



# Asia Pacific Academy

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## for Psychosocial Factors at Work



The Asia Pacific Centre for  
**Work Health  
and Safety**

Macro to Micro Perspectives on Healthy  
Vital Work in the Asia Pacific

## **Psychosocial Risks at Work in a Capitalist Economy and the Role of Psychosocial Safety Climate**

**Professor Maureen Dollard,**  
**University of South Australia,**  
**University of Nottingham.**

Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health & Safety

A WHO Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health



# Outline

1. State of Affairs
2. Values, Political Economy of Work Stress
3. Causes of Work Stress; PSC Theory
4. Where does PSC come From
5. The Practical Value of PSC- Human & Economic Case
6. How to Build PSC
7. Future Research Agenda



Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health & Safety  
A WHO Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health  
University of South Australia, Adelaide

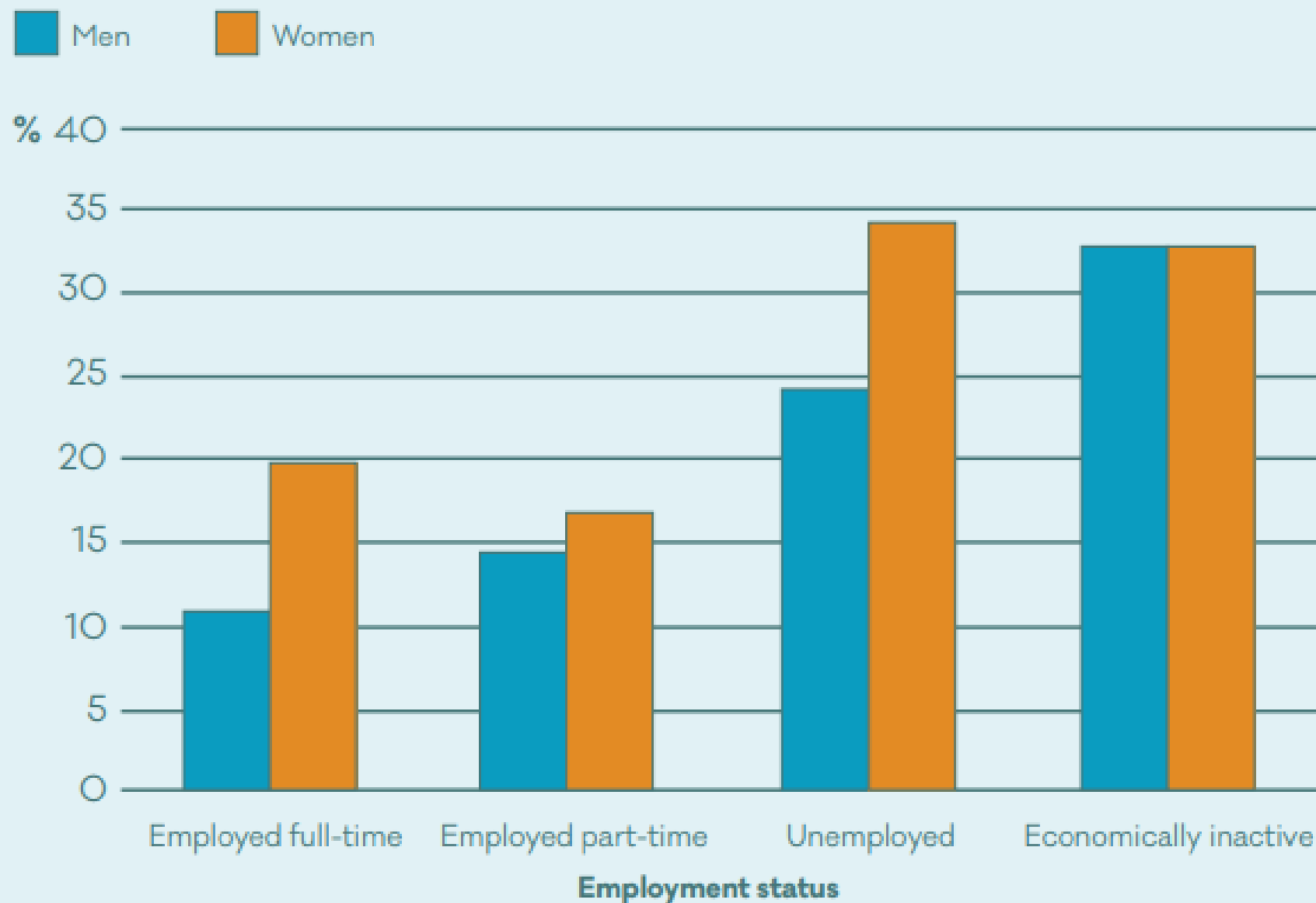
# Mental Health Costs

- The scale of mental ill-health in society is being described by some as a crisis.
- According to the WHO (2016) the burden of depression and other mental health conditions is on the rise globally.
- Mental health problems are a major contributor to the overall disease burden worldwide accounting for 21.2% of years lived with disability (Vos et al, 2013).
- 300 million of all ages suffer from depression ---a main contributor to overall disease burden -- leading cause of disability (WHO, 2016).
- Calls for national policy responses to tackle the rising burden of mental health have come from the WHO and the ILO.

# Mental Health Costs

- In Australia 2014-15, almost one in five people had a mental health or behavioural condition = suicide is the leading cause of death for working age (ABS, 2015).
- Australia has the second highest level of antidepressant use in the OECD (OECD, 2015).
- Only 52% of Australian workers consider their workplace to be mentally healthy; 56% believe that their most senior leaders value their mental health.
- Productivity Commission 2018 Inquiry to consider the role of mental health in supporting economic participation, enhancing productivity and economic growth





**Figure 3b: Prevalence of common mental health problems by employment status**

Stansfeld, S., Clark, C., Bebbington, P., King, M., Jenkins, R., & Hinchliffe, S. (2016). Chapter 2: Common mental disorders. In S. McManus, P. Bebbington, R. Jenkins, & T. Brugha (Eds.), *Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014*. Leeds: NHS Digital.

# Frontline Healthcare Workers

“I’ve been nursing for nearly 40 years and I think that the pressure over those years outweighs the rewards, but it is still a rewarding career, and its very collegial. But there’s certainly one day out of ten that I would say; ‘jee, I feel really great today, I’ve had a lovely day, and my patients really loved me, and thanked me,’ and I’ll have nine days out of ten where I’ll say; ‘I felt pressured today, I felt unsafe at times, I felt overworked, and my patients were lashing out at me..’ and I’m the person that takes the brunt of that home at the end of the day..”

• **Full title:** “The dynamic interplay of physical and psychosocial safety in frontline healthcare workplaces in Australia and Malaysia” **Investigators:** Prof Maureen Dollard; Dr Michelle Tuckey; Prof Peter Chen; Prof Bill Runciman; Dr Sharon Morton; Ms Mardi Webber, and; Dr Awang Idris; **Participating Organisations and Groups:** University of South Australia; SafeWork SA; University of Malaya; Southern Adelaide Local Health Network; Flinders Medical Centre, and; Calvary Health Care Group.

# Political economy and work conditions

- Developing economies moving to extreme capitalism (neoliberalism)
- The driving beat is economic rationalism; the drummers the economists!
- Competition, relentless demands for increased profits, performance and productivity coupled with reduced resources → workers poor quality work conditions
- Costs to workers → mental and physical ill-health
- Costs to organisations → high rates of sickness absence and reduced performance
- Costs to society → loss of potential labour supply and high rates of unemployment, workers compensation.

# I think that Work stress is an infinite problem under extreme capitalism (unequal power, unfair resourcing)

*Politics of the Mind, Marxism and Mental Health*, Iain Ferguson (2017) highlights the link between the economic and political system we live under – capitalism – and the extremely high levels of distress evident in the world today.

Even the Pope is talking about the perils of capitalism-  
poverty, climate! (inclusive growth for all)

Capitalism and controlling climate change incompatible

*Naomi Klein 'This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs The Climate 2014*

“the fiction of perpetual growth on a finite planet”

Rob Nixon (November 6, 2014). *The New York Times*



## On judging the US by its GDP

GDP is the total market value of all goods and services produced in an economy in a country in a year.

Robert F Kennedy

Remarks at the University of Kansas March 18, 1968

It does not include the beauty of our poetry, or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

[maureen.dollard@unisa.edu.au](mailto:maureen.dollard@unisa.edu.au)



# Australia Disparity between Wages and Productivity

Productivity and real wages (March 2002 = 100)

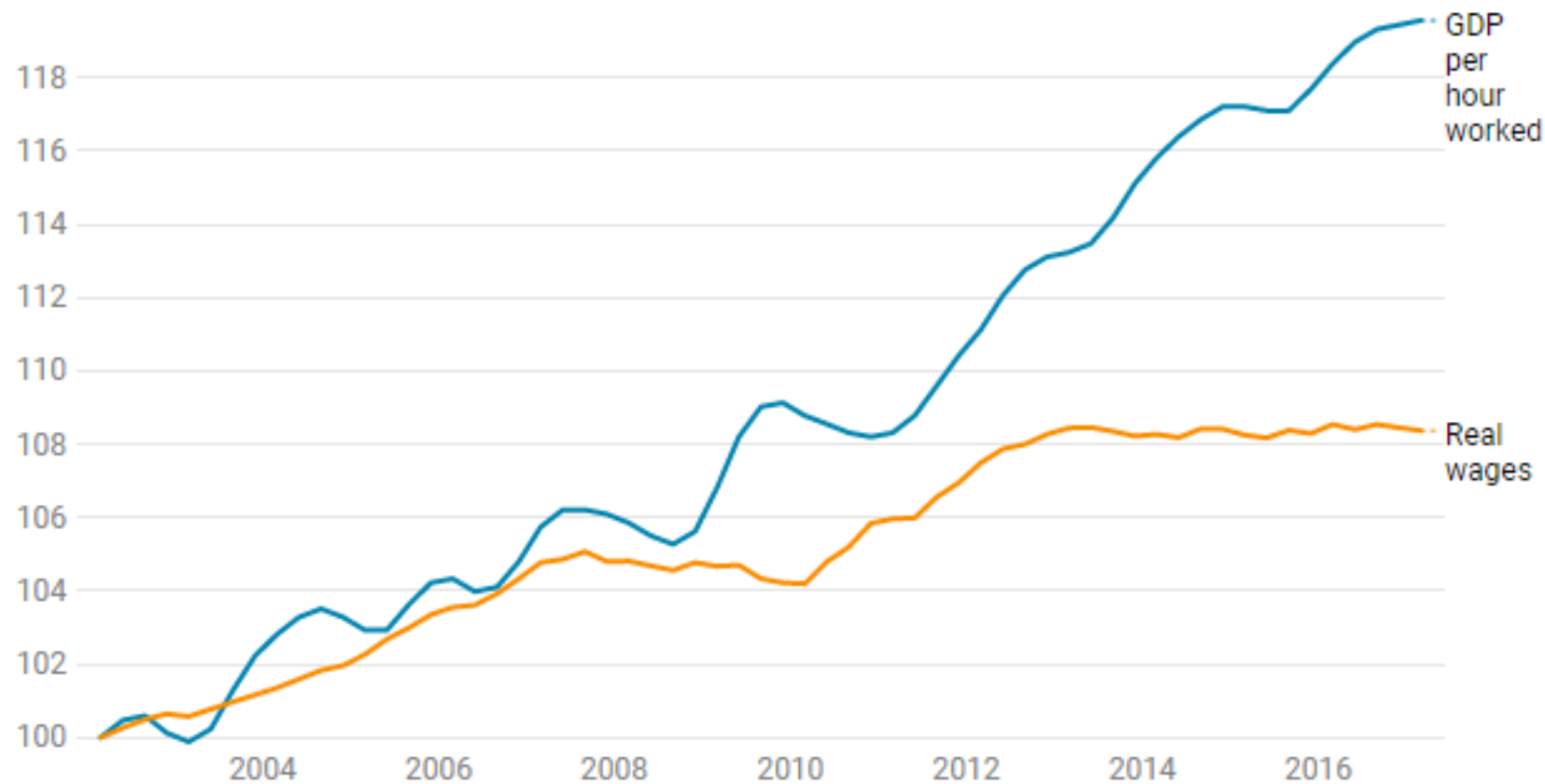


Chart: Greg Jericho • Source: ABS 5206.0, 6345.0, RBA • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

