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Workplace bullying as an arena of social influence: a review of tactics in the bullying process^{*}

ABSTRACT: This article applies theoretical insight into the bullying phenomenon from social influence practices to present a framework for understanding the use and functions of negative workplace activities. Bullying is perceived as a process of multiple strategies. The article describes its antecedents and background that may trigger negative behavior. It presents the forms and dynamics of bullying from the perspective of social influence tactics taxonomies, as well as knowledge on the impact of such social influence practices as manipulative communication, social rejection, rumors and work-related behavior. It also discusses the role of negative social influence strategies in group regulation processes and how they relate to bullying.

KEYWORDS: workplace bullying, social influence, social influence tactics.

* The research was supported by NCN grant UMO-2013/09/D/HS6/02717.

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Jak cytować:	Gamian-Wilk, M., Wilk, K., Meyer E. S. (2017). Workplace bullying as an arena of social influence: a review of tactics in the bullying process. <i>Forum Oświatowe</i> , 29(1), 91–108. Pobrano z: http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/czasopismo/article/view/472
How to cite:	Gamian-Wilk, M., Wilk, K., Meyer E. S. (2017). Workplace bullying as an arena of social influence: a review of tactics in the bullying process. <i>Forum Oświatowe</i> , 29(1), 91–108. Retrieved from http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/czasopismo/article/view/472

Multiple social influence practices occur in organizations. While employees have their own individual goals they strive to accomplish, such as being successful in their roles and obtaining their individual benefits, employers are motivated to create attitudes and behaviors suitable for the organization. The latter often strive to promote workers' identification with the organization and their efficiency in work. Some goals may be in conflict with others. Challenges become even more salient in situations of organizational change, where ambiguity often results in stress and an atmosphere in which negative social influence tactics and manipulation can flourish.

Social influence is related to using power to get something done. Social influence practices aim to change others' attitudes or behaviors (Barry and Shapiro, 1992; Dolinski, 2005, 2016; Kipnis, 1984; Yukl and Falbe, 1990). By "social influence tactic," Pratkanis means "any non-coercive technique, device, procedure, or manipulation capable of creating or changing the belief or behavior of a target of the influence attempt, whether this attempt is based on the specific actions of an influence agent or the result of the self-organizing nature of social systems" (Pratkanis, 2007, p. 17). Such practices are sometimes based on manipulation, a specific form of social influence through which, to achieve certain goals, one party tries to benefit, from changing another's attitudes or behaviors and the subjected person makes decisions while under the influence of the manipulator (Buss, 1987; Nawrat, 1989; Zdankiewicz-Ścigała and Maruszewski, 2003). This article aims to present workplace bullying as a process in which manipulation, a form of social influence, takes place. It will describe the origins of bullying as the background for generating manipulation practices and compare bullying activities with other social influence strategies.

BULLYING AS A FORM OF MANIPULATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE PRACTICES

In the early 1990s, Leymann pioneered research on bullying – described as a long-lasting process (about six months) of frequent (at least once a week) and re-

peated acts of hostile communication and humiliation of an employee, who experiences discomfort and personal and health problems (Brodsky, 1976; Caponecchia and Wyatt, 2012; D'Cruz, 2015; Einarsen, 2000; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper, 2011; Hirigoyen, 2003; Leymann, 1990, 1996; Lipinski and Crothers, 2014; Matthiesen, 2006; Zapf and Einarsen, 2001, 2005). Several other terms are used in the literature to name negative workplace behavior: *moral maltreatment* (Hirigoyen, 2003), *mobbing* or *psychological terror* (Leymann, 1990), *workplace trauma* or *petty tyranny* (Ashforth, 1994), *scapegoating* (Eagle and Newton, 1981), *harassment* (Brodsky, 1976) or *ijime*, a Japanese name for bullying (Meek, 2004), *workplace incivility*, *workplace abuse* (Omari and Paull, 2016), and *abusive supervision* (Salton Meyer and Mikulinier, 2016).

