

# Bullying of the Manager and Employees' Prosocial or Antisocial Behaviors: Impacts on Equity, Responsibility Judgments, and Witnesses' Help-Giving

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## Keywords

bullying, revictimization, antisocial or prosocial behaviors, equity, responsibility, help-giving.

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## Abstract

This article aims at studying how bullying acts, revictimization, and behaviors' targets influence responsibility judgments of witnesses bullying and determine help decision. According to the literature, help-giving has various determinants such as gravity of the bullying acts and behaviors of the perpetrators and responsibility attributed to the perpetrators and to the victims often depend on behaviors. With vignettes, we examined the influence of bullying acts, victim's prosocial or antisocial behavior at work, and revictimization on equity judgments, perceived responsibility of perpetrators and victims, and help-giving. Eight vignettes of bullying at work were submitted to 205 participants. The results showed that the situation was judged less equitable, the victim less responsible, the perpetrator more responsible, and the intention of help increased (a) when the perpetrator's acts were serious and (b) when the bullied had emitted a prosocial behavior versus an antisocial one.

Workplace bullying affects millions of employees today, and the rate of occurrence as well as the severity of bullying acts in the workplace has become alarming (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). Many governments all over the world recognize workplace bullying as a serious problem, resulting in the enactment of legislations to combat it (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Rayner & Hoel, 1997). Workplace bullying has been variously referred to as mobbing (Leymann, 1996), abuse at work (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003), or workplace harassment (Brodsky, 1976). Occupational stress research suggests that bullying is a major work-related stressor (Zapf, 1999) and has a significant impact on mental and physical health (Dehue, Bolman, Völlink, & Pouwelse, 2012). It could lead to extreme feelings (learned helplessness or distress) or extreme behaviors directed toward self (suicide). Often, the victims suffer for a long period of time at work without doing anything to change their current situation.

Bullying was initially defined as a social interaction through which one individual (seldom more) is attacked by one or more (seldom more than four) individuals almost on a daily basis and for periods of many months, bringing the person into an almost helpless position with potentially high risk of expulsion (Leymann, 1996, p. 168). Bullying has often been explained by identifying the characteristics of bullies and victims. However, many studies have shown that both personal and organizational factors contribute to determining bullying likelihood. In order to understand the process of bullying and the reasons why victims receive so little help at work, organizational factors (climate, leadership, work overload, organizational changes) in addition to individual factors (disagreeability, narcissism, neuroticism

of the perpetrators, low self-esteem, low assertiveness, and vulnerability of the victims. . . ) had been identified (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001; Hoel & Salin, 2011; Poilpot-Rocaboy, 2006; Zapf, 1999). Another important characteristic concerns the fact to occupy a *subaltern position*, which highlights a major fact in the process: the imbalance in relation to power. The bullying context includes this imbalance and the asymmetrical power position of the victim who is in dependence or in a subordinate position in comparison with the perpetrator. According to Desrumaux (2011), Zapf and Einarsen, (2011), superiors are seldom bullied by subordinates and the more frequent situation involves one (or more) manager(s) who bullies(y) subordinates. The status and hierarchical position of individuals in organizations drive them in accordance with their role and position to adopt sometimes roles of subordinates, other times that of decision makers, assessors, managers, etc. On the basis of accessions to values or shared standards enabling the exercise of power, the executives can thus help to operate the company. However, certain personal operating modes or certain normative derivatives operate mostly in the context of a relationship of subordination. Any institutional relationship can also be the starting point of derivatives and leads to a passage of an accepted subordination on the basis of values co-opted for alienating subordination.

From a worker-employee status, the individual moves surreptitiously to that of a victim, attributed by the entourage, colleagues, leaders, and institution. This status is therefore on the basis of beliefs, in connection with responsibility, a concept that becomes central in terms of speech but sterile and paralytic in relation to action and change. That is the reason why studying judgments and intentions of bystander should take account of the asymmetrical power context. For this reason, we choose to stage, in this study and vignettes, a prototypical bullying situation with a victim who is a subordinate employee and a perpetrator, his or her manager.