- Decline in Unions
- Difficult to strike
- Fair Work Australia
- Cuts to penalty rates
- Underpaying migrant workers
- Executive Salaries



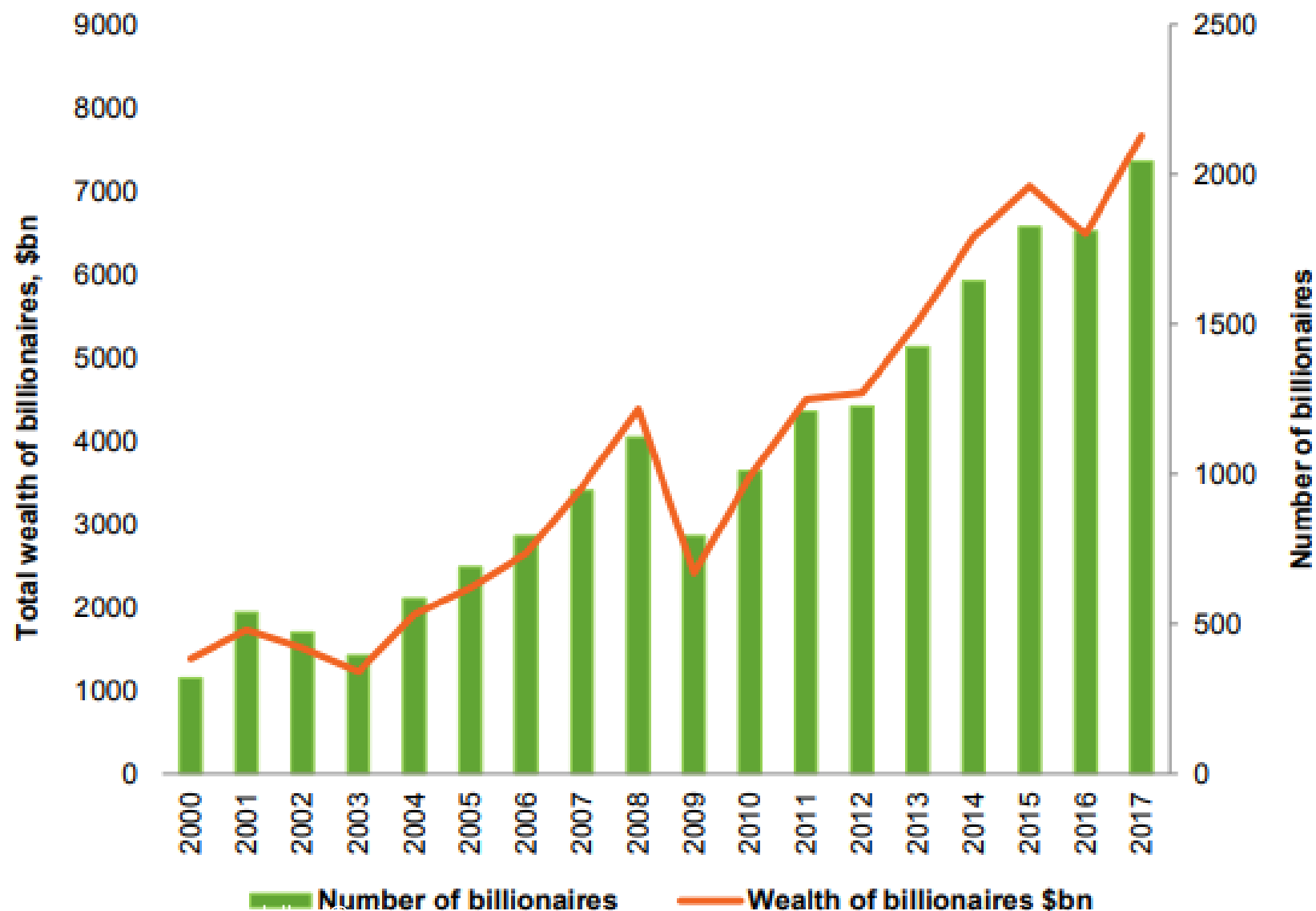
## REWARD WORK, NOT WEALTH

To end the inequality crisis, we must build an economy for



42 billionaires own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world's population – 3.7 billion people

Figure 1: Number and total wealth of billionaires, 2000–17



Mulhall (1996) sounds a salutary reminder that  
“the discourse on stress, or indeed anything  
else does not arise in a political or ideological  
vacuum” p. 456.

# Work Stress and Values

## Values that underlie views of occupational stress

- (a) a humanistic-idealistic desire for a good society and a good working life;
- (b) a drive for health and well-being;
- (c) a belief in worker participation, influence, and control at the individual level; and
- (d) economic interest in competitiveness and profits of the business organisation and the economic system" (Levi, 1990, p. 1144).

Placed within this framework occupational stress is a social and political problem as much as a health problem (Levi, 1990).



# Psychosocial Safety Climate

- Psychosocial safety climate addresses value conflict: concerns the value and priority given to worker psychological health vs productivity imperatives
- Psychosocial safety climate (PSC) offer a point of resistance to capitalist pressures.
- Pro-social options embodied in high PSC organisations that value worker psychological health will lead to better quality work.

# Psychosocial Safety Climate

*Psychosocial safety climate (PSC)* refers to shared perceptions regarding policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety

Addresses competing Values—a balance of productivity and worker health

Evidence based tool that predicts psychosocial risk and psychological health

# PSC-12 Measure

## **Management commitment**

1. In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' psychological health
2. Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employees' psychological status is raised
3. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment

## **Priority**

4. Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organization
5. Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance
6. Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity

## **Communication**

7. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which effect me
8. Information about workplace psychological well-being is always brought to my attention by my manager/supervisor
9. My contributions to resolving occupational health and safety concerns in the organization are listened to

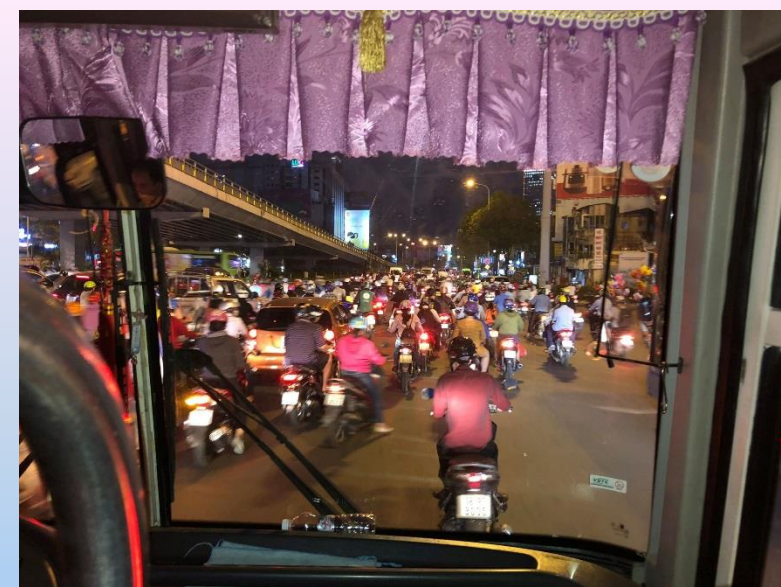
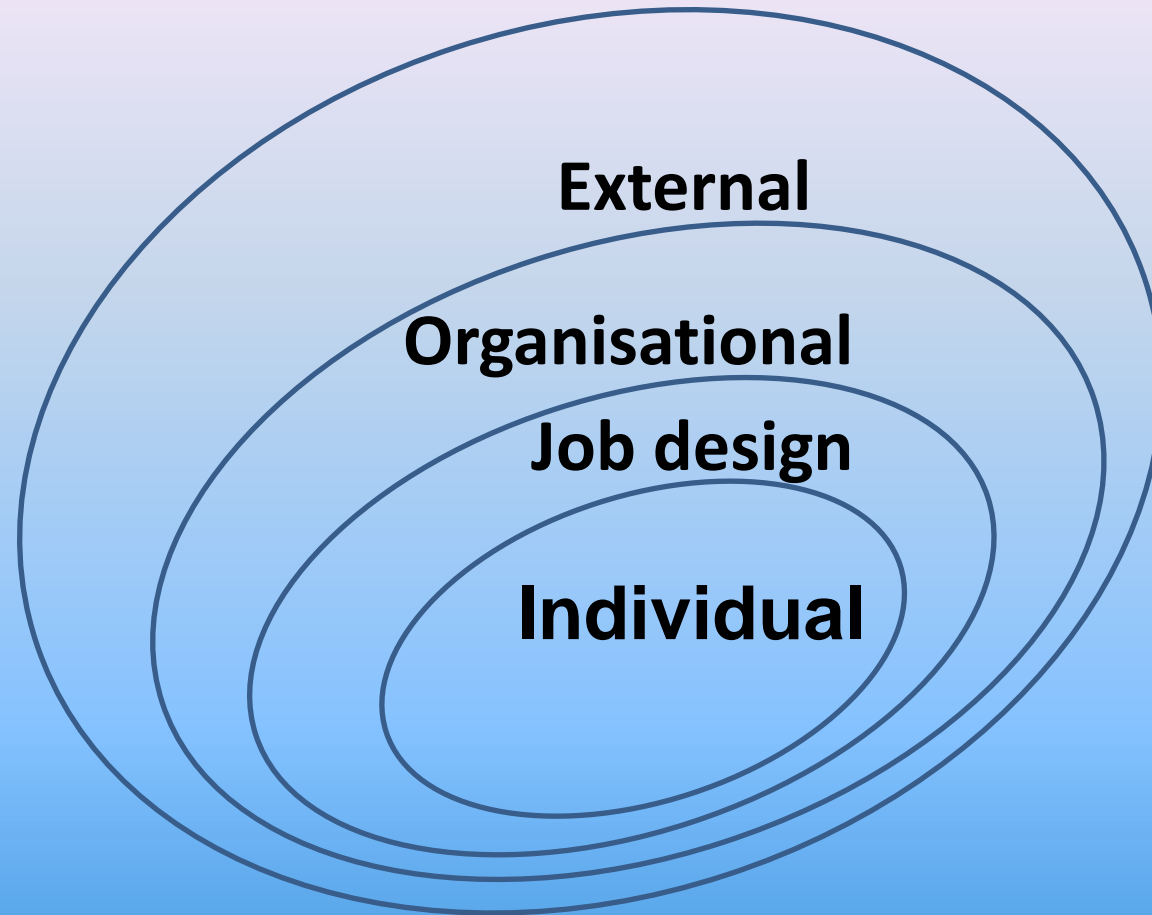
## **Participation and involvement**

10. Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety occurs with employees', unions and health and safety representatives in my workplace
11. Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters
12. In my organization, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organization