The imbalance in psychological power (emotional, structural, group over an individual imbalance) between a victim and an oppressor, and victims' inability to defend themselves are the core defining aspects of bullying (e.g., Einarsen, 2000). Both sides gradually establish the discrepancy in power and control over the course of action and over the target's situation in the organization during as the bullying process develops. Although the power structure between parties may originate from the formal power structure (e.g., subordinate/supervisor), there are many cases of subtle, informal power structures (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper, 2011). The roles of an oppressor and a victim are gradually constructed during their mutual interactions as the bully's and target's behaviors are influenced by each other and by the work environment. Often the aim of workplace bullying is to expel a victim from the workplace community, according to Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2003, 2011), who summarized assumptions made in the definition of bullying:

- a) The experience of being singled out and victimized is crucial to the label of bullying,
- b) Negative activities are repetitive and persistent. (The label of bullying cannot be applied in case of single, isolated events.)
- c) The power between parties is unbalanced, as a bully possesses a greater level of access to support from other people.
- d) The victim is placed in a position that diminishes his or her power.
- e) Bullying is an interpersonal phenomenon with one stigmatized worker and one or a group of bullies (contrary to institutionalized bullying, which occurs when everyone in the work group is maltreated).
- f) Bullying is a process of conflict escalation.

The bullying phenomenon may be characterized as a complexity of social influence practices of deeply manipulative nature. This article will show that according to the definition of social influence tactics (Dolinski, 2016; Pratkanis, 2007) these are some of its aspects present in workplace bullying are:

- a) One individual has more power and influence than the other.
- b) The target stays under the manipulator's control as he or she is constantly maltreated and perceives having little recourse to retaliate.

- c) According to social interactionist theory of teasing and bullying (Kowalski, 2007; Neuman and Baron, 2011), by implementing negative behaviors bullies gain a higher degree of power and achieve personal goals. Bullying can be used for instrumental reasons, at least from the perpetrator's perspective. Workers may bully others to maintain their position within a social hierarchy. Bullying for self-serving reasons may help perpetrators be dominant and their impressions on others (Kowalski, 2007).

From the bystanders' perspective, bullying may seem quite innocent. In each workplace the atmosphere becomes sometimes tense; people gossip; some individuals are liked, others disliked. The subtle and complex nature of bullying makes it difficult to diagnose and cope with as an organizational problem.

FORMS OF BULLYING BEHAVIORS

Brodsky (1976) described five types of negative behaviors among U.S. workers and employers: name-calling, scapegoating, physical harassment, sexual harassment and work pressure. Leymann (1996) also distinguished five groups of negative behaviors. The first consists of negative communication (e.g., indirect speech, allusions, irony, shouting, being excessively critical, disrupting one's speech). The second is linked to isolating a victim from other coworkers. The third group includes negative behaviors associated with delegating tasks (e.g., demanding performance of tasks that are irrational, dangerous, too easy or too difficult). The fourth consists of activities aimed at destroying the target's reputation (rumors, name-calling, suggesting mental illness). The last category is associated with physically abusing power (e.g. physical aggression, sexual harassment).

One of the largest and most representative studies on bullying found that bullying behaviors could be grouped under two main categories: work and personal (Einarsen and Hoel, 2001, after Einarsen et al., 2003). Work-related behaviors included excessive monitoring of work, assignment of unreasonable deadlines and unmanageable workloads, and assignment of meaningless tasks or no tasks at all. Personal bullying activities included making insulting remarks, excessive teasing, spreading gossip or rumors, persistent criticism, playing practical jokes, and intimidation. Subjected individuals most frequently report behaviors of social nature (Einarsen et al., 2003), while rumor-mongering and social isolation have been the most frequently reported by victims (Vartia, 1996).

Recently, workplace cyberbullying has received large amount of research (Schimmel & Nicholls, 2014). This new form of bullying is extremely manipulative and dangerous as an oppressor can attack anonymously. The victim may not know the identity of the perpetrator. Bullying may occur at any time and has no spatial boundaries. This anonymity and persistence makes cyberbullying more insidious than other forms of workplace bullying. For these reasons cyberbullying may be more appealing to the bully (Schimmel and Nicholls, 2014).

BULLYING ANTECEDENTS TRIGGERING MANIPULATION

Bullying is a result of many factors, from very general ones (economic rationalism, global competitiveness) to antecedents related to characteristics of the work environment, the bullies and/or their targets (Zapf, 1999). Two of the main hypotheses of workplace bullying's antecedents are the work environment hypothesis and the vulnerability hypothesis (Coyne, 2012; Hauge, 2010; Matthiesen, 2006). The first assumes that work environment factors such as time pressure, workload, role ambiguity, type of leadership, individual role stress and climate can explain the development of bullying at work (Hauge, Einarsen, Knardahl, Lau, Notelaers and Skogstad, 2011; Leymann, 1996). The latter hypothesis assumes that individual dispositions may predispose targets negative treatment (Bowling and Beehr, 2006; Bowling, Beehr, Bennett and Watson, 2010; Lind, Glasø, Pallesen and Einarsen, 2009). Moreover, bullies' individual dispositions should also be taken into account as bullying antecedents (Coyne, 2012; Einarsen et al., 2011).