Today, the causes of harassment are quite identified. Despite the utility of these studies, we consider as Leymann and with regard to published studies that personal factors are not more efficient and we refute an explanation too psychological of this phenomena. Also, we want to insist on the fact that research on bullying needs to take account of psychosocial factors and the role of the judgments. Furthermore, we wish better understanding factors that conduct colleagues or bystanders at work to support or not bullying victim by defending (insisting on) idea that these factors are in the first place psychosocial. For Paull, Omari, and Standen (2012), the role of the bystander has received only a small portion of research attention in relation to workplace bullying. As Paull et al. (2012) posited, we consider that bystanders are not just incidental but are an integral part of the context of bullying because this context is based on judgments, words, and intentions of bystanders. In problematic contexts or contexts of aggression, the witnesses will have tendency to focus on psychological explanations and this phenomenon is in bond with the theory of the fundamental error attribution, the theory of the Just World Belief. The causal attribution bias (*bias*) (Heider, 1958) involves a focus on explanations related to the actors, and the witnesses then will try to evaluate the responsibility for the victim and that of the perpetrator and will neglect the organizational factors. The theory of the Just World Belief (Lerner, 1980) amplifies the phenomena. Indeed, on the one hand, the situation of mobbing is characterized by an overvaluation of the responsibility for the victim. In addition, according to the BJW, a victim, when the witnesses cannot react (what characterizes the bullying situations because the professional entourage does not wish to take any risk with respect to the harasser), sees himself or herself allotting the responsibility for what arrives to him or her.

Moreover, few studies have shown the links between the acts emitted by the aggressor and victim's behaviors and their relationships with judgment and intentions to help. Consequently, to foster an understanding judgment of responsibility and help toward the bullied victims, research should pay more attention to psychosocial factors including these variables.

We will wonder in particular about the way in which a piece of information relating to the victims (their conducts at work and the fact that they already lived a situation of bullying) influences, among the witnesses, their attributions of responsibility and the decision to come to assistance. Indeed, information on the victim by a mechanism of "psychologization" will increase the feeling that this victim is

responsible partly for the events. Does this mechanism of “responsibilization” work on the basis of information relating to the behaviors at work? Does it work on the basis of the former life at work of the victim? On the contrary, when information is positive (victim’s prosocial behavior), is the responsibility of the harasser then clearly pointed? Finally, we try to answer the principal question: “What role does information play in relating to the victim on the judgments of equity and attributions of responsibility and the decision to come to assistance?”

## Research on Workplace Bullying

Looking at the scientific research on bullying, characteristics of perpetrators, victims of bullying, and their organizations are well identified (Agervold & Gemzoe-Mikkelsen, 2004; Einarsen et al., 2011; Leymann, 1996). Bullying is caused by factors related to deficiencies in work organization and leadership behavior within organizations (Einarsen, 2000). Such characteristics of the work environment may directly provoke bullying, but it also contributes to creating a stressful work climate in which first, bullying can grow up (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2007) and second, bullying can induce burnout (Trépanier, Fernet, & Austin, 2013). Several studies have found a negative correlation between workplace harassment and perceptions of organizational justice (e.g., Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). Tepper (2000) has shown that abusive supervision was negatively associated with perceptions of interactional, procedural, and distributive justice. The consequences of the bullying acts on health are serious (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001, 2002a,b).

In recent times, scholars have tried to explain bullying by considering the judgments toward the perpetrators, the victim, and the bullying situations. A few studies have shown first that organizational characteristic (climate) influences and legitimates judgments of equity (Desrumaux-Zagrodnicki, Lemoine, & Mahon, 2004). Thus, harassment is judged more equitable when the climate is based on strict rules and procedures (Desrumaux-Zagrodnicki et al., 2004). Second, it has been found that the bullied is considered more responsible if he or she has already been victimized and when he or she evokes internal explanations (Desrumaux, 2007). Third, revictimization decreases the intent to help. Understanding the judgments can be a track, a way to explain the lack of help-giving. Indeed, it is striking to note that victims often report lacking of social support (Poilpot-Rocaboy, 2006; Zapf, Knorz, & Kulla, 1996).

## Why Did Victims Not Receive Help?

Empirical research has reported that the overall majority of employees hardly report any repeated negative behaviors (Nielsen, Notelaers, & Einarsen, 2011; Zapf, Escartin, & Einarsen, 2011). Bullying can take the form of open direct acts such as critics, remarks, verbal abuse, public humiliations, or physical aggressions, but it can also be indirect, for instance, excluding or isolating a target, gossiping, rumor spreading, and excluding (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Undergoing such acts, witnesses suffer in silence, feel distress, and underline a great feeling of solitude and a lack of social support. While a few may support the target, others may not give help at all, even sometimes turn against the target (Leymann, 1996). Even when the target of bullying asks for help at work, it is usual that witnesses or colleagues seem to ignore the victim’s suffering and do not intervene.

We can therefore ponder on the role of information relating to the victim and on the role of judgment and contextual information concerning nonassistance to victims.

