence_and_workplace_aggression_Evidence_concerning_specific_forms_potential_causes_and_preferred_targets_Journal_of_Management_24_391-419/links/566e20e608aea0892c5291c2.pdf) Accessed 20/11/2016

Nursing in Practice. (2015). *NHS staff physically assaulted 67,864 times this year*. Retrieved from <https://www.nursinginpractice.com/article/nhs-staff-physically-assaulted-67864-times-year>

National Health Service. (2001). *Violence and Aggression in General Practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/library/media/Violence-and-aggression1.pdf>

NHS Protect. (2015). *Not Part Of The Job Part One: a guide to reporting assaults and violent incidents at work*. NHS Business Services. Retrieved from [http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Documents/SecurityManagement/Not\\_Part\\_of\\_the\\_Job\\_-\\_Part\\_1.pdf](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Documents/SecurityManagement/Not_Part_of_the_Job_-_Part_1.pdf)

Nord, W. & Connell, A. (1993). From Quicksand to Crossroads: An Agnostic Perspective on Conversation. *Organisation Science*, Vol 4(1),108-120.

Nowrouzi, B. & Huynh, V. (2015). Citation analysis of workplace violence: A review of the top 50 annual and lifetime cited articles. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 28, 21-28. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.03.014>

Nursing Times. (2017). *Mental health trust prosecuted after nursing staff stabbed*. Retrieved from <https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/workforce/mental-health-trust-prosecuted-after-nursing-staff-stabbed/7018340.article#.WS2sAgeBvu4.linkedin>

Occupational Health and Safety Administration. (2015). *Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers*. Retrieved from: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3148.pdf>

O'Leary-Kelly, A., Griffin, R., & Glew, D. (1996). Organisation-Motivated Aggression: A Research Framework. *Academy of Management Review*, 21(1),225-253.

Oxford English Dictionary. (2017). [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)

Patterson, B., Leadbetter, D. and Miller, G. (2005). Beyond Zero Tolerance: a varied approach to workplace violence. *British journal of nursing*, 14(14),746-752.

Paterson, B., Leadbetter, D., & Miller, G. (2012). Workplace violence in health and social care as an international problem: A public health perspective on the 'total organisational response'. Not available online.

Perrone, S. (1999). *Violence in the Workplace*. Australian Institute of Criminology. Retrieved from [http://aic.gov.au/media\\_library/publications/rpp/22/rpp022.pdf](http://aic.gov.au/media_library/publications/rpp/22/rpp022.pdf)

Pidgeon, N. and O'Leary, M. (2000). Man-Made Disasters: why technology and organisations (sometimes) fail. *Safety Science*, 34,15-30.

Piquero, N,L., Piquero, A,R., Craig, J,M. and Clipper, S.J. (2013). Assessing research on workplace violence, 2000-2012. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 18(3). 383-394.

Pulver, A. (2018). *94% of women in Hollywood experience sexual harassment or assault, says survey*. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/feb/21/94-of-women-in-hollywood-experience-sexual-harassment-or-assault-says-survey>

Royal College of Nursing. (2008). *Work-related violence*. Royal College of Nursing. Retrieved from [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk).

Renold, E., & Barter, C. (2003). 'Hi, I'm Ramon and I run this place'. In E.A. Stanko (Ed.). *The Meanings of Violence*, London: Routledge

Richards, J. (2003). *Management of Workplace Violence Victims*. World Health Organisation. Retrieved from: [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVmanagementvictims\\_paper.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVmanagementvictims_paper.pdf)

Rippon, T.J. (2000). Aggression and violence in healthcare professions. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 31(2),452-460.

Robehmed, N, (2017). *How Times's Up Could Help Close Hollywood's Pay Gap*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/natalierobehmed/2018/01/17/how-times-up-could-help-close-hollywoods-pay-gap/#45153b4849ef>

Rogers, P., Miller, G., Paterson, B., Bonnett, C., Turner, P., Brett, S., Flynn, K., and Noak, J. (2007). Is Breakaway Training Effective? Examining the evidence and the reality. *The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice*, 2(2),5-12.

Rogers, K. & Kelloway, K. (1997). Violence at Work: Personal and Organisational Outcomes. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*,2(1),63-71. Retrieved from <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/ocp/2/1/63/>

Richards, J. (2003). Management of workplace violence victims. *Joint Programme on Workplace Violence in the Health Sector*. Geneva.

Schat, A., & Kelloway, K. (2000). Effects of perceived control on the outcomes of workplace aggression and violence. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(3),386-402.