### 3. The Cause of the Causes of Work Stress; PSC Theory





Layers of influence on worker health



# Multi-level model of psychosocial factors at work (Dollard, 2013)

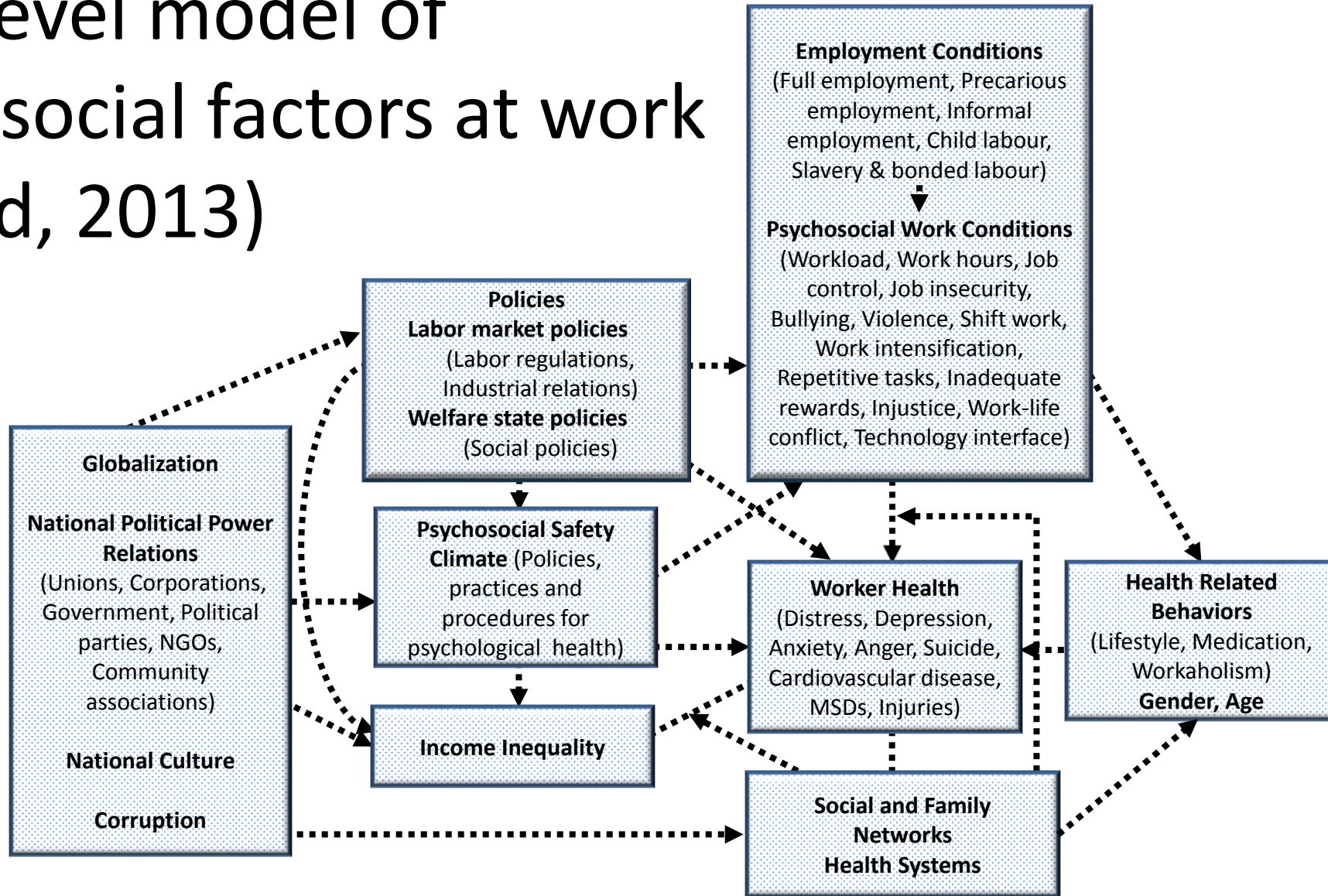


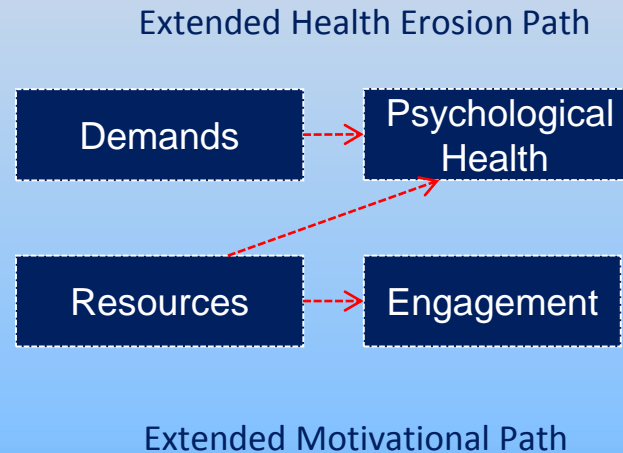
Fig. 1.3

Dollard, M.F., Shimazu, A., Nordin, R. Bin, Brough, P., Tuckey, M.R (Eds.), (2014). *Psychosocial Factors at Work in the Asia Pacific* Dordrecht; Springer International Publishing. 978-94-017-8974-5

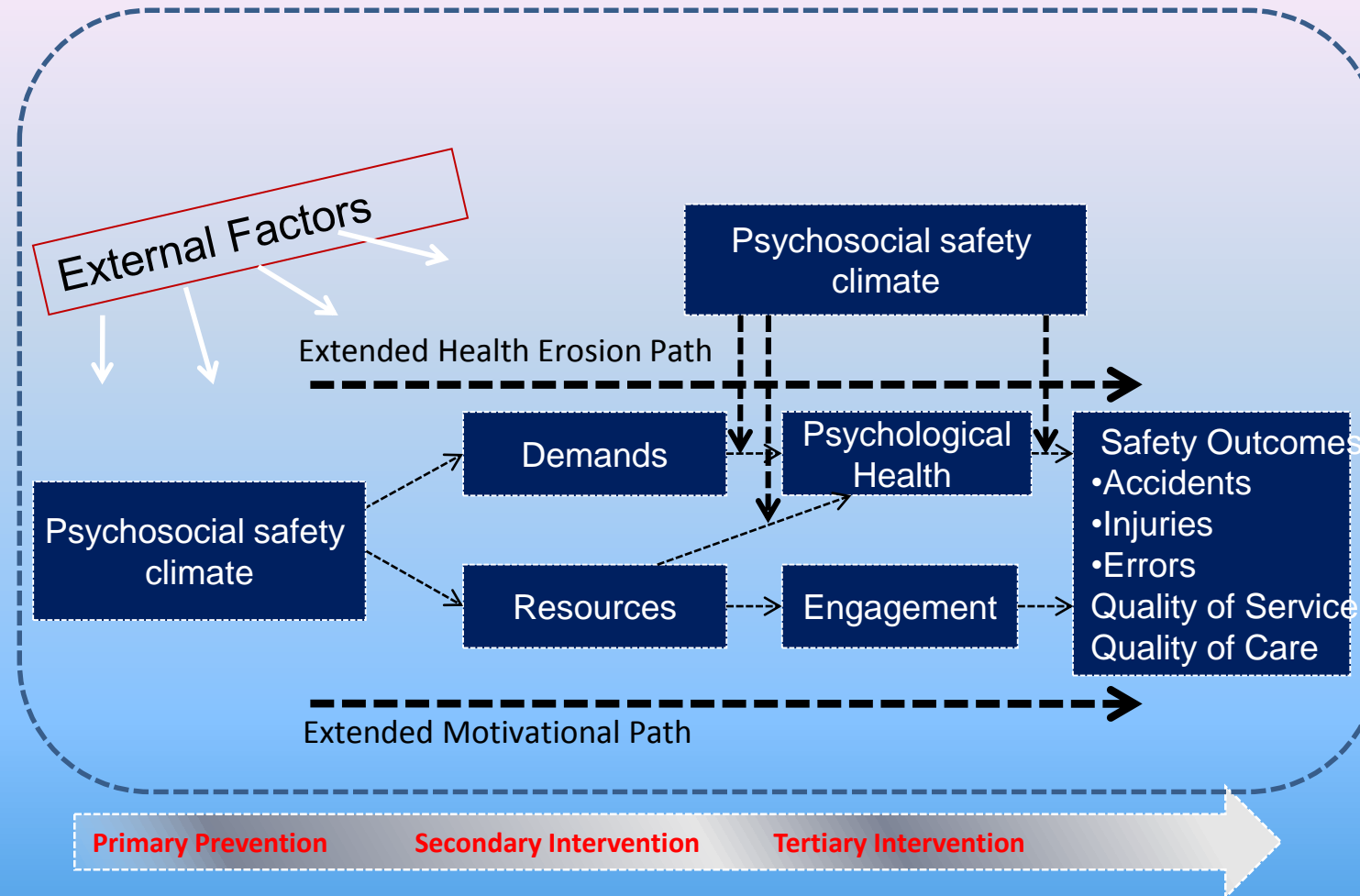
# 3. The Cause of the Causes of Work Stress; PSC Theory

?

Where does  
job design come from



Job Demands-Resources Model  
Demerouti, Bakker et al., 2001



*Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* (2011), 00, 1–7. © Cambridge University Press 2011  
doi:10.1017/S2045796011000588

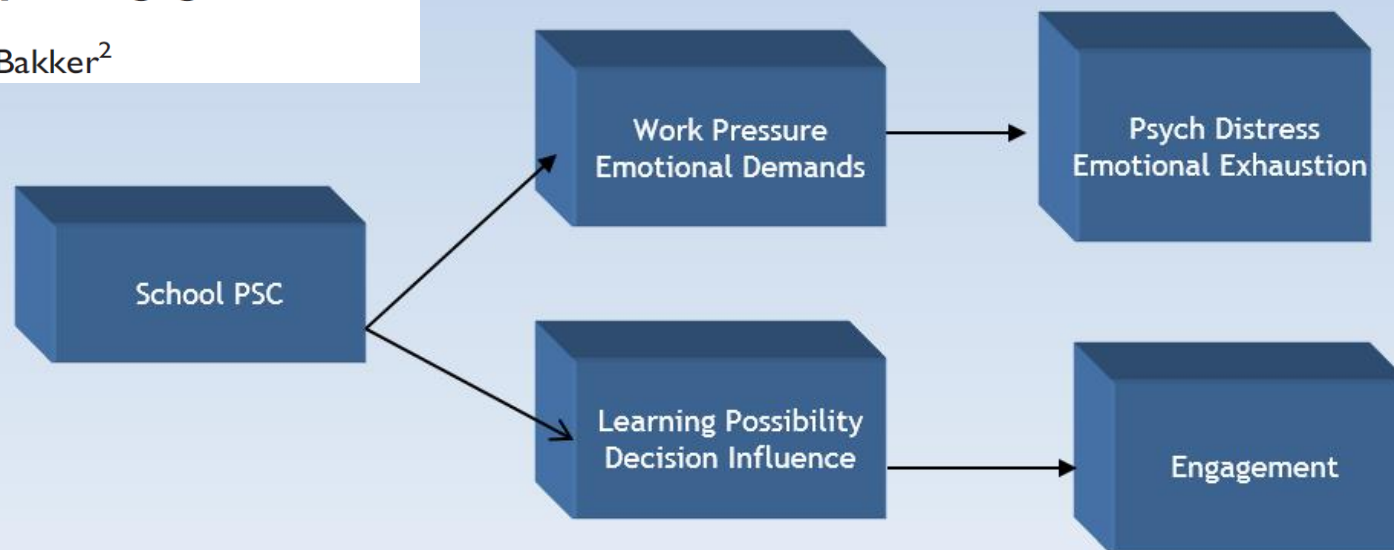
EDITORIAL

# Psychosocial safety climate: a multilevel theory of work stress in the health and community service sector

M. F. Dollard\* and W. McTernan

# Psychosocial safety climate as a precursor to conducive work environments, psychological health problems, and employee engagement