First, the witnesses’ nonintervention can be explained by the emotions such as intense fear and vulnerability (Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002). For example, Mulder, Pouwelse, Lodewijkx, and Bolman (2013) in the strong stigma by association (SBA) condition found that women and men reported more fear and consequently were less involved in helping. Second, bystanders’ lack of support can also be explained by

the attributions toward the targets of bullying. A number of investigations have documented the main role played by perceptions of responsibility on help-giving (Betancourt, 1990; Reizenzein, 1986; Weiner, 1996). Moreover, a study has shown that a piece of information about the revictimization increases the witnesses' feeling that the target of bullying is responsible for what happens to him or her (Desrumaux & de Chacus, 2007). Thus, the question of what determines the witnesses' intervention seems to be central and needs to be investigated. For Weiner (1996), the intention to help a person depends on the victim's controllability for what happens to him or her. If the person is capable of controlling what happens to him or her, the probability to give help is less important than when he or she is not capable of controlling the event. Moreover, controllability and intention are two antecedents of personal responsibility. According to Weiner's model (1996) and Rudolph, Roesch, Greitemeyer, and Weiner (2004) meta-analysis, positive or negative emotions have a strong effect on help-giving and are strong mediators between cognitions and help. Thus, negative piece of information such as responsibility of the victim induces negative emotion that decreases intention to support the target of bullying. In his responsibility-based theory of social conduct, Weiner (2001) attributed responsibility triggers to affective reactions which are the proximal causes of prosocial behavior.

### **Kinds of Acts, Judgments of Responsibility, and Help-Giving**

As showed above, and in line with the distinction between direct and indirect aggressive behaviors (Baron & Neuman, 1996), workplace bullying can take the form of direct acts, such as verbal abuse, aggressive behaviors, but can also be indirect as gossips, isolation, or exclusion (Einarsen et al., 2009). Escartun, Rodriguez-Carballeira, Zapf, Porrua, and Martin-Pena (2009) differentiated among six categories of bullying behaviors at work. The first three categories talked about the indirect aggressive behaviors and the work environment of the person involved in the harassment situation such as isolation, manipulation of information, and abusive working conditions. The remaining three focused on direct aggressive behaviors and the experiences of victims of harassment (emotional abuse, professional discredit, or devaluating professional roles). These authors showed that bullying behaviors fell into six categories, with various types of emotional abuse proving to be perceived as the most severe category. There was no significant difference in the perceived severity of bullying behavior among victims, witnesses, and employees without previous experience of bullying.

So we can assume that direct and severe acts involving emotional abuse will affect more judgments and help decisions than less severe acts as isolating or ignoring. These latter are often considered as less serious, and we can assume that the indirect and less serious forms will have less influence on equity and responsibility judgments and help intentions. For many authors (Feather, 1996; Howe & Loftus, 1992; Rind, Jaeger, & Strohmetz, 1995), an increase in the severity of crime corresponds to an increase in the judgments of responsibility toward the perpetrator, the emotions in favor of the victim (Zummuner & Fischer, 1995), and more these emotions are associated with a strong motivation to help him or her (Dijker & Raeijmaekers, 1999). Additionally, a study of Cass, Levett, and Kovera (2010) has shown that jurors who read the severe harassment vignettes in opposition to jurors who read a mild harassment vignette were more likely to agree that the plaintiff had suffered and should be compensated for her suffering, and that the organization should be punished. Thus, when the kind of bullying act is considered as more serious (to impact on somebody's health or to aggress by opposition to isolate), we can think that a perpetrator will be judged more responsible and the victim will receive more help. A recent research (Mulder et al., 2013) on determinants of help-giving behaviors in case of workplace bullying tested victims' perceived responsibility and witness' anticipated risk of being themselves victimized as determinants of bystander helping behaviors toward a victim. They found that bystanders who perceived the victim as responsible for the bullying situation appeared to have less helping intention toward this victim.

Thus, in line with previous research, it was hypothesized (H1) when the bullying act is considered as more serious (to impact on somebody's health by opposition to isolate) that (a) the situation will be judged less equitable, (b) the bullied employee will be judged less responsible, (iii) the perpetrator will be judged more responsible, and (d) the target of bullying will be given more support.