Schat, A., & Kelloway, K. (2003). Reducing the adverse consequences of workplace aggression and violence: the buffering effects of organisational support. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 8(2),110-122. DOI: 10.1037/1076 – 8998.8.2.110

Scheer, D., Benighaus, C., Benighaus, L., Renn, O., Gold, S., Röder, B. and Böl, G.F.(2014). The distinction between risk and Hazard: understanding and Use in stakeholder communication. *Risk Analysis*, 34(7),1270-1285.

Securitas. (2014). *Top Security Threats and Management Issues facing Corporate America*. Retrieved from [https://www.asisonline.org/About-ASIS/Who-We-Are/Whats-New/Documents/2015\\_Top\\_Security\\_Threats.pdf](https://www.asisonline.org/About-ASIS/Who-We-Are/Whats-New/Documents/2015_Top_Security_Threats.pdf)

Securitas. (2016). *Top Security Threats and Management Issues facing Corporate America*. Retrieved from <https://www.asisonline.org/About-ASIS/Who-We-Are/Whats-New/Documents/2016%20Top%20Security%20Threats.pdf>

Security Industry Authority. (2015). *SIA Key Priorities for 2015/6 and Beyond*. Retrieved from: <http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Documents/conference/sia-key-priorities-for-2015-16-and-beyond.pdf>

Sharpe, J. (2016). *A Fiery & Furious People: A History of Violence in England*. Random House.

Spector, P.E., Coulter, M.L., Stockwell, H.G., & Matz, M.W. (2007). Perceived violence climate: a new construct and its relationship to workplace physical violence and verbal aggression, and their potential consequences. *Work & Stress*, 21(2), 117-130.

Simonet, S., & Wilde, G. J. (1997). Risk: Perception, acceptance and homeostasis. *Applied Psychology*, 46(3), 235-252.

Stanko, E.A.(2003). Introduction: Conceptualising the meanings of violence. In E.A. Stanko (Ed.) *The Meanings of Violence*, London: Routledge

Stone, R., & Hayes, R.(1995). *Developing Policies Addressing Workplace Violence*. *Employment Relations Today*. 22(3),25-37. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ert.3910220305/pdf>

Stouffer, K., & Varnes, J.(1998). Workplace Violence: Implications for Health Promotion. *Journal of Health Education*. 29(3),140-143.

Supreme Court. (2016). *Press Summary*. Retrieved from: <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2014-0087-press-summary.pdf>

Skills CFA. (2013). *The Prevention and Management of Violence in the Workplace*. Retrieved from <http://www.skillsca.org/images/pdfs/National%20Occupational%20Standards/Industrial%20Relations/2007/The%20Prevention%20and%20Management%20of%20work-related%20violence.pdf>

Talbot, J. and Jakeman, M. (2009). *Security Risk Management Body of Knowledge*. John Wiley & Son. Hoboken: New Jersey.

Taylor, J. & Rew, L.(2010). A Systematic review of the literature: workplace violence in the emergency department. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*,20(7-8),1072-1085. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2010.03342.x>

The Guardian. (2017). *Sussex University failed duty of care to assault victim, inquiry finds*. Retrieved from [https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jan/17/sussex-university-failed-duty-of-care-assault-victim-inquiry?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jan/17/sussex-university-failed-duty-of-care-assault-victim-inquiry?CMP=share_btn_tw)

Tobin, T.J. (2001). Organisational determinants of violence in the workplace. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 6(1), 91-102.

Toch, H. (2017). *Violent men: An inquiry into the psychology of violence*. American Psychological Association.

Tombs, S. (2007). 'Violence', Safety Crimes and Criminology. *British Journal of Criminology*, 47(4),531-550. DOI:10.1093/bjc/azl1095

Trade Unions Congress. (2016). *One in Eight people experience violence at work says TUC*. Retrieved from <https://www.tuc.org.uk/industrial-issues/workplace-issues/health-and-safety/violence/one-eight-people-experience-violence>

UNISON. (2016). *School support staff facing high levels of violence and abuse, says UNISON*. Retrieved from <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2016/06/school-support-staff-facing-high-levels-of-violence-and-abuse-says-unison/>

Vandenbos, G.R. & Bulatao, E.Q. (Eds.).(1996). *Violence on the Job: Identifying Risks and Developing Solutions*. American Psychological Association. Washington: USA

Viitasara, E. and Menckel, E.(2002). Developing a framework for identifying individual and organizational risk factors for the prevention of violence in the health-care sector. *Work*, 19(2),117-123.

Vidal-Martí, C., & Testor, C. P. (2017). Is Chappell and Di Martino's interactive model of workplace violence valid? An article analysing workplace violence towards healthcare professionals in Spain. *Aggression and violent behaviour, 35*, 83-90.