Maureen F. Dollard<sup>1\*</sup> and Arnold B. Bakker<sup>2</sup>



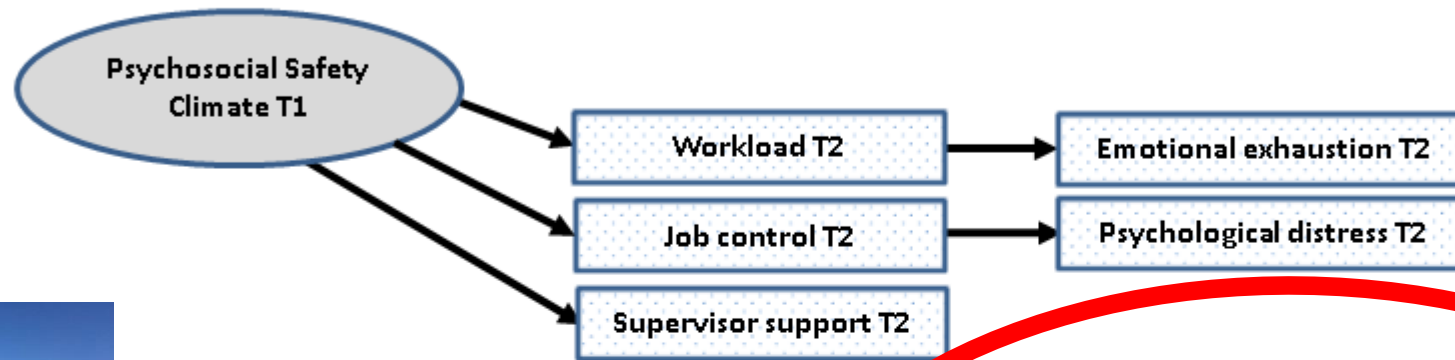
Controls for Time 1 Dependent measures

N = 262 Time1; N = 196, Time 2  
18 schools

PSC predicts future  
work conditions,  
psychological health  
and engagement



# Psychosocial safety climate as an antecedent of work characteristics and psychological strain: A multilevel model



Sample T1  
(N = 202)

Sample T2  
(N = 163)

- Independent samples matched by work unit
- Time 1 → Time 2 24 months

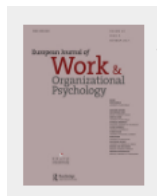
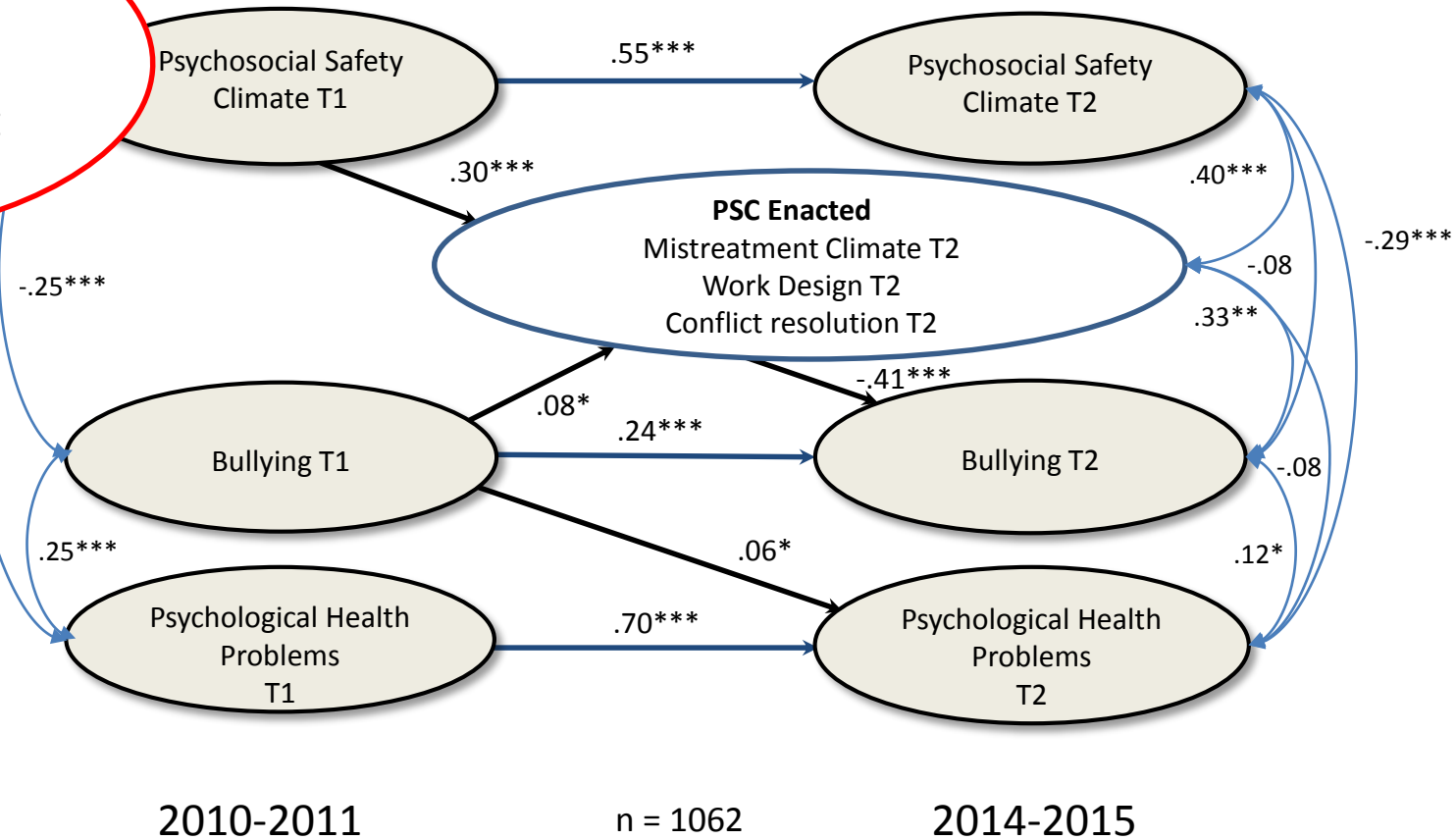
## Main effects and mediation model

(2012). Maureen F. Dollard, Tessa Opie, Sue Lenthall, John Wakerman, Sabina Knight, Sandra Dunn, Greg Rickard & Martha MacLeod

PSC predicts future work conditions, psychological health and engagement in other workers



PSC predicts future pro-social procedures (job design, social relational) that prevent bullying