### **Deviant and Prosocial Employees' Behaviors Effects on Judgments**

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) arises in response to job stressors and organizational justice (Fox et al., 2001). In the literature, researchers have not really examined how bullied employee's behaviors can influence judgment and help and consequently contribute to the process. It is well known that bullying often emerges not only in a bad climate, but in conflict situations and relationships between employees or between subordinates and supervisors. The conflict escalation hypothesis of bullying (e.g., Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009) states that a social climate characterized by intragroup conflicts develops, in which the target can have different reactions as revolt and deviant behavior or as submission and probaviors. Hauge et al. (2007) showed that among the situational factors, only role conflict and interpersonal conflicts significantly predicted being a perpetrator of bullying. The employee living conflict and mistreated can also by reaction emit deviant behaviors or in the contrary to appease the supervisor that they can work more and better. Robinson and Bennett (1995, p. 556) defined employee deviance as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both". Four distinct categories of deviance had been proposed (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, 1997): production, property, political, and personal aggression. Previously, two kinds of deviances were distinguished (Hollinger & Clark, 1982). Currently, production deviances imply a decrease in the quality or in the quantity of work (e.g., dealing with its personal businesses during his or her working hours).

It is often stipulated in the literature (Desrumaux, 2011; Leymann, 1996) that bullying targets are conscientious, sociable, voluntary, kind, and prosocial in their work. The victims' prosocial behaviors are less studied in the workplace; as a result, we do not know whether it is helping for the target or not. Bierhoff (2002) considered that the terms of helping, prosocial behavior, and altruism are closely interrelated. The prosocial organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is defined as "a discretionary behavior of employees that contributes to the effectiveness of the organization" (Organ, 1988; Organ & Ryan, 1995). In addition to this, Desrumaux, Léoni, Bernaud, and Defrancq (2012, p. 62) defined the prosocial organizational behaviors at work as any voluntary behavior which helps to preserve the organizational standards or rules and gets busy to maintain the well-being of the members of the organization. Desrumaux and de Chacus (2007) showed that the intention of help-giving increased with the victim's prosocial behaviors as opposed to antisocial behaviors. They showed it for each dimension (production, property, political) of antisocial and prosocial behaviors; in the present research, we want to test the hypothesis that victim's antisocial or prosocial behavior will not only impact help-giving but also responsibility and equity judgments. If the judges have pieces of information about target behaviors, it is possible that they will give better ratings to the prosocial target because antisocial behavior at work is illegal and individuals are considered responsible for their acts. Consequently, we assume (H2) that when the bullied person has emitted a prosocial organizational behavior as opposed to an antisocial organizational behavior, (a) the situation will be judged less equitable, (b) the bullied employee will be judged less responsible, (c) the perpetrator will be judged more responsible, and (d) the target of bullying will be given more support.

### **Labeling as a Victim: Will it help or Stigmatize the Victim?**

Recent studies on harassment have shown that victims are considered to be responsible for what happens to them (Desrumaux, 2007) and that the revictimization (defined as the inclination of a person

to be victimized again) decreases the intention to help (Desrumaux & de Chacus, 2007). Why does the fact to be revictimized is acting as negative information? Is there a link between the fact of been revictimized and the fact that responsibility increases? Does it always decrease intention to help? With regard to current scientific literature, there is a lack of research about the consequences of being labeled or self-labeled as a victim. If exposure to negative acts is a reason of labeling, other factors might influence the personal appraisal or labeling of oneself as a victim of workplace bullying (Hoel et al., 2001).

As previous results showed (Desrumaux, 2007; Desrumaux & de Chacus, 2007), the fact of knowing that somebody is revictimized decreases the intention to assist. This appears paradoxical, because we might think that a revictimized person needs more help than others. It also explains why, when the victim at work suffers from aggression (Desrumaux & de Chacus, 2007), the judges had the highest intention of help-giving by opposition to all other kinds of harassment. Previous studies are, however, limited for many reasons that justify the necessity to conduct this new study. The first study on help-giving (Desrumaux & de Chacus, 2007) was limited to a measure of help intention (namely, "intention to intervene," which was a too general word to test help), and we did not know the degree of responsibility attributed to the perpetrator and the victim. In the study of Desrumaux (2007), the psychological problems of the perpetrator were manipulated and the variable "problems of the harasser" probably explains the fact that the witnesses decide not helping the revictimized employee considering that they had a responsibility in these problems. Another limit was the measure of help intention (namely, "intention to intervene," which was a too general word to test help). Taken all together, these manipulations explain the fact that revictimization did not allow help. If we follow Rudolph et al. (2004), the predictions will be that the more an employee is victimized, the more the observer feels that he could not control the situation and the more he or she will consider the victim needs to be helped. This new prediction needs to be tested: A person who has already been victimized decreases the feeling of equity and increases the motivation to help. Having no information about the victim's attribution and without information about the perpetrator, it is probable that in the case of non-revictimization, the judges will paradoxically base their decision on helping, on the kind of bullying: It shows that when the judge wants to decide on helping or not the target, he looks at the severity of the bullying. Consequently, we can hypothesized (H3) that when the employee has already been victimized: (a) the situation will be judged less equitable, (b) the target of bullying will be given more support, and (c) in the case of non-revictimization (lacking of pieces of information) the judges will paradoxically base their decision to help on the kind of bullying.