According to the work environment hypothesis, bullying is generated by such organizational factors as stress, tension, ambiguity and fear (Einarsen, 2000; Einarsen et al., 2003; Vartia, 1996). Dissatisfied workers experience constant anxiety to speak their opinions or to make claims. An authoritarian, aggressive leader produces fear of being criticized. A negative organizational climate results in experiencing threats and frustration and in consequence leads to breaking social norms. Stress generates bullies' aggressive behavior on the one hand and the victims' lack of sense of safety and control on the other (Einarsen, 2000; Einarsen et al., 2003; Zapf, 1999). Hauge and colleagues (Hauge et al., 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011) found that such risk factors as social climate, role conflict, ambiguity and high quantitative demands (work overload) are the strongest predictors of workplace bullying.

The vulnerability hypothesis assumes that individual dispositions can explain exposure to bullying at work. Earlier studies revealed that employees exposed to bullying at work could be characterized by low self-esteem, low aggressiveness and lack of social competencies (Matthiesen and Einarsen, 2001, 2004). Other studies have described these employees as less social and talkative, as well as less likable, understanding and diplomatic (Glasø, Matthiesen, Nielsen and Einarsen, 2007). In addition, employees exposed to bullying at work have been described as less assertive, less independent and extroverted, less mentally stable, and more neurotic than other employees (Coyne, Seigne and Randall, 2000). Further, employees who have been exposed to bullying at work have described themselves as achievement-oriented, conscientious, rigid and intolerant of diversity (Einarsen, 2000; Matthiesen, et al., 2003; Matthiesen and Einarsen, 2004), as well as low on agreeableness (Lind, Glasø, Pallesen and Einarsen, 2009). Research results indicate that victims' response to the first signs that bullying is developing may be inappropriate or inefficient to help cope with the situation – for example, overt discussions with the bully, which have proven to worsen the situation (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006; Matthiesen et al., 2003; Zapf and

Gross, 2001). Some findings of longitudinal research provide evidence that individual dispositions predispose targets to workplace bullying (Bowling et al., 2010). However, other prospective studies suggest the reversed causal hypothesis: personality traits may change as a consequence of bullying (Podsiadly and Gamian-Wilk, 2017; Nielsen and Knardahl, 2015).

Bullies' personal characteristics are also discussed as bullying antecedents (Coyne, 2012; Einarsen et al., 2011). Bullies are described as having high but unstable self-esteem and high narcissism (Matthiesen and Einarsen, 2004). Therefore, when they feel threatened, they may often respond with aggression. Salton Meyer and Mikulincer (2016) review studies of bullying that reveal findings that men were more often than women perpetrators of bullying at the workplace, and that they show a preference for same-gender harassment (Einarsen, 2000; Wimmer, 2009; Zogby International 2007). This may be connected with various patterns of aggressive behavior displayed by men and women. In addition, bullying most strongly influences women, who are targeted by bullies more often, particularly by other women (Zogby International, 2010).

However, perpetrators probably have impaired perspective-taking abilities (after Ireland and Archer, 2002). Sutton, Smith and Swettenhem (1999, after Ireland and Archer, 2002) suggest that bullies can detect and interpret social clues but make inappropriate decisions and choose aggressive strategies, as they view hostility positively. Perpetrators perceive social situations as hostile; thus they constantly search for possibilities to retaliate (Randall, 1997, after Ireland and Archer, 2002). Choosing aggression and retaliation is inappropriate from the ethical point of view, however from the bully's and the organization's point of view such a pattern of response may be adequate. Such way of reasoning is in line with the social interactionist explanation of bullying and aggression occurrence (Neuman & Baron, 2011). According to this approach, bullying is seen as goal oriented actions which may be displayed to obtain justice or to regain control over those who disobey. Moreover, such traits as disability to take third person perspective and hostility are typical for Machiavellian individuals (Pilch, 2008). In fact, Machiavellian trait is related to bullying in the workplace (Turska and Pilch, 2016).