European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology >

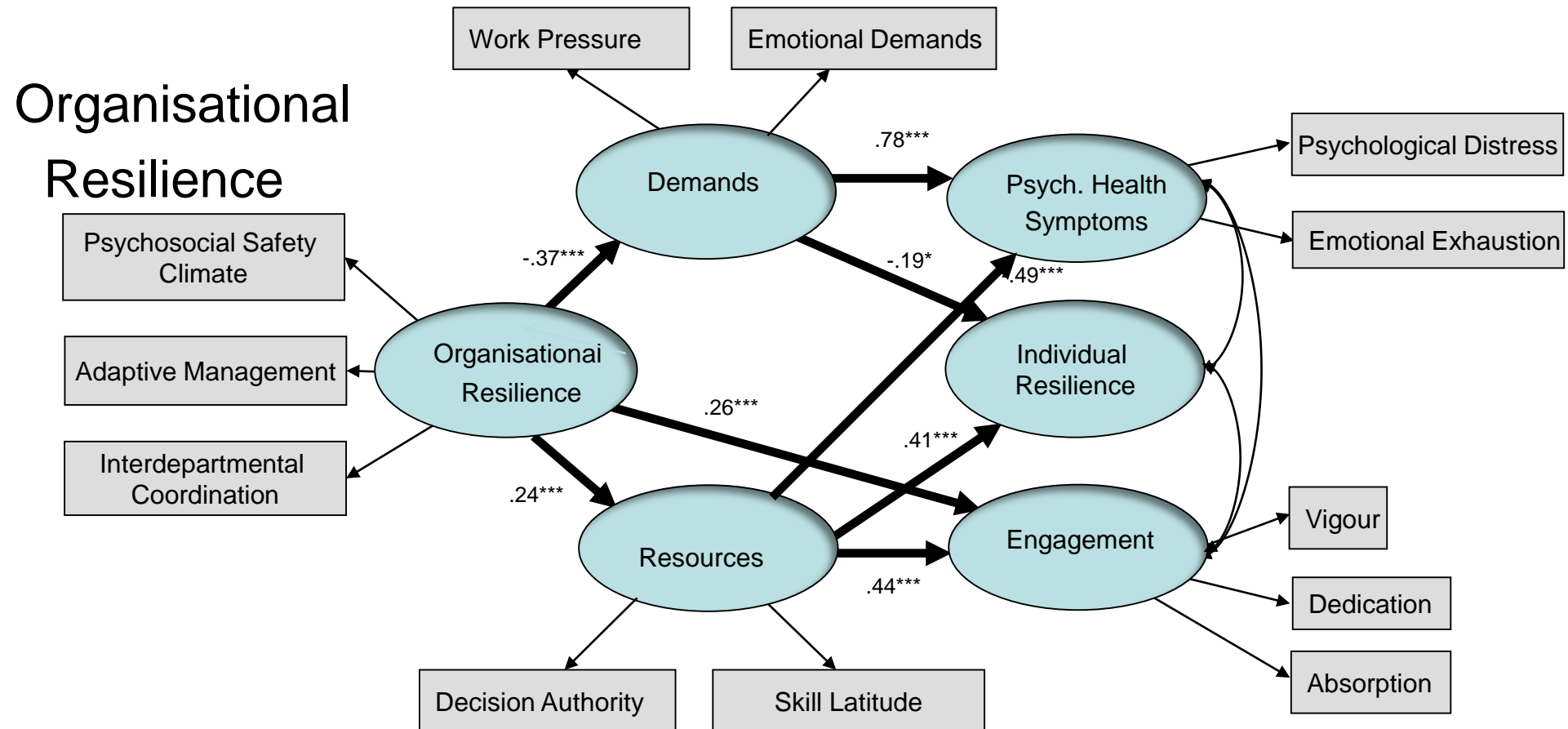
Original Articles

## Psychosocial safety climate (PSC) and enacted PSC for workplace bullying and psychological health problem reduction

Maureen F. Dollard, Christian Dormann, Michelle R. Tuckey & Jordi Escartín

Received 14 April 2017; Accepted 20 May 2017; Published online 24 October 2017

# Resilient Organisations, Resilient Individuals

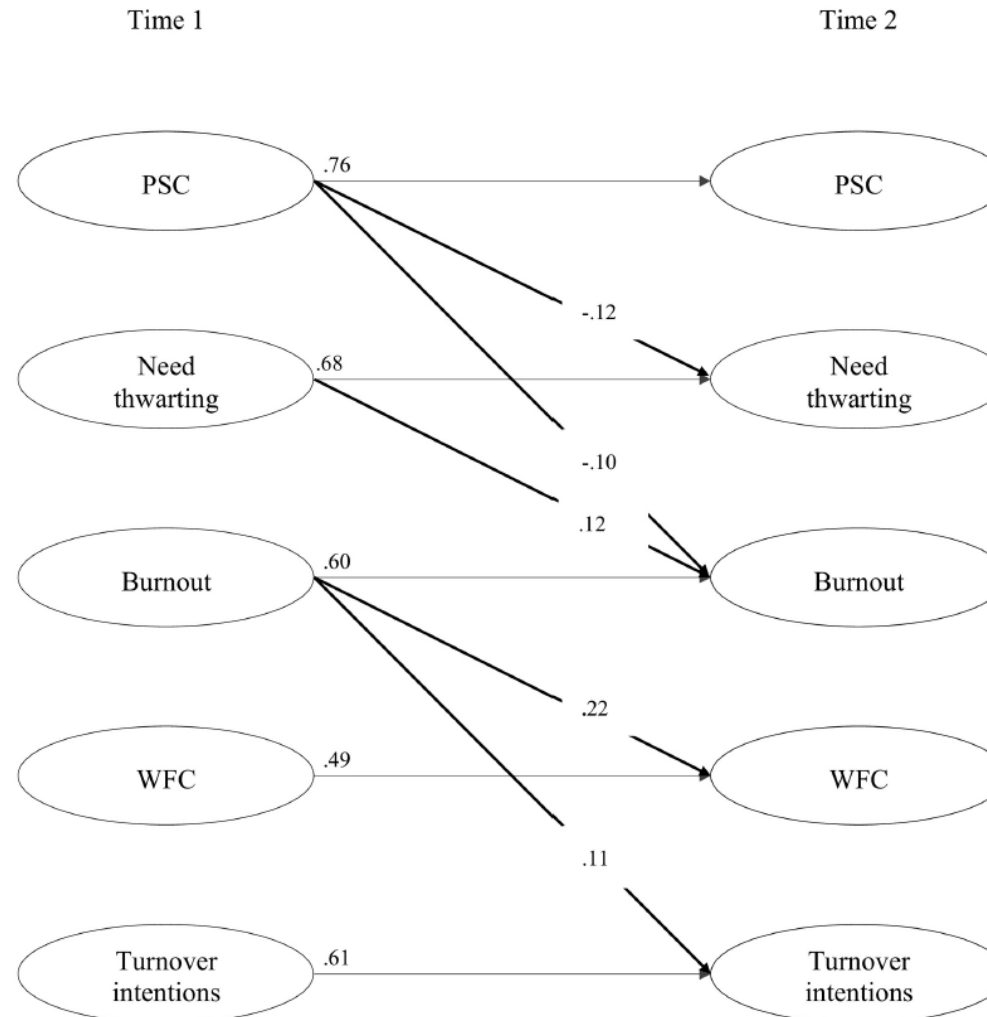


# Leveraging psychosocial safety climate to prevent ill-being: The mediating role of psychological need thwarting


Tiphaine Huyghebaert, Nicolas Gillet, Claude Fernet, Fadi-Joseph Lahiani, Evelyne Fouquereau

Needs  
*autonomy, competence,  
and relatedness*

18 French healthcare centers  
A total of 910 nurses



Article  
**Predicting Circulatory Diseases from Psychosocial  
Safety Climate: A Prospective Cohort Study  
from Australia**

Harry Becher <sup>1</sup>, Maureen F. Dollard <sup>1,2,\*</sup>, Peter Smith <sup>3,4,5</sup> and Jian Li <sup>6</sup> 

PSC predicts  
circulatory disorders  
over 5 years

**Table 3.** Predicting Circulatory Diseases at Time 2.

Models	Variables	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Odds Ratio	Low CI	High CI
Model 2	Constant	−3.08	0.98	9.81	0.00	0.05	0.01	0.31
	Age Time 1	0.04	0.01	12.99	0.00	1.04	1.02	1.06
	Education Time 1	−0.13	0.06	4.84	0.03	0.87	0.78	0.99
	Effort-Reward Imbalance Time 1	0.51	0.47	1.18	0.28	1.66	0.66	4.18
	ICO Job Strain Time 1	−0.47	0.45	1.08	0.30	0.62	0.26	1.51
	Psychosocial Safety Climate Time 1	−0.02	0.01	4.34	0.04	0.98	0.96	1.00

Note: PSC was entered as a continuous measure as was effort-reward ratio. Job strain was entered with 3 other dummy variables. SE: standard error.

# Climate congruence: How espoused and enacted psychosocial safety climate affects emotional exhaustion

Yulita, Awang Idris, University Malaya,  
Maureen Dollard, University of South Australia,



- 23 schools in Selangor, Malaysia
- 109 secondary school teachers across
- 545 diary data points - five consecutive days from

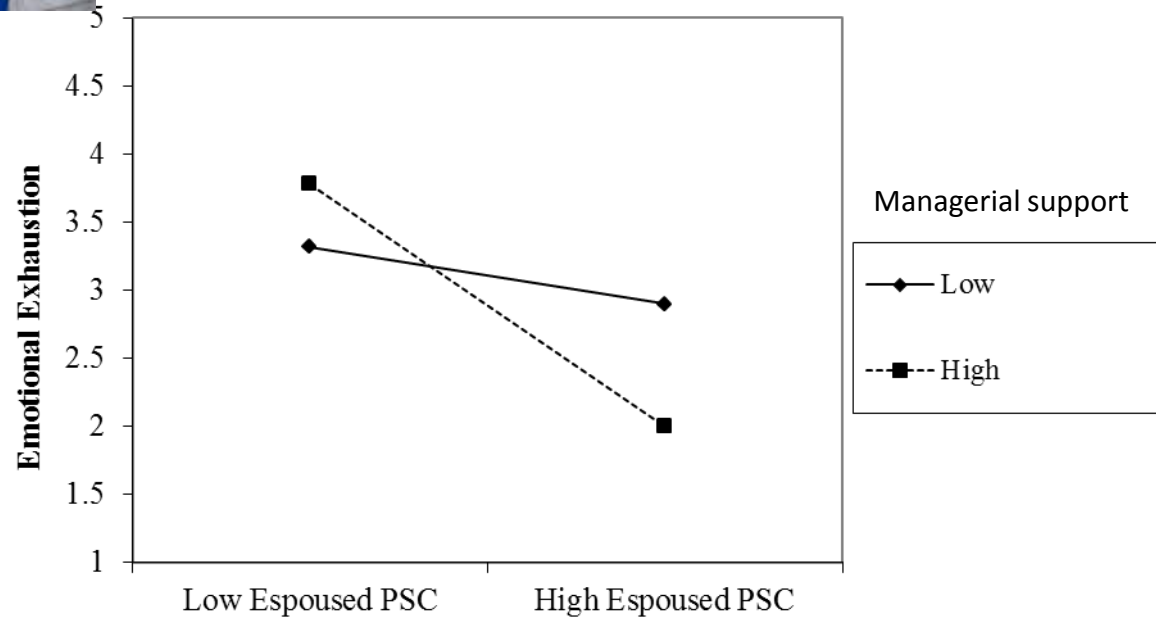


Figure. The interaction of espoused PSC and daily enacted managerial support predicting emotional exhaustion

PSC is most effective if it is constantly reinforced -- in this case by managerial support



Yulita, Dollard, M. F., & Idris, M. A. (2017). Climate congruence: How espoused psychosocial safety climate and enacted managerial support affect emotional exhaustion and work engagement. *Safety science*, 96, 132-142.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Psychosocial safety climate, emotional exhaustion, and work injuries in healthcare workplaces

Amy Jane Zadow<sup>1</sup> | Maureen Frances Dollard<sup>1</sup> | Sarven Savia McLinton<sup>1</sup> | Peter Lawrence<sup>2</sup> | Michelle Rae Tuckey<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

<sup>2</sup>Calvary Healthcare Adelaide, Little Company of Mary Health Care Ltd, Adelaide, Australia

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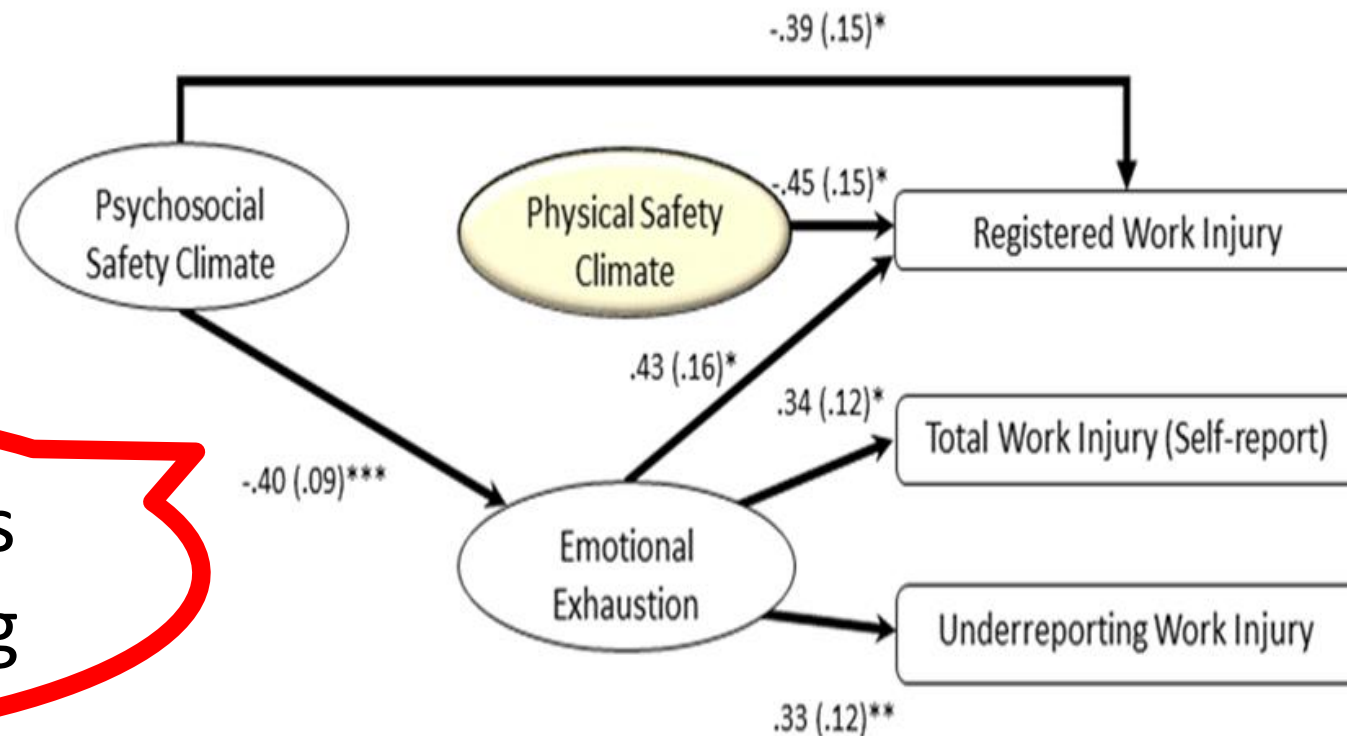
## Abstract

Preventing work injuries requires a clear understanding of how they occur, how they are recorded, and the accuracy of injury surveillance. Our innovation was to examine how psychosocial safety climate (PSC) influences the development of reported and unreported physical and psychological workplace injuries beyond (physical) safety climate, via the erosion of psychological health (emotional exhaustion). Self-report data (T2, 2013) from 214 hospital employees (18 teams) were linked at the team level to the hospital workplace injury register (T1, 2012; T2, 2013; and T3, 2014). Concordance between survey-reported and registered injury rates was low (36%), indicating that many injuries go unreported. Safety climate was the strongest predictor of T2 registered injury rates (controlling for T1); PSC and emotional exhaustion also played a role. Emotional exhaustion was the strongest predictor of survey-reported total injuries and underreporting. Multilevel analysis showed that low PSC, emanating from senior managers and transmitted through teams, was the origin of psychological health erosion (i.e., low emotional exhaustion), which culminated in greater self-reported work injuries and injury underreporting (both physical and psychological). These results underscore the need to consider, in theory and practice, a dual physical-psychosocial safety explanation of injury events and a psychosocial

PSC predicts injuries and under-reporting

# Psychosocial safety climate, emotional exhaustion, and work injuries

(Zadow, Dollard, McLinton, Lawrence, & Tuckey, 2017)



Participants included 214 hospital employees (18 teams) linked to the hospital workplace injury register (T1, 2012; T2, 2013; T3, 2014).