As a result, not only victimization will modulate the help-giving but positive or negative behaviors will increase or decrease social support. Thus, we suppose that positive or negative behaviors generated by mobbed employee such as prosocial or antisocial behaviors at work will condition the reaction toward him or her.

Finally, the main aim of this study was to test the hypotheses that the kind of harassment, the revictimization, and the harassed employee's prosocial or antisocial behaviors will influence equity and responsibility judgments and will modulate the decision to give help.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Participants, two hundred and five French employees, were recruited at their workplace in the middle of the school year (from January to April), with the agreement of hospitals, companies, and administrations. They were 94 men and 111 women. The majority of the respondents were between 21 and 57 years old ( $M = 39.5$ ,  $SD = 9.4$ ). These participants were working as managers or as subordinates in different areas and services (health, education and social work, catering, industries. . .). Participants in

hospitals were overrepresented in our sample, with 44% respondents. Participants in education and social work were 19%, and administrations cover 15% of the respondents. Finally, blue collars and others professions were in a minority. Sixty-nine percent participants were in subordinate position (nurses, secretary, blue collars. . .), and 31% were managers.

The questionnaire was presented as a survey on interpersonal relationships at work. Questionnaires were distributed and collected by four undergraduate students in several companies located in the Nord-Pas de Calais Picardie area (the second most urbanized area in France after the Parisian area). In each organization, participants received a questionnaire packet, a cover letter explaining the study. Their participation was confidential and voluntary. They were also assured that their managers would not see their responses. They completed the questionnaires and gave them directly back to the undergraduate student.

Participants had to judge the equity of the situation, the responsibility of the perpetrator and the victim, and the probability to help a bullied employee in eight vignettes. The design (2×2×2) included three within-subject variables.

For the eight vignettes, we used three within-subject variables (K2: kind of bullying; B2: antisocial or prosocial behaviors of the bullied employee; and S2: revictimization of the bullied employee or never been victimized). The participants were recruited at their workplace.

After reading the vignette, participants had to judge, on continuous scales of 10 cm, (a) the equity of the situation (from “totally unfair” to “totally fair”), (b) the harasser’s responsibility and the victim’s responsibility (from “not responsible” to “completely responsible”), and (c) the intention of help-giving (from “not at all” to “entirely”) by answering to the four questions. The participants had to answer the first question (first DV): “Do you think this situation is equitable or not?”. For the measure of the second and third DV, respectively, they had to answer the question “How responsible is the manager to you?” and “How responsible is the employee to you?”. The four DV was measured with the question “How likely would you give help to the employee X?”.

## Measures

The questionnaire presented as a survey on interpersonal relationships at work included eight vignettes and continuous scales for each vignettes.

### *Workplace Bullying*

According to the classification of Leymann (1996), two kinds of acts were chosen relating to the categories of LIPT (Leymann, 1996): to isolate versus to impact on somebody’s health.

### *Labeling as a Victim*

The labeling included two modalities (“had already been a victim of similar schemes” and “never been such a victim”).

### *Bullied Employee’s Behaviors*

The antisocial behavior included production deviance (“has dealt with his personal businesses during his working hours”). The prosocial behavior included production deviance (“has invested strongly in its work”).

The vignettes were presented as follows:

Example 1: “X invested himself strongly at work. Regularly for 4 months, his or her supervisor has isolated him or her. X has never undergone similar acts during a previous job.”

Example 2: “X has dealt with his or her personal businesses during his or her working hours. Regularly for months, his or her supervisor has attacked on his or her health. X has already undergone similar acts during a previous job.”

All the judges read all the stories and used four 10-cm-long continuous scales to rate the equity of the situation, the responsibility of supervisor (harasser) and of the subordinate (bullied), and lastly the intention to help the victim.

