



## Chapter 9

# Organizations as Instruments of Domination





# Organizations Are Used As Tools

- ✦ Instruments of domination emphasizes the ways in which organizations are used as tools for exploitation and domination.

# Not Intended?

- ☀ "The negative impact that organizations often have on their employees or their environment or that multinationals have on patterns of inequality and world economic development is not necessarily an intended one."




# Descriptions?

- ✦ Alienation
- ✦ Repression
- ✦ Imposing values, compliance
- ✦ Maintenance of power
- ✦ Exploitation
- ✦ Divide and rule
- ✦ Discrimination
- ✦ Corporate interest







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# Canadian Workplace Fatalities

☀ 5 deaths a day – 1993-2005





# What is workplace violence?


- ✦ *It is the attempted or actual exercise of any intentional physical force that causes or may cause physical injury to a worker.*

- ✦ *It also includes any threats which give a worker reasonable grounds to believe he or she is at risk of physical injury.*



# The risk of workplace violence is greater in jobs that involve:

- ✦ Handling cash
- ✦ Protecting or securing valuables
- ✦ Transporting people and goods
- ✦ A mobile workplace (such as a vehicle)
- ✦ Public or community contact
- ✦ Working with unstable or volatile people
- ✦ Working alone, or with just a few people
- ✦ Working late nights or very early mornings



# The risk of violence is greater in workplaces that involve

- ✦ Health care
- ✦ Social services
- ✦ Retail
- ✦ Hospitality
- ✦ Financial institutions
- ✦ Education
- ✦ Transportation
- ✦ Police, security and corrections

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# ⚙️ Convictions under the Employment Standards Act

★ [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/report\\_card/rc\\_2.html](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/report_card/rc_2.html)

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# Engagement

- ☀ Highly Engaged/Fully committed
- ☀ Moderately engaged/committed
- ☀ Disengaged but grudgingly complying
- ☀ Disengaged/dragging feet
- ☀ Highly engaged/actively opposed



# Element of Domination

- ★ Morgan suggests organizations are often used as instruments of domination that further the selfish interests of elites at the expense of others, and there is an element of domination in all organizations. Morgan continues, reviewing significant theoretical perspectives on domination, including Weber (1947), who was particularly concerned by the trend towards increasing bureaucratization and rationalization, which he saw as a very great threat to the freedom of the human spirit and the values of liberal democracy.



# Subtle Processes?

- ★ Morgan argues that the real value of these perspectives is that they show how even the most rational and democratic forms of organization can result in modes of domination where certain people acquire and sustain a commanding influence over others, often through subtle processes of socialization and belief.



# Power is Firmly Concentrated

- ✦ Multinationals usually control a network of subsidiary companies. Power is firmly concentrated in the hands of senior management.
- ✦ Morgan suggests that of all multinationals come closest to realizing Max Weber's worst fears with regards to how bureaucratic organizations can become totalitarian regimes serving the interests of elites, where those in control are able to exercise power that is "practically unshatterable."



# Sports Shoes

- ★ When the costs of production began to rise in the United States and Europe, and workers organized and exercised collective bargaining power, sports shoe companies relocated their factories or sought subcontractors in Asia where wages were much lower and where systematic repression of labour movements promised a 'docile' workforce.
- ★ Companies like Nike and Reebok began to subcontract to medium and small-scale companies in East Asia, particularly Taiwan and South Korea.



# Sports Shoes

- ✦ It is no accident that these two countries became the world's two largest shoe manufacturing countries at a time when political authoritarianism and repression of the workers' movement was at its height. However, once the independent labour movements began to gain strength, and workers successfully fought for higher wages and better working conditions, sports shoe production once again shifted overseas, this time moving to countries with still cheaper labour costs, such as Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and China.



# Sports Shoes

- ✦ In these countries sports shoe multinationals made mega-profits by exploiting the massive gap between production costs (particularly labour costs) and the prices at which the shoes could be sold in the European and North American markets. Ironically, different brands of sports shoes are often produced in the same factory, side by side, despite ruthless market competition and the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on advertising in the United States and Europe.

# Sports Shoes

- ★ The workers work 11 hours a day, in violation of both Chinese labour law and the Nike Code of Conduct. In addition to this arduous schedule, all must work overtime. If they refuse they can be fined \$1.20 - \$3.61 or docked the entire day's pay.
- ★ Workers only get 2-4 days off every month. This violates both China's Labour Law and Nike's Code, which states that workers are entitled to at least one day of rest every week. After working at the factory for one year, workers are given an annual leave of five days, and after two years this becomes seven days.



# Power

- ★ “Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved and it also influences who gets what, when, and how.
- ★ Power is one of the most important things of the political systems and it is been used in many ways.