Concordance between survey-reported and registered injury rates was low (36%).

# Predicting Happiness in Australian Workers Over 5 years, 2014-2015 (National Sample)

2009-2010	B	SE	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	5.99	0.36		16.61	.000
Age	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	.949
Gender	0.09	0.08	0.03	1.11	.268
Psychosocial Safety Climate	0.02	0.00	0.15	4.78***	.000
Bullying	-0.06	0.02	-0.10	-3.51***	.000
Skill Discretion (Control)	0.02	0.01	0.07	2.28*	.023

Gender, 1 = Males, 2 = Females

N = 1139

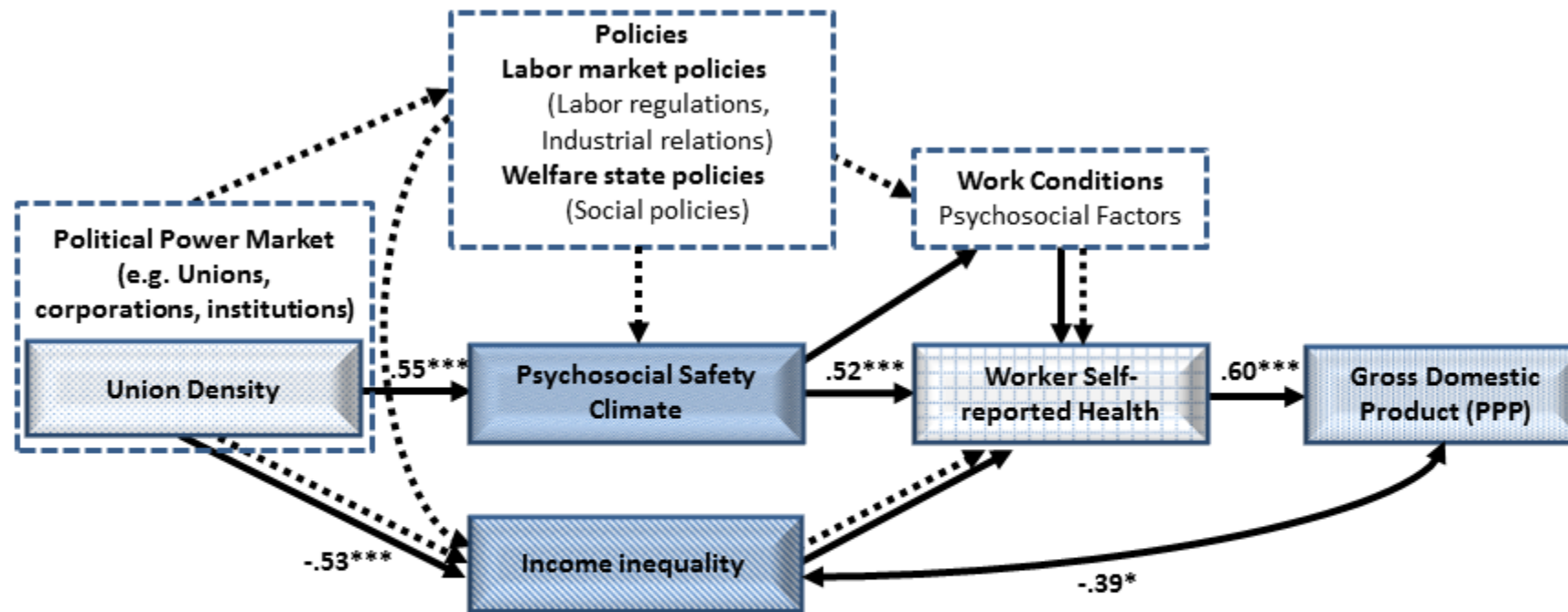


Outstanding question...

4. Where does PSC come from?

The cause of the cause of the cause

The context



---> proposed by Benach et al., 2007

—> tested empirically

Solid boxes reflect the final model, different shades reflect different data sources

\*/\*\*\* Beta values significant in final model,  $P < .05$ ;  $P < .001$

Social Science & Medicine 92 (2013) 114–123



Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Social Science & Medicine

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/socscimed](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/socscimed)



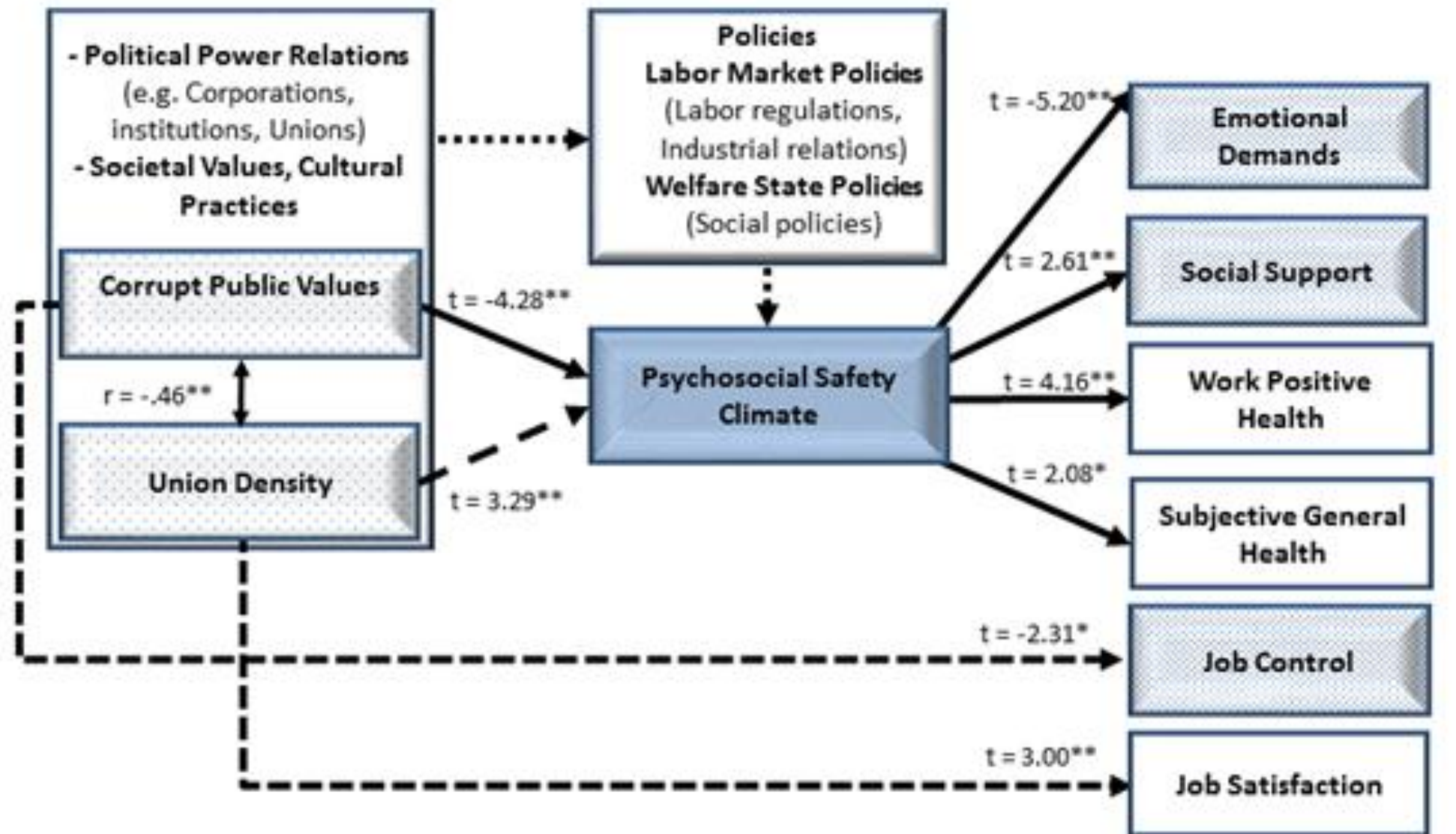
Worker health is good for the economy: Union density and psychosocial safety climate as determinants of country differences in worker health and productivity in 31 European countries

Maureen F. Dollard\*, Daniel Y. Naser

Centre for Applied Psychological Research, School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia, Magill Campus, Adelaide, Australia



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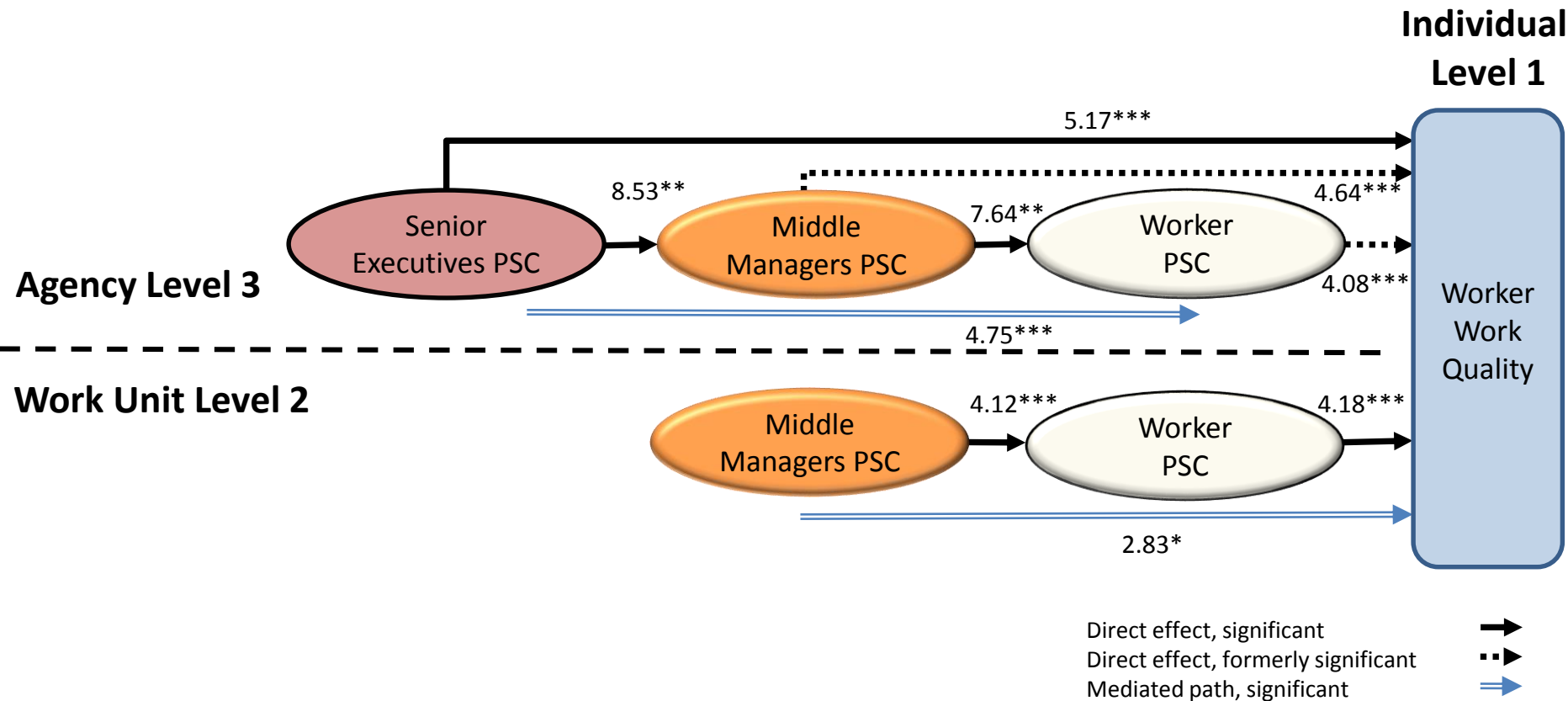
# ESENER Findings