## Results

The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

### Judgments of Equity

The analysis of variance on the judgments of equity in Table 2 indicates (a) an effect of the intergroup variable: The men judged the situation more equitable than the women ( $F(1, 203) = 6.14, p < .01$ ) who judged the situation less equitable (b) when the acts were serious ( $F(1, 203) = 77.02, p < .001$ ): To impact on health is considered as less equitable than to isolate, (c) when the harassed employee had emitted a prosocial organizational behavior by opposition to an antisocial organizational behavior ( $F(1, 203) = 102.69, p < .001$ ): The acts are judged less fairly when the victim has emitted a prosocial behavior, and (d) the equity increases when the harassed target has not already been victimized by opposition to revictimized employee ( $F(1, 203) = 4.25, p < .05$ ).

Two interactions were significant: one-two-way interaction and one-three-way interaction. The two-way interaction involved the prosocial or antisocial behaviors and the kind of bullying ( $F(1, 203) = 45.65, p < .001$ ). Isolate is judged more equitable than aggression, but in the case of serious attack of the perpetrator, the judges barely considered the employees' behavior. In the case of isolation, prosociality and antisociality are more taken into account by the judges. The three-way interaction involves bullying, judges' gender, and revictimization ( $F(1, 203) = 7.73, p < .01$ ). In case of serious attack, women take more account of the revictimization: Women find the situation the less equitable for the revictimized employees.

### The Perpetrator's Responsibility

The perpetrator's responsibility, presented in Table 2, is estimated more important (a) when the act is serious ( $F(1, 203) = 26.17, p < .001$ ): The perpetrator's responsibility is higher when the bullying consists of impacting on health by opposition to isolate the employee and (b) when the harassed employee has emitted a prosocial behavior by opposition to an antisocial behavior

Table 1  
Means and Standard Deviations (Equity, Responsibility of the Bullier and of the Victim, Help)

	Equity		Responsibility of the bullier		Responsibility of the victim		Help	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Isolation or prosocial or revictimization	1.47	2.32	7.62	3.17	2.80	3.26	7.33	2.93
Isolation or prosocial or non-revictimization	1.85	2.44	7.98	2.89	2.51	3.30	7.27	3.06
Isolation or antisocial or revictimization	3.81	3.21	6.62	3.31	5.92	3.36	4.85	3.15
Isolation or antisocial or non-revictimization	3.83	3.42	6.50	3.35	5.87	3.44	4.74	3.27
Aggression or prosocial or revictimization	1.25	2.25	8.12	2.87	1.90	2.89	7.93	2.74
Aggression or prosocial or non-revictimization	1.35	2.37	8.21	2.88	2.16	3.25	7.61	2.92
Aggression or antisocial or revictimization	1.77	2.47	8.01	2.61	4.50	3.32	6.77	2.81
Aggression or antisocial or non-revictimization	2.02	2.39	7.33	3.18	5.40	3.24	5.59	3.16



Table 2  
*Variance Analysis of the Effects of IV on DV*

Perceived equity	<i>df</i>	MC	<i>df</i> error	MC error	<i>F</i>
Variance analysis of the effects of IV on equity					
Judges' gender	1	7861.15	203	19.13	6.41**
Kind of bullying	1	541.47	203	7.03	77.02***
Prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	800.50	203	7.79	102.69***
Revictimization	1	12.33	203	2.89	4.25*
Bullying × prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	248.37	203	5.44	45.65***
Bullying × judges' gender × revictimization	1	36.10	203	4.66	7.73***
Perpetrator's perceived responsibility					
<i>df</i>	MC	<i>df</i> error	MC error	<i>F</i>	
Variance analysis of the effects of IV on perpetrator's perceived responsibility					
Kind of bullying	1	207.56	203	7.93	26.17***
Prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	294.40	203	10.19	28.88***
Bullying × prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	58.25	203	5.26	11.06
Bullying × revictimization	1	14.33	203	3.57	4.07*
Prosocial or antisocial behaviors × revictimization	1	43.95	203	3.41	12.88***
Victim's perceived responsibility					
<i>df</i>	MC	<i>df</i> error	MC error	<i>F</i>	
Variance analysis of the effects of IV on victim's perceived responsibility					
Kind of bullying	1	235.82	203	7.33	31.16***
Prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	3766.21	203	24.12	156.14***
Bullying × revictimization	1	52.40	203	6.58	7.96**
Prosocial or antisocial behaviors × revictimization	1	23.47	203	5.66	4.14*
Help-giving					
<i>df</i>	MC	<i>df</i> error	MC error	<i>F</i>	
Variance analysis of the effects of IV on help-giving					
Kind of bullying	1	319.92	203	8.29	38.78***
Prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	1633.70	203	15.92	102.62***
Revictimization	1	66.19	203	3.99	16.61***
Bullying × prosocial or antisocial behaviors	1	84.14	203	5.92	14.22***
Bullying × revictimization	1	37.12	203	5.46	6.795**
Bullying × prosocial or antisocial behaviors × revictimization	1	17.45	203	4.26	4.09*