Faced with difficult workplace conditions, job dissatisfaction and frustration of needs, some individuals respond by bullying others. Further research is needed to assess the extent to which personality features may predispose workers to contribute to bullying development. The antecedents of bullying escalation are certainly connected with allowing a possibly stronger individual to increase his or her power and influence over the other party.

DYNAMICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIORS

It is often mentioned that bullying is a particular type of escalating conflict that consists of a series of conflict episodes (Leymann, 1996; Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie and Einarsen, 2003; Zapf and Gross, 2001). Nevertheless, in the case of maltreat-

ment in the workplace, conflicts take a destructive form and escalate dramatically. Researchers agree that bullying development is always a gradual process that occurs over during a long period of time and becomes more and more devastating for the target. Leymann (1996) argued that bullying is triggered by a difficult and conflicting situation. Björkvist (1992, after Einarsen, 2000) proposed three stages of bullying development.

In the first phase, indirect strategies are used. The atmosphere becomes more tense and formal. A number of behaviors that are not necessarily aggressive take place in quite normal interactions. But negative communication becomes more and more frequent and changes from subtle to more offensive forms. Rumors about the target are spread; the subjected person is constantly criticized and interrupted in his or her speech; and his or her opinions are not taken seriously. All these activities destroy the target's image in the eyes of coworkers, and in his or her own.

In the second phase, more direct acts of aggression, such as isolation or public humiliation, are implemented. The bully finds allies. The target is stigmatized. Finally, when the bullying target feels left without any support and totally helpless, extreme forms of direct aggression and power are used. There are threats to distribute intimate knowledge; the victim is accused of being psychologically ill; the bully exploits tactics of threats, blackmailing and accusations, which often lead to the target's exclusion from the organization.

BULLYING: A VARIETY OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE PRACTICES

Negative communication

In the early stages of bullying, individuals still act in a reasonable manner, although tensions arise. The first sign of further conflict escalation is deterioration of communication. According to both Leymann (1996) and Hirigoyen (2003), hostile and manipulative communication is a defining aspect of bullying. Hirigoyen describes the bullying language as indirect, ambiguous and deformed, necessitating "reading between the lines," and causes the target to feel anxious. The aim of using irony (sentences that really mean quite the opposite) or allusions (sentences that contain additional meaning apart from the literal meaning) is to hide the intention of providing overt aggression (Tokarz, 2006). Interpreting the nonliteral meaning hidden behind irony or allusions takes much longer than processing literal sentences (Dews and Winner, 1999, after Tokarz, 2006). Being subjected to nonliteral communication must thus result in not only an increase in anxiety but also cognitive overload. Research suggests that cognitive overload facilitates compliance, as it generates automaticity (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999) or mindlessness (Langer, 1989). Automaticity and mindlessness are crucial mechanisms of numerous social influence techniques (Doliński, 2005, 2016). As previously mentioned, bullying is associated with a negative social climate, role conflict, ambiguity and high quantitative demands (work overload). It is therefore possible that victims become more emotionally and cognitively overloaded. Further research should answer the question whether nega-

tive communication produces cognitive overload and, therefore, greater compliance by bullying targets.

Isolating

The literature agrees that both school and workplace bullying are a form of social exclusion (e.g. Einarsen, 2000; Juvonen and Gross, 2005). Isolating the target from other coworkers is the core activity of bullying (e.g. Einarsen, 2000; Einarsen et al., 2003; Leymann, 1996). From the very beginning, the mere aim of expressing negative behavior is to expel the victim from the working community. Silent treatment leads to broadening the asymmetry of power between the perpetrator and the target. In the case of bullying, various forms of ostracism appear: physical isolation when the target is excluded from others, for instance by working in a room distant from other workers; social ostracism when a target is ignored, excluded from social activities or prevented from having opportunities to speak with other workers; and cyber ostracism when a victim's e-mails or phone calls remain unanswered as bullies do not reply (Williams and Zadro, 2005).

Findings on experimentally manipulated rejection have indicated a number of different outcomes for both sides in the interaction (Williams, 2007). First, through both experimental research and observations on bullying, findings regarding reasons for people's use of social exclusion and their possible gains by rejecting others have shown that use of ostracism by a group fulfills the need to belong within the group (Williams and Zadro, 2005). Even playing a role of an ostracizing person increases the sense of power, perceived social status and feeling of belonging with those who reject (Williams, Bernieri, Faulkner, Grahe and Gada-Jain, 2000). Moreover, those who ostracize gain a higher sense of control and power (Williams, 2007). Social ostracizing is used as a form of manipulation by individuals with low self-esteem. People with high self-esteem reject unaccepted others when they do not want to continue the relationship (Sommer, Williams, Ciarocco and Baumeister, 2001).