Main reasons for dealing with OHS risks were

- Legal Requirements (63%),
- Requests from employees or representatives (45%), and
- Absence rates (18%)

We found that type of society, social and economic factors (e.g., welfare regimes, work related policies) explain in part national differences in workplace protection (PSC)

# Psychosocial Safety Climate Trickle Down Effects



Worker work quality is affected by cascading climates

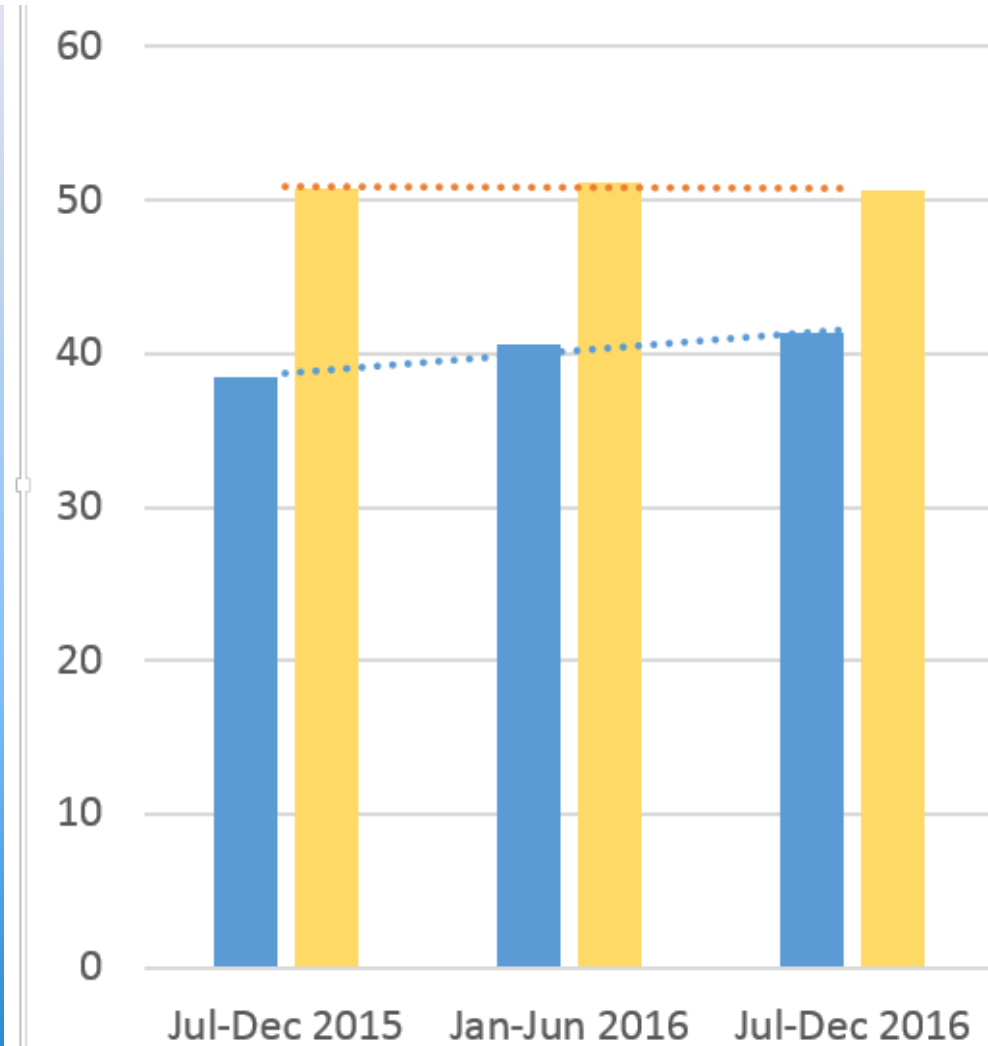
TLI = .995, CFI = .999

23 agencies, 179 work units.

1071 senior executives, 2307 executives, 21809 public sector workers.

M Dollard 08\_03\_2018

# PSC Team Vs PSC Leadership



PSC Team (Blue) Vs PSC Leadership (Yellow)

How leaders rate their  
PSC leadership and  
how team members  
see the PSC is very  
different

Graph Sarven McLinton

## 5. The Practical Value of PSC- Human and Economic Case



# A National Standard for Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC): PSC 41 as the Benchmark for Low Risk of Job Strain and Depressive Symptoms

Tessa S. Bailey, Maureen F. Dollard, and Penny A. M. Richards  
University of South Australia



Journal of Occupational Health Psychology  
2015, Vol. 20, No. 1, 15–26

Elimination of low PSC –  
14% reduction in job strain  
16% reduction in depression

PSC Standards	Range 12 – 60	
Low risk (High PSC)	41 or above	
Medium risk PSC	38 – 40	
High risk PSC	37 or below	(35% of respondents)
Very High risk PSC	26 or below	

Urgent action to  
prevent further  
dramatic increases in  
depressive periods.

## Translating cross-lagged effects into incidence rates and risk ratios: The case of psychosocial safety climate and depression

Christian Dormann<sup>a,b</sup>, Mikaela Owen<sup>b</sup>, Maureen Dollard<sup>b</sup> and Christina Guthier<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Johannes Gutenberg-University, Mainz, Germany; <sup>b</sup>Asia Pacific Centre for Work Safety & Health, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

Work & Stress (2017)

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Australian Government  
Australian Research Council



# Mental Health Treatment by PSC Levels

PSC Standards	Range 12 — 60	M	SD	N	Percentage of Workers
Low risk PSC (High PSC)	$\geq 41$	.07	.26	761	
Medium risk PSC	$41 < \text{and} > 37$	.05	.22	62	
High risk PSC	$37 \leq \text{and} > 26$	.06	.24	192	
Very high risk PSC (Very low PSC)	$\leq 26$	.12	.33	213	70% more likely than low risk; 100% more than high risk

# Using PSC to estimate productivity loss

(Becher & Dollard, 2016)

PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE AND BETTER  
PRODUCTIVITY IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES  
COSTS, PRODUCTIVITY, PRESENTEEISM, ABSENTEEISM

Report

November 2016

Harry Becher  
Maureen Dollard  
Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety  
WHO Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health  
University of South Australia

Workers PSC	Annual sickness absence (hours)	Cost via sickness absence	Productivity Loss	Cost via presenteeism
Low	60.3	\$2,109	5.5%	\$3,113
Moderate	59.1	\$2,067	5.4%	\$3,042
High	42.3	\$1,479	3.2%	\$1,856

Becher, H., & **Dollard, M. F.** (2015). Psychosocial and human capital costs on workplace productivity, Safe Work Australia, [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

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# Using PSC to estimate productivity loss

(Becher & Dollard, 2016)

## A Pro-Social Approach to Productivity using the Australian Workplace Barometer

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PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE AND BETTER  
PRODUCTIVITY IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES  
COSTS, PRODUCTIVITY, PRESENTEEISM, ABSENTEEISM

Report

November 2016

Henry Becher  
Maureen Dollard  
Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety  
WHO Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health  
University of South Australia

Cost of low PSC via sickness absence:	AUD 2.4 billion p.a.
Cost of low PSC via presenteeism:	AUD 3.6 billion p.a.
<b>Total cost of low PSC to employers:</b>	<b>AUD 6 billion p.a.</b>



Australian Government  
Australian Research Council

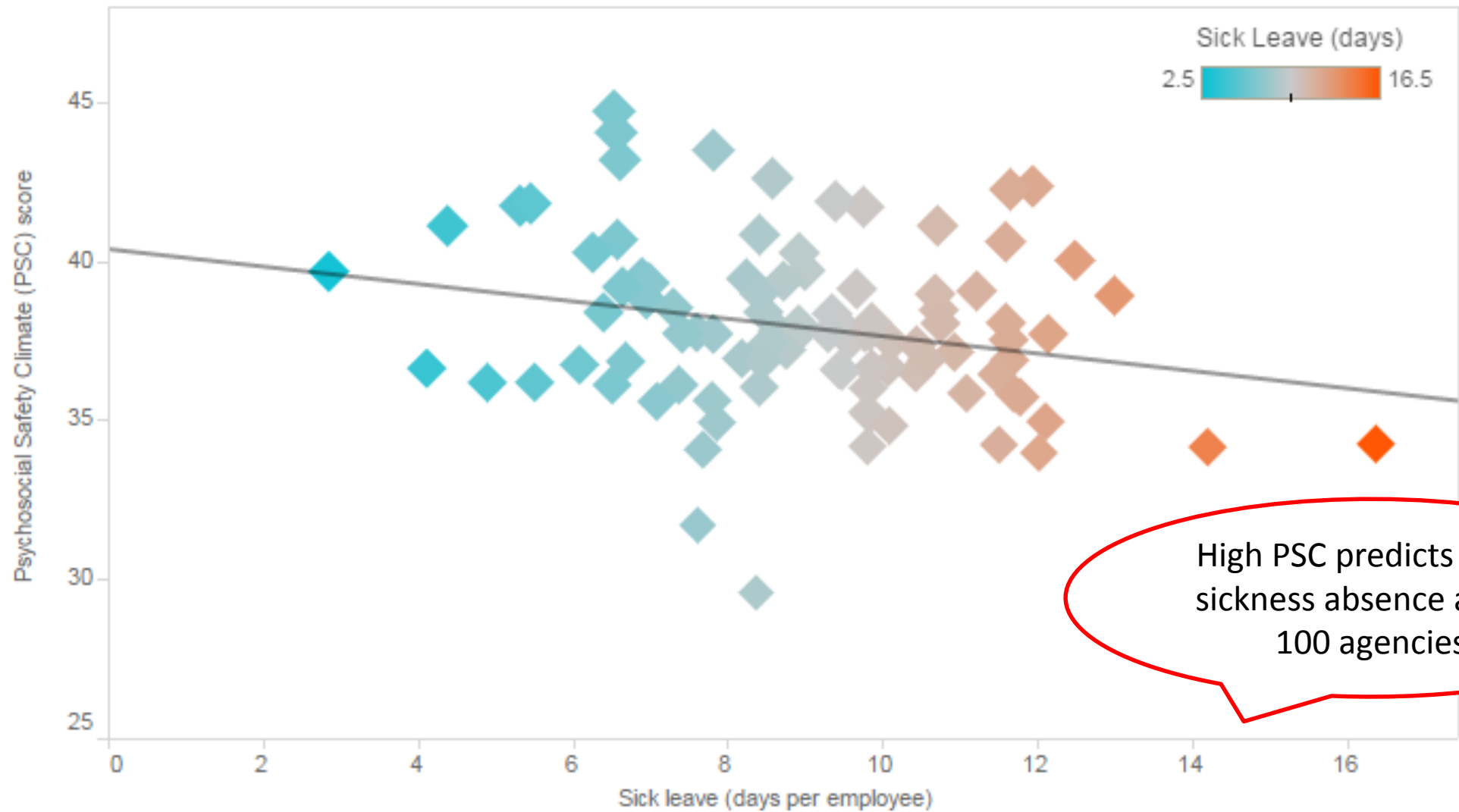
Becher, H., & **Dollard, M. F.** (2015). Psychosocial and human capital costs on workplace productivity, Safe Work Australia, [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au) ; Funding from the Commonwealth Government Agency Safe Work Australia, SafeWork SA, Australian Research Council Discovery Grants [DP0879007 & DP140103429] and an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant [LP100100449].