Notes. ns, nonsignificant.  
 \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

( $F(1, 203) = 28.88, p < .001$ ). A first two-way interaction involves the prosocial or antisocial behaviors and the kind of bullying ( $F(1, 203) = 11.06, p < .001$ ). When an employee is isolated, the judges find the perpetrator less responsible if this employee has emitted an antisocial behavior. In the case of serious attack, the judges take less account of the employees' behavior. A second two-way interaction involves the victimization and the kind of bullying ( $F(1, 203) = 4.02, p < .001$ ). In the case of aggression, judges differentiated between revictimized and nonvictimized targets. The perpetrator is judged more responsible when the target is not revictimized. A third two-way interaction involved employees' behaviors and revictimization ( $F(1, 203) = 12.88, p < .001$ ). When the targets are prosocial, the perpetrator is judged more responsible if the target is non-revictimized. When the bullied target has emitted an antisocial behavior, the perpetrator was rated as more responsible if the employee is revictimized.

### The Victim's Responsibility

The victim's responsibility presented in Table 2 decreased when (a) the acts are serious ( $F(1, 203) = 32.13, p < .001$ ): The responsibility is lower when the harasser impacts on health than when he or she isolates, (b) when the harassed employee has emitted a prosocial behavior by opposition to an antisocial organizational behavior ( $F(1, 203) = 156.14, p < .001$ ): The responsibility is more important when the employee is deviant than when he is prosocial. The revictimization has no effect ( $F(1, 203) = 3.18, ns$ ). Two interactions were significant. A first two-way interaction involved the kinds of bullying and revictimization ( $F(1, 203) = 7.96, p < .01$ ): In the case of isolation, there are no differences. In the case of aggression, the bullied target is judged more responsible if he or she was never victimized. A second two-way interaction involves prosocial or antisocial behaviors and revictimization ( $F(1, 203) = 4.14, p < .01$ ): In the case of prosociability, no differences are observed. In the case of antisociability, the employee (never victimized before) is considered as more responsible than an employee who is revictimized.

### Judgments of Help-Giving

Analysis of variance in Table 2 yielded three main effects. First, the intention to help depended on the kind of harassment ( $F(1, 203) = 38.78, p < .001$ ). Second, the prosocial behaviors increased the intention to help contrary to the antisocial behaviors ( $F(1, 203) = 102.62, p < .001$ ). This result confirmed Hypothesis 3.1 and 3.2. Third, the intention to help increased when the harassed employee had already been victimized compared to an employee who had never been victimized ( $F(1, 203) = 16.61, p < .001$ ). Two two-way interactions were significant. A first two-way interaction involved the kinds of bullying and employee's behaviors ( $F(1, 203) = 14.22, p < .001$ ). In the case of isolation, judges take more account of the behaviors. The second two-way interaction involved the kind of bullying and revictimization ( $F(1, 203) = 6.79, p < .01$ ): In the case of non-revictimization, the judges take more account of the kind of bullying. This result confirmed Hypothesis 3.3. A three-way interaction is significant ( $F(1, 203) = 4.09, p < .05$ ) between the kinds of bullying, revictimization, and employee's behaviors. In the case of revictimization and isolation, judges distinguished more between prosocial and antisocial conditions than in the case of non-revictimization.

## Discussion

The present study was aimed at showing that bullying acts, behaviors' targets, and revictimization could determine judgments of bystanders and help decision. Supporting Hypothesis 1, the perpetrator's acts modulated participants' judgments for the equity of the situation, the perpetrator's responsibility, the victim's responsibility. Impacting on the health of somebody is considered as more inequitable than isolate. It increases the perpetrator's responsibility and decreases the victim's responsibility. The intention to support him or her did depend on the kind of bullying. In relation to the DV equity only, we found that men and women did not have the same rates. Women found the bullying less fair than men. As Hypothesis 2 predicted, prosocial behaviors increased the feeling of inequity, the level of the perpetrator's responsibility, and the intention to assist the victim decreased the level of the victim's responsibility. The employee's behavior had an important effect on their decision. Indeed, the intention to help was very high in the case of prosocial behaviors and was weak in the case of antisocial behaviors.