Even short episodes of social rejection lead to immediate negative consequences for the ostracized person. As shown, rejection causes distress, anger and sadness and a threat to social self-esteem, as well as a need to belong, a need for control and for a sense of meaningful existence (Williams and Zadro, 2005; Zadro, Williams and Richardson, 2004). Rejected individuals tend to restore their positive self-esteem and sense of belonging by behaving in a socially desirable way. In the CyberBall game paradigm, excluded participants (especially women) tended to engage in a collective task rather than an individual task (Ezrakhovich et al., 1998, after Williams, 2007; Williams and Sommer, 1997), were more conformist (Williams, Cheung and Choi, 2000), tended to mimic others' behavior (Lakin and Chartrand, 2005) and were more susceptible to social influence attempts (Carter-Sowell, Che and Williams, 2008).

It is therefore of interest whether numerous episodes of social rejection in the case of bullying also generate greater compliance. Gamian-Wilk (2013) has shown that the tendency to comply is lower among bullying targets than among non-targets, especially after they remembered situations in which they were rejected or excluded

by co-workers. This result is in line with behavioral responses to ostracism. Many studies have reported antisocial reactions to ostracism (Twenge, 2005), especially when re-inclusion in the group or other groups seems to be impossible or improbable (Maner, DeWall, Baumeister and Schaller, 2007; Williams, 2007). Aggressive responses are more likely to occur when rejection is linked to lack of control over an unpleasant situation (Williams and Zadro, 2005). Being bullied means experiencing constant social rejection and other forms of maltreatment over a longer period. Targets lack a sense of power and control over their situation. Moreover, they are left without support in the workplace. Thus, long-lasting social rejection implemented in bullying decreases compliance (Gamian-Wilk, 2013) and agreeableness (Podsiadly and Gamian-Wilk, 2016; Nielsen and Knardahl, 2015).

Destroying the target's reputation

Rumors – that is, unverified information – appear in order to make sense in uncertain situations and to cope with threats (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). The authors of the dynamic social impact theory of rumor explain that the need to control fear (resulting, e.g., from an unstable situation in the workplace) and self-enhancement motivation lead individuals to spread information that may not be true. DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) distinguish gossip from rumor. The first is evaluative assessment told in the absence of a target to entertain the audience and to exclude the target from the community. Another aim of gossiping is to build or change social norms or social structures. Rumor's aim is to bring greater amounts of significant data that, although uncertain and unverified, makes sense in a threatening reality.

Findings reported by DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) suggest that anxiety, both situational and as an individual trait, is associated with the tendency to transmit rumors. Anxious individuals gain a sense of control by sharing rumors. Moreover, rumors are often self-enhancing, as spreading significant information improves in-group status and weakens a target's position. Sharing rumors may also fulfill the need to belong, as it is a collective form of making sense, expressing feelings, exploring implications of information and managing threat. Such processes reduce negative feelings within a group (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007).

Both gossip and rumors are common practices in bullying cases (Crothers, Lipski and Minutolo, 2009; Einarsen et al., 2003). Rumor transmission serves as a social influence tactic first by making impressions that tend to persist and then by reinterpreting and confirming data by selecting the incoming information (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). In the process of bullying, the perpetrator tends to find allies and spread negative information about a target. Rumors work as a form of propaganda damaging damage targets' image and justifying further maltreatment.

Work-related behaviors

Apart from negative bullying activities of a social nature, targets tend to report work-related behaviors most of which also aim to isolate the target or destroying the target's positive image (Einarsen et al., 2011). Assigning meaningless tasks or delegat-

ing no tasks is a form of excluding the target from the working community. By acting in such a way, the bully indirectly provides information that the subjected person is either not competent enough to manage certain tasks or unable to cooperate within a group. Other activities, such as unreasonable deadlines or unmanageable workloads may also be intended to prove t the bullying target cannot cope with tasks and is thus redundant. The last negative activity produces additional work pressure and, as a consequence, emotional and cognitive overload. As mentioned earlier, the state of overload may lead to compliance.