[maureen.dollard@unisa.edu.au](mailto:maureen.dollard@unisa.edu.au)

# Interactive Chart: Sick leave and Psychosocial Safety Climate score



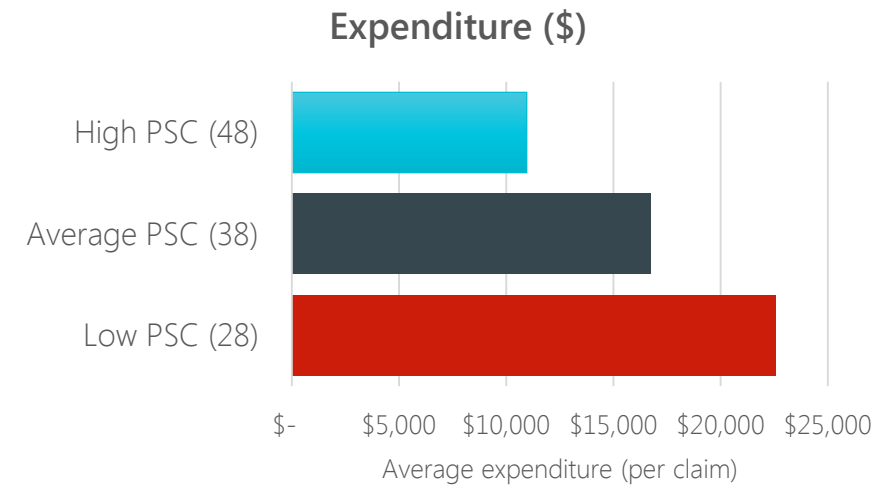
Learn more about this chart: [view data for Figure 4.](#)



High PSC predicts lower  
sickness absence across  
100 agencies

# PSC and Workers' Compensation in South Australia

Harry Becher & Maureen Dollard



## PSC and Workers' Compensation Expenditure

PSC levels in organisations (AWB data) is significantly linked to Expenditure in SafeWork SA data.

The average compensation claim in SA is \$16,753.

The average PSC in this sample was 38.

Each PSC point above 38 can save approximately \$580.

In a company with low PSC of 28 we expect average claim cost of \$22,550.

In a company with a high PSC of 48 we expect average claim cost of \$10,750.

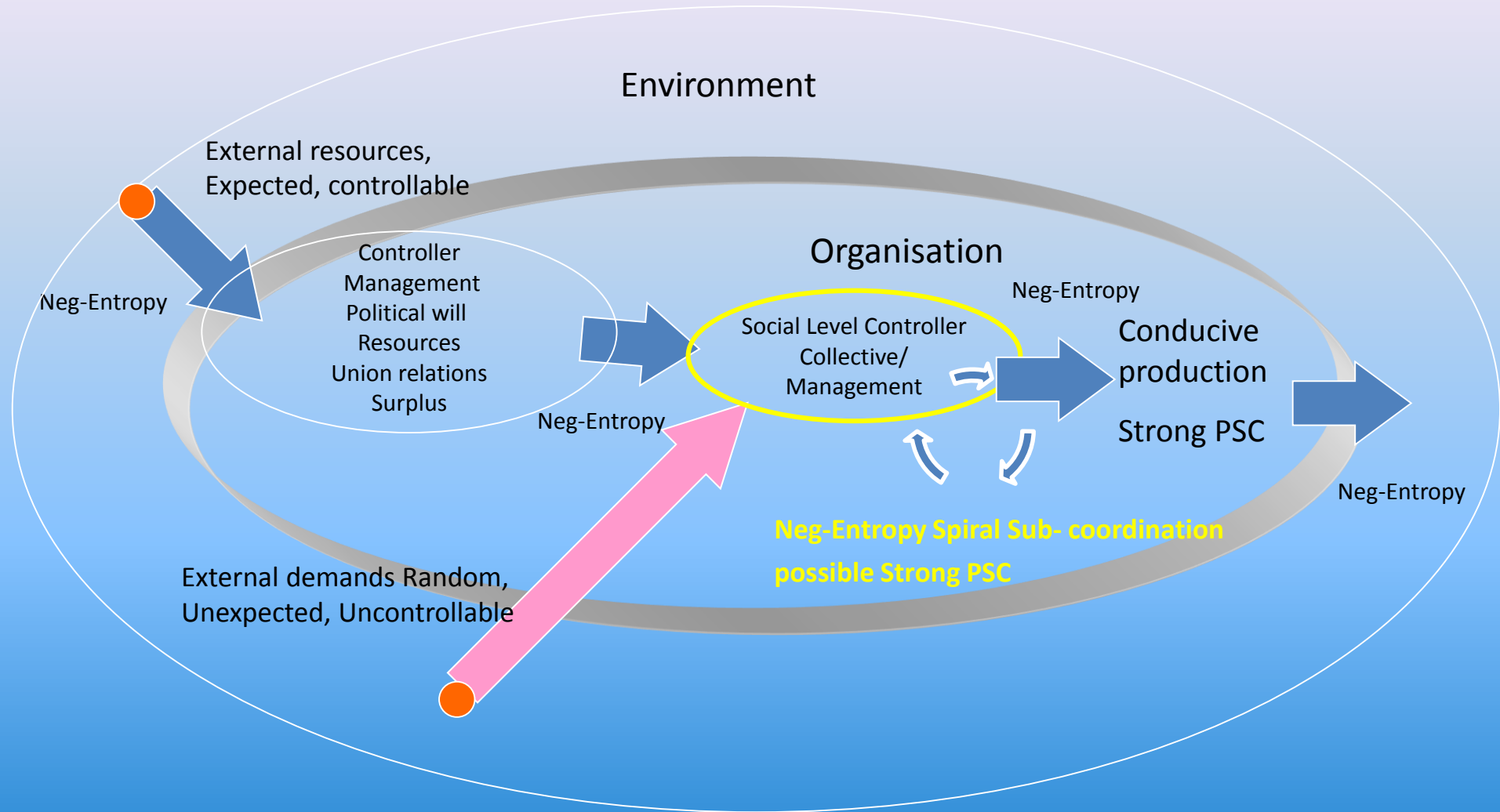
The really amazing thing about this research is that we can predict future Workers Compensation Time OFF and Expenditure by knowing about company PSC





## 6. How to Build PSC

# Healthy Conducive Production Model



**Mental Health  
and Wellbeing:  
The Minimum  
Data Set**

Version 5.2 March 2018

Psychosocial  
Safety Climate is  
included in the  
minimum data  
set!!



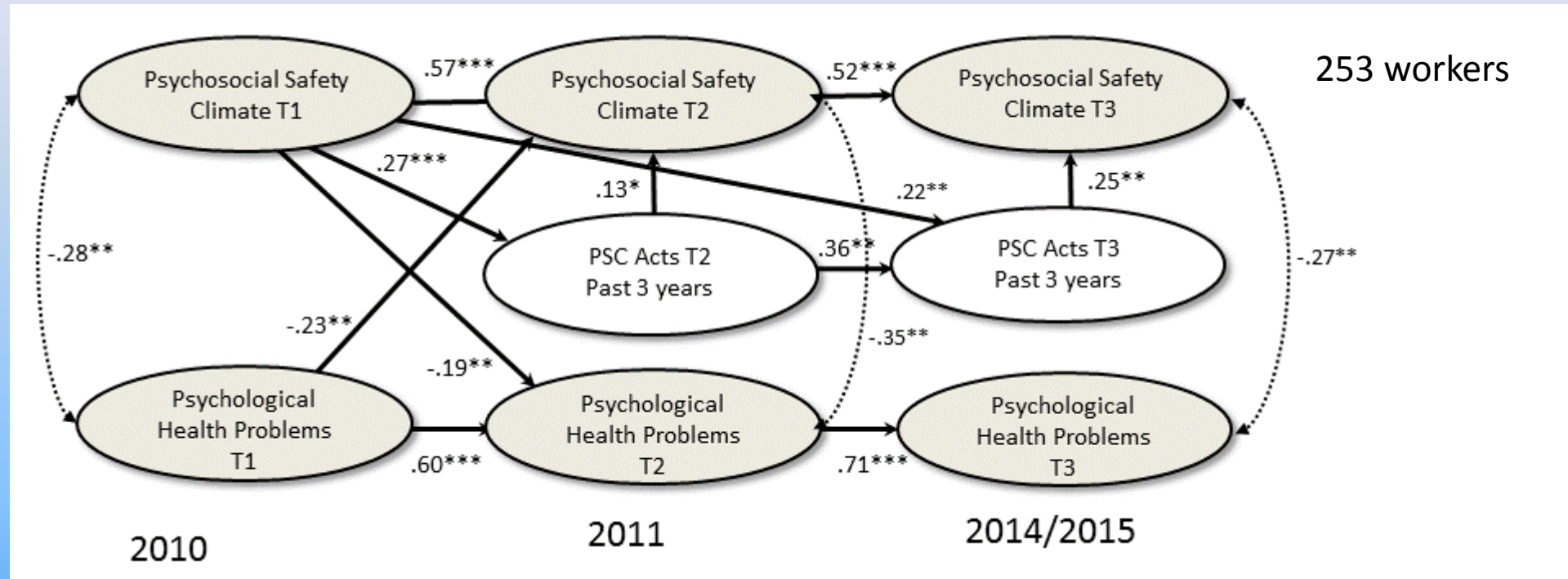
State level policy: Victorian Public Sector Leadership Group endorsed the following key approaches to assist employees (March 2018):

1. performance indicators relating to mental health and wellbeing to be used for each department's baseline, measure improvement, and benchmark across similar organisations to assist with continuous improvement on learning and mental health and wellbeing outcomes

# A fundamental assumption of PSC theory is that PSC can be modified. Empirical evidence?

- System/ organisational level intervention Rickard et al. (2012) PSC increased over two years in two hospitals (nursing workload tool to assess workloads, roster audits, nurses to address shortfall, access to clinical supervision).
- Workplace transformational policy change (Haar, 2018) a New Zealand company
- Educational individual focused - occupational safety website video to increase police understanding about stress and how to manage stress that arises in their daily work life. (Rasdi et al., 2018).

# How to Change PSC---Enact It!



PSC Acts items were drawn from the European Survey on New and Emerging Risks – Psychosocial Risks (ESENER) (2009).

In the last 3 years, has your establishment used any of the following measures to deal with psychosocial (stress) risks?”

- “Changes to the way work is organised?”;
- “A redesign of the work area”, or
- “Set-up of a conflict resolution procedure?”



# 7. Research Agenda



1. Development of a 4 item measure
2. Investigate how PSC is transmitted and built at all levels of the organisation
3. PSC in emerging economies—how does PSC work in cooperatives
4. Does PSC work for informal workers –where is the care coming for them?
5. Trading human rights for profits—PSC links with alienation
6. Asia Pacific Regional Surveillance of PSC

# Conclusion

1. PSC is an important theoretical construct links the external social political pressures to internal functions
2. Important role for national values and societal power actors including unions and management, WHS, in PSC development for healthy work
3. Economists of a capitalist kind have too much say in running the world—we need more pro-social influences—that means you!
4. PSC is an evidence based leading indicator and risk factor, best target for work quality, stress prevention/intervention (top management support, all levels involved etc).
5. PSC should be mandated KPI for strategic ethical management

# Thank You Very Much for Listening

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In summary, we have discussed contemporary economic policies, work stress issues, PSC theory and evidence-based implications for organisations and national level, policy, practices and procedures for worker psychological health. We highlighted how PSC affects working conditions, employee health and well-being, and organisational outcomes, with evidence from around the globe.



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