Our results confirmed the Hypothesis 3. We showed here that when the victim is reattacked at work, he or she will receive more help than when he or she has never been victimized. A second main result is that in the case of non-revictimization, judge based their decision to help on the severity of the acts. These results were not obtained with previous results (Desrumaux, 2007) in a context where we had manipulated psychological problems of the perpetrator. This new result can be explained by the fact that

a revictimized employee needs to be helped more than others. In the present study, knowing that a person has already been victimized decreases the judgment of his or her responsibility and increases the motivation to help. The more an employee is victimized, the more the observer feels that he could not control the situation, the more he or she will consider the victim as not responsible (Rudolph et al., 2004). We have found that in the case of non-revictimization, the judges take more account of the kind of bullying. This result is interesting because paradoxically it shows that the judge in order to make an opinion about the help to give looks at the kind of bullying acts.

Moreover, the interaction between victims' behaviors and revictimization shows that if the non-revictimized employee is considered as antisocial at work, he or she will dramatically be considered as more responsible than if he is revictimized. Actually, the results showed that judges based their decisions on pieces of information about the employee. They show the importance of not self-labeling (or being labeled) early as a victim at the workplace. Vie, Glaso, and Einarsen (2010) found that bullied victims, similar to anxious people, perceived themselves and their work situation negatively. As a response to this negative feeling, they behaved inappropriately and were usually perceived unfavorably by others.

The kind of bullying and the prosocial or antisocial behavior at work emitted by the victims are real predictors of the judgments of equity, responsibilities of perpetrator, and target. Acting like a prosocial employee and been victim of serious acts decrease the judgment of equity and the responsibility of the bullied employee, increase the perpetrator's responsibility judgment. The intention to help depends overall on the target's behavior and on the revictimization. The working environment has an important effect on the judgments: The employees known to have emitted prosocial behaviors will be considered less responsible, and they will be given more support than those known to have emitted counterproductive behaviors.

Giving negative pieces of information on the behavior of an employee can produce negative emotions and can explain the colleagues' nonintervention (Martinko, Douglas, Harvey, & Gundlach, 2007; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002). Contrarily, positive pieces of information given about the victim increases help-giving intentions. Saying that the employee has been prosocial is bond to positive emotions that are directly linked to the social support (Martinko et al., 2002, 2007; Rudolph et al., 2004). Ultimately, negative pieces of information, such as antisocial behaviors or responsibility (Rudolph et al., 2004; Weiner, 2001), undoubtedly induce negative emotions and decrease help. However, we must not forget that sometimes, being prosocial can also, paradoxically, wake up the jealousy of a superior or colleagues and increase harassments (Poilpot-Rocaboy, 2000). Ultimately, negative pieces of information, such as antisocial behaviors or responsibility (Rudolph et al., 2004; Weiner, 2001), undoubtedly decrease help.

As we expected, isolating the victim increases equity, target's responsibility, decreases aggressor's responsibility. These judgments contribute to perpetuate the situation. In the case of serious attack, equity and responsibility do not depend on target's behaviors. We need to insist on the numerous cases of isolated victims, and our results show that these persons will be more accused, will suffer more, and are finally perhaps more in danger. We want to emphasize that extreme harassment can include physical assault, but the most common, minor instances include obscene gestures, dirty looks, threats, giving the silent treatment, and belittling.

In this research, revictimization does not increase the risk of stigmatization. This result is different from others (Desrumaux & de Chacus, 2007). However, in the case of revictimization and isolation, judges differentiate between prosocial and antisocial conditions than in the case of non-revictimization. As we recommended (Desrumaux, 2011), to come out of this process of harassment without leaving the company, the victim should not be introduced as a stigmatized person but as someone able to forsake any negative information and seeking path to develop near others by prosocial behaviors at work. It is possible in this case that he or she obtains social support from the environment. In any case, it is important that bullied employees look for social support also in their family and social environment.

## Limitations

Our study has limitations that need to be addressed. First, the method used all self-report measures. Thus, common-method variance might have artificially inflated some of the correlations that we obtained. Second, the vignettes were short enough to avoid parasite variables and to control pieces of information but we are aware that it limited external and ecological validity (real bullying situations are more complicated than these short vignettes). However, the fact that the study used experimental data makes it possible to draw conclusions concerning the causal relationships between harassment and target behaviors and judgments. Third, as Rudolph et al.'s (2004) model recommends it to predict helping or aggressive behaviors, it would be useful to rate judges' emotions. It has been known that positive and favored emotion toward victims can increase the intention to help. Here, we cannot know whether emotions played a role in help decisions. From the employee's point of view, some studies (Martinko et al., 2002, 2007) suggest that although internal attributions for negative events (my fault) are likely to lead to negative emotions (e.g., self-deprecation or helplessness, guilty) and behaviors directed toward oneself (