Vineburgh, N., Ursano, R. & Fullerton, C.(2005). Workplace preparedness and resiliency: an integrated response to terrorism. In Bowie, Fisher and Cooper (Eds.). *Workplace Violence: Issues, Trends, Strategies*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing

Waddington, P.A.J., Badger, D and Bull, R.(2005). Appraising the inclusive definition of workplace 'violence'. *British Journal of Criminology, 45(2)*,141-164. DOI: 10.1093/BJC/AZH052

Waddington, P.A.J., Badger, D and Bull, R.(2006). *The Violent Workplace*. Devon,UK:Willan Publishing

Warrell, H., & Plimmer, G. (2016). *Prisons crisis likely to last for months, warns Truss: Justice secretary says 'long standing' issues led to outbreaks of violence*. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/197f65e8-c615-11e6-9043-7e34c07b46ef>

Wassell, J.(2009). Workplace violence intervention effectiveness: A systematic literature review. *Safety Science 47(8)*,1049-1055. Retrieved from doi:10.1016/j.ssci.2008.12.001

Webster, C. and Hucker, S. (2007). *Violence Risk Assessment and Management*. Chichester, England: Jon Wiley & Sons Ltd

Weick, K. (1998). Foresights of Failure: An Appreciation of Barry Turner. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, 6(2)*, 72-75.

Wells, J., & Bowers, L. (2002). How prevalent is violence towards nurses working in general hospitals in the UK? *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 39(3)*,230-240.

Westwood, R. (2003). Economies of violence: an autobiographical account. *Culture and Organization, 9(4)*,275-293.

World Health Organisation. (2002). *Framework Guidelines for addressing workplace violence in the health sector*. International Labour Office: Geneva Retrieved from:

[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVguidelinesEN.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/interpersonal/en/WVguidelinesEN.pdf?ua=1)

Zelnick, J. R., Slayter, E., Flanzbaum, B., Butler, N. G., Domingo, B., Perlstein, J., & Trust, C. (2013). Part of the job? Workplace violence in Massachusetts social service agencies. *Health & social work, 38*(2), 75-85. DOI: 10.1093/HSW/HLT 007

Zollers, F.E. and Callahan, E.S. (2003). Workplace Violence and Security: Are There Lessons for Peacemaking? *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law, 36*, 449. Retrieved from: <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/vantl36&div=27&id=&page=>

# Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview schedule

## **Safe Spaces: Professional perspectives on managing violence in organisations**

### **Interview schedule v2**

#### **Demographics**

- Can you tell me a bit about your professional background in relation to the management of work related violence?
- Current responsibilities
- Types of organisation experienced

#### **Organisational perceptions of violence risk in relation to other risk areas**

How do you think that most organisations you have experienced view the risks of violence in the workplace?

- Definition?
- As a risk?
- In relation to other risks?
- Levels of concern?
- Sources of advice / information?
- Strategy?

#### **Risk management models and methods for work related violence**

Can you talk me through the models and methods that are applied to reduce the risks?

- Models used?
- Pre event?
- During event?
- Post event?
- How is risk assessed?
- Who is responsible?

#### **Strengths and weaknesses of the current approaches from a risk management perspective**

How do you measure the effectiveness of the approaches that are taken?

- Strengths of the approaches?
- Weaknesses?
- Challenges?
- Most effective measures?
- Areas for improvement



What do you see as the biggest area that needs improvement in the management of violence at work?  
Would a formal risk approach help?

## Appendix 2: Initial participant introduction letter

Researcher: Richard Diston  
Email: [up756684@myport.ac.uk](mailto:up756684@myport.ac.uk)  
07469 894531  
Research Supervisor: Dr. Alison Wakefield  
Email: [Alison.wakefield@port.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.wakefield@port.ac.uk)

Dear Potential Participant

### **RE: Professional Doctorate research into the organizational management of violence risks**

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study on the above topic, which I am undertaking as part of my Professional Doctorate in Security & Risk Management at the University of Portsmouth, UK.

This research will seek to re-examine the way that workplace violence has been understood before proceeding to investigate the ways that violence is perceived and managed at an organisational level. These methods and models will be assessed, leading onto a discussion on whether a formal risk management model may provide a more effective solution.