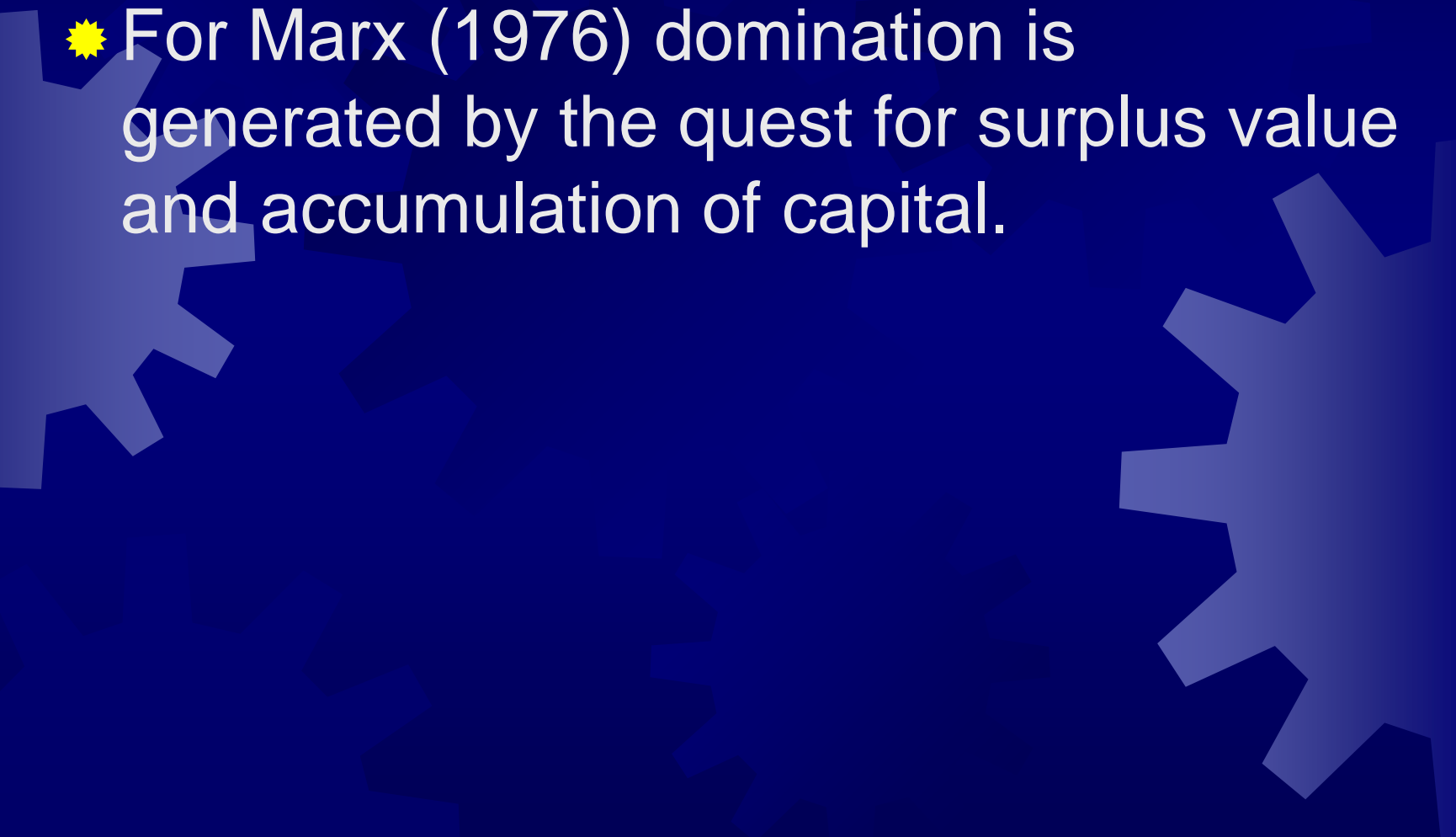


# Scarcity and Dependence

- ★ Morgan's text mentions that controlling scarce resources plays an important role in determining who has ultimate authority and power. In addition, the statement "scarcity and dependence are the keys to resource power"



# Marx

- ✦ For Marx (1976) domination is generated by the quest for surplus value and accumulation of capital.
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# Strengths

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# Strengths

- ★ **Strengths** include the fact that the metaphor draws our attention to the double-edged nature of rationality. For example, actions that are rational for increasing profitability may have a damaging effect on employees' health; what is rational for one organization may be catastrophic for another

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# Limitations

- ✦ As to limitations the metaphor can add to the polarization between social groups if domination is interpreted as an aim rather than an unintended result.
- ✦ It can also lead to blaming individual decision makers rather than seeing that the "logic" of the whole system needs to be addressed.
- ✦ It can also be seen as too extreme.



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# The Land of Domination