The dynamics of social influence tactics in bullying development

A number of classifications of social influence tactics used in workplaces have been described (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl and Falbe, 1990; Yukl and Tracy, 1992). The most commonly recognized is Yukl's social influence tactics taxonomy, which includes rational persuasion (use of logical arguments, information and factual evidence), inspirational appeals (arousing enthusiasm by appealing to ideals, values or aspirations), consultation (involving the target in the process of making, or planning how to implement, a decision), ingratiation (using flattery, praise or helpful behavior before presenting a request), personal appeals (appealing to feelings of friendship or loyalty when asking for something), exchange (offering material or immaterial goods in return), coalition (aiming to seek compliance by seeking or claiming support from superiors or peers), legitimating tactics (claiming authority or the right to make a request, or referring to its congruence with existing policies, rules or traditions), and pressure (intimidating the target through demands, threats or persistent reminders) or assertiveness.

According to the strength dimension of influence tactics, that is the extent to which using a particular influence tactic takes control over the situation and the target and does not allow the target to choose whether to comply, we may distinguish hard strategies, that is controlling and coercive strategies such as pressure, legitimating tactics, and coalition, and soft tactics such as ingratiation, inspirational appeals, consultation, and rationality (after van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2007). Assertive, forceful strategies are not favorable and generate tensions and negative consequences within a group. They hardly ever produce authentic compliance but rather resistance (after van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg, 2007; see also: Doroszewicz and Gamian-Wilk, 2015). Thus, as research indicates, hard tactics are often preceded by the use of more friendly and soft ones (Yukl, Falbe and Youn, 1993).

As the imbalance of power is one of the crucial defining aspects of the bullying phenomenon, hard strategies may be implemented to take control over a target. While people usually start with soft tactics when they try to achieve something, in the case of bullying utterly different dynamics of social influence tactics seem to take place. According to descriptions of negative workplace activities (Einarsen et al., 2003; Leymann, 1996), bullies never use soft tactics but instead use indirect manipulative ones from the very beginning. The first phase of bullying escalation tends to be associated with ambiguity of social situations; perpetrators exhibit indirect activities

such as making allusions, causing targets to withdraw from social interactions, or arousing positive and negative emotions. As bullying develops, hard tactics are used more often, such as creating coalitions with other workers against a target, legitimating tactics, pressure and assertiveness (intimidating, insulting, criticizing, belittling, or threatening a target).

Workplace bullying as a process of group regulation

It has been proven that workplace bullying consists of a multitude of social influence tactics. All the negative bullying activities reported by targets – negative communication, social rejection, rumor-spreading and work-related behaviors – may be redefined in terms of social influence practices. Bullies act as manipulators because they possess greater power over targets, who are unable to defend themselves against negative behaviors. Consequently, two central questions arise about bullies' aims and profits and about targets' compliance. Each social influence tactic has to be used intentionally to achieve something. It is therefore crucial to investigate bullies' reasons for abusing power and implementing a negative form of social influence, and also to examine the extent to which bullies' activities are effective in leading targets to comply.

The question about bullies' intentions is extremely difficult to answer. Case study reports suggest that perpetrators act to achieve certain goals, e.g., to make a certain person leave the company, or to attain a certain position at someone else's expense (Kowalski, 2007; Zapf, 1999). A more profound analysis of social influence strategies used in the escalation of bullying leads to quite different conclusions about bullies' intentions. The bullying phenomenon may be perceived as a process of building group cohesiveness (common norms, attitudes) as well as a process of in-group emotion regulating. Bullying is often a response to ambiguous, confusing and uncertain workplace situations. In such circumstances, groups need to rebuild social structures, norms or hierarchy, and group identification. In difficult workplace conditions associated with stress, ambiguity and anxiety, individuals with high but uncertain self-esteem tend to respond by exhibiting indirect aggression. These activities permit individual high self-esteem to be maintained on the one hand and, on the other, a new power structure to be created. The workplace community benefits with a drop in uncertainty and negative emotions and an increase in positive we-feeling. Rejecting an unaccepted person or spreading rumors about him or her are group sense-making activities that are tools to achieve group goals.

The second question is whether social influence practices occurring in bullying are effective in leading to target's compliance. Plentiful evidence suggests that targets finally leave the organization (Zapf and Gross, 2001). It is, however, questionable whether the target's quitting the workplace reflects the effectiveness of these negative social influence tactics. It has been shown that exposure to bullying is associated with low compliance (Gamian-Wilk, 2013). It seems, however, interesting to ask whether people subjected to negative social influence tactics (i.e., bullying behaviors) become more receptive to the bully's activities and requests. It is essential to investigate the

mutual interactions of a bully's use of social influence tactics and the target's responses in a prospective study.

CONCLUSIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Workplace bullying is an important problem within the education sector (Mościcka-Teske, Drabek, & Pyżalski, 2014; Strutyńska, 2014, 2016; Warszewska-Makuch, 2008). It has been shown that exposure to workplace bullying is connected with symptoms of professional burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and lower level of professional efficacy (Mościcka-Teske, Drabek, & Pyżalski, 2014). The main antecedents of teachers' exposure to bullying are the head of a school inspection, low job satisfaction and feeling of work overload and being controlled (Strutyńska, 2016). School inspection is related to taking control, motivating, giving support and assessing the teachers' work by a supervisor. Thus, school inspection may be connected with creating power imbalance and abusing social influence practices. The Strutyńska's (2016) findings are in line with the work environment hypothesis suggesting that inadequate management style, the lack of supervisor's support and fair treatment cause bullying (Hauge et al., 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011). It is therefore essential to introduce good interpersonal relationships in educational institutions and implement procedures to prevent bullying in the workplace. Prevention procedures should include workshops for management on clear communication (e.g. avoiding indirect communication) and methods of supporting, tasks delegating, motivating and assessing the subordinate teachers. The more clear the rules of recruitment, awarding, motivating and assessing are, the lower the risk of bullying occurrence. As it has been shown if an educational institution is well managed and the school inspection is motivating the teachers the probability of bullying development diminishes (Strutyńska, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this current article has argued that bullying may be perceived as a process of regulating in-group emotion. As a response to ambiguous and uncertain workplace situations, negative social influence strategies are implemented. The assumptions proposed here require further investigation in future research. The bullying process, its antecedents, escalation and moderating factors are complex and tremendously difficult to measure. Whereas the bullying target's compliance with particular social influence tactics seems easier to observe, bullies' true intentions may never be revealed.

Workplace bullying is a process in which manipulation, a form of social influence, takes place. Although other terms describing negative workplace behaviors have been mentioned earlier, it is important to note that the above argument has been discussed in relation to bullying as a uniquely defined construct and does not necessarily relate to other terms relating to negative workplace behaviors. For ex-

ample, the term “abusive supervision” is close to bullying in many ways; both relate to a situation in which individuals in organizations view themselves as being exposed to sustained negative actions that they find difficult to deal with and defend themselves from. Both terms relate to aggression while excluding physical violence. However, intent to cause harm is not necessary in the case of abusive supervision, in contrast to many views of bullying. Therefore reflecting an approach that regards workplace behavior as abusive while disregarding premeditation and intent (Salton Meyer and Mikulincer, 2016). As each social influence tactic has to be used intentionally to achieve something, abusive supervision cannot be described in terms of social influence tactics, since, in contrast with bullying, intent is not required for the description of this form of negative workplace behavior.

Therefore, this article not only contributes to the understanding of the bullying phenomenon from a social influence perspective, but also supports knowledge on bullying development and its understanding as distinct from related terms.

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MOBBING W MIEJSCU PRACY A REGULACYJNA ROLA STRATEGII WPŁYWU SPOŁECZNEGO

ABSTRAKT: Artykuł stanowi przegląd teoretyczny, dotyczący problematyki mobbingu w miejscu pracy z perspektywy przejawów wpływu społecznego. Porównano negatywne działania, charakterystyczne dla mobbingu, do procesu manipulacji oraz do taktyk wpływu społecznego, pojawiających się w miejscu pracy. Przedstawiono źródła i czynniki ryzyka rozwoju mobbingu, które mogą ułatwiać lub dawać przyzwolenie na stosowanie taktyk manipulacji. Wykazano, że w procesie mobbingu

występują takie strategie wpływu społecznego, jak manipulacja w języku i procesie komunikacji, ostracyzm czy też plotka. Dyskusji poddano regulacyjną rolę negatywnych sposobów oddziaływania i strategii wpływu dla funkcjonowania i przetrwania grupy i organizacji, co przyczyniać się może do utrwalania się rozwoju mobbingu.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: mobbing, bullying, wpływ społeczny, manipulacja, taktyki wpływu.