It will add to the body of knowledge on violence management by examining the issue from an organizational and managerial perspective. In this respect it will both inform future practice, and draw out the specific issues associated with managing violence risks in a range of occupational environments. Specifically, the research will be based on the following four objectives:

- Examine how practitioners view the risk of violence in relation to other organisational risks
- Identify which risk management models and methods are in use for violence management
- Examine these for strengths and weaknesses from a risk perspective
- Discover whether a formal risk management approach for violence risks would be considered beneficial

It is intended to gather the perspectives of a number of interviewees from a range of occupational environments where violence is perceived to be a higher risk and then present a description of these issues through their eyes: there are therefore no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

I am seeking 25 interviewees who would be willing to participate in a telephone or Skype interview of less than an hour. Any calling costs will be borne by myself. Interviews will be completely anonymous and confidential, and the anonymity of your organisation will be preserved. The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. Participants will be permitted to withdraw from the research at any time prior to the analysis of the data. Included with this letter is an information sheet that explains

more about the research and the processes employed, and a consent form which you will be asked to return if you are willing to take part.

I very much hope you will be interested in participating. By way of a thank you, I would be pleased to share a copy of the final research report with you. If you have any specific queries or concerns please feel free to get back to me or my research supervisor, Dr Alison Wakefield ([alison.wakefield@port.ac.uk](mailto:alison.wakefield@port.ac.uk)). I would be very grateful if you could confirm with me via my email address above if you are willing to take part in the research.

Yours sincerely

Richard Diston

## Appendix 3: Letter of ethical approval



Ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk

20<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Richard Diston

<b>Study Title:</b>	<b>'Tranquil waters' or Pandora's Box? Perspectives on workplace violence as a strategic organisational risk</b>
<b>Ethics Committee reference:</b>	<b>16/17: 23</b>

Thank you for submitting your documents for ethical review. The Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation, revised in the light of any conditions set, subject to the general conditions set out in the attached document.

### ***The Ethics Committee provides a favourable ethical opinion***

There is no need to submit any further evidence to the Ethics Committee; the favourable opinion has been granted with the assumption of compliance

The favourable opinion of the EC does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including University of Portsmouth, prior to the start of the study.**Documents reviewed**

The documents reviewed by The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Document	Version	Date
Application Form	2	06/01/2017
Participant Information Sheet	2	06/01/2017
Consent Form	2	06/01/2017
Invitation Letter	2	06/01/2017
Interview Schedule	2	06/01/2017

### **Statement of compliance**

The Committee is constituted in accordance with the Governance Arrangements set out by the University of Portsmouth.

### **After ethical review**

Reporting and other requirements

The enclosed document acts as a reminder that research should be conducted with integrity and gives detailed guidance on reporting requirements for studies with a favourable opinion, including:

- Notifying substantial amendments
- Notification of serious breaches of the protocol
- Progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

### **Feedback**

You are invited to give your view of the service that you have received from the Faculty Ethics Committee. If you wish to make your views known please contact the administrator [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)

<b>Please quote this number on all correspondence – 16/17: 23</b>
---

Yours sincerely and wishing you every success in your research

Chair

Dr Jane Winstone

Email: [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)

## Appendix 4: Ethics review checklist UPR16

### FORM UPR16

#### Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Research Degrees Operational Handbook for more information)



<b>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</b>		<b>Student ID:</b>	UP756684	
<b>PGRS Name:</b>	Richard Diston			
<b>Department:</b>	ICJS	<b>First Supervisor:</b>	Alison Wakefield	
<b>Start Date:</b> (or progression date for Prof Doc students)				
<b>Study Mode and Route:</b>	Part-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MPhil <input type="checkbox"/>	MD <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/>	PhD <input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Doctorate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Title of Thesis:</b>	'Tranquil waters' or Pandora's Box? Perspectives on workplace violence as a strategic organisational risk
<b>Thesis Word Count:</b> (excluding ancillary data)	48357

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

#### UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:

(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: <http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/>)

a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

#### Candidate Statement:

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

<b>Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):</b>	16/17: 23
---	-----------

If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

<b>Signed (PGRS):</b>		<b>Date:</b> 26/7/2018
-----------------------	--	------------------------

## Appendix 5: Interview participant consent form

9/9/16 v2

**Study Title: 'Tranquil waters' or Pandora's Box? Perspectives on workplace violence as a strategic organisational risk**

**Name of Researcher:** .....Richard Diston.....

**Please initial each box**

1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 9/9/2016 (version 1) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason up to the point when the data is analysed, after which I may not be withdrawn.	
3	I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Portsmouth or from regulatory authorities. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data	
4	I agree to my interview being audio recorded unless I specify otherwise	
5	I agree to being quoted verbatim	
6	I agree to the data I contribute being retained for future, Research Ethics Committee approved, research	
7	I agree that my data will be anonymised. Direct quotations may be attributed to me with my approval.	
8	I agree to take part in the above study.	

Name of Participant:

Date:

Signature:

Name of Person taking consent : Richard Diston

Date:

Signature:

When completed: 1 for participant; 1 for researcher's file;