

**SUMMARY OF CULTURE WARS:
SHOULD ORGANIZATIONS BE CONCERNED HOW THE WARS
AFFECT THEIR EMPLOYEES?**

*David Lynn Hoffman, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Campus Box 78, P.O. Box
173362 Denver CO 80217-3362, dhoffm20@msudenver.edu*

*Debora J. Gilliard, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Campus Box 78, P.O. Box 173362
Denver CO 80217-3362, gilliard@msudenver.edu*

*Cynthia L. Sutton, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Campus Box 78, P.O. Box 173362
Denver CO 80217-3362, suttoncy@msudenver.edu*

Many large and small organizations are being pushed into today's Culture Wars over issues such as abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, contraception, same sex marriages, and now employee benefits. This new environmental socio-economic/political force can originate from any of the organization's stakeholders including consumers, employees, stockholders, the organization's community, and or activists on both sides.

According to sociologists, this conflict runs deep in America and its values. While the conflict started between religions, it is now a conflict over what we believe, value, think is American or un-American, what it means to live together, or what is a citizen. The conflict is so deep that some on the extremes view the other side as un-American, unpatriotic, misguided, or just plain wrong and should be outshouted, outvoted, and bullied into acquiescence. Attacks can take the form of consumer boycotts over an organization's product line or mission, social media blasts, employee complaints, shareholder requests, or other activist strategics.

A number of well-known organizations have been attacked including Microsoft, Kohls, Target, Anheuser Bush, Safeway, North Face, Alphabet, Under Armour, Walmart, JCPenney, Target and small wedding cake bakeries.

The paper argues that an environmental factor with this much impact should be examined in the organization's strategic planning process. The organization should continually scan the environment to detect issues that might impact them. The values, vision, mission, product line, and marketing messages should be consistent. If one of these items makes a stand the others mentioned above should be consistent. For example, Victoria's Secrets provides LGBTQ+ wear in its merchandise line, has a mission mentioning diversity, and now uses models of

different sizes, colors, races, and even disabilities. The product line, mission, social media, and marketing messages are consistent and complimentary.

Now the conflict can include employee benefits. If the organization does not offer benefits to LGBTQ+ employees, it can be attacked by activists. If it does offer them, it can be attacked by anti-LGBTQ+ activists. A legal quagmire can occur if their benefits have anything to do with abortion. A large organization with employees in states that do not have anti-abortion laws and states that have anti-abortion laws will have to be extremely careful. Some states allow any citizen to sue anyone who provides support for female abortions. If their benefits offer reproductive benefits to men, do they have to offer reproductive or non-reproductive benefits to women?

References available upon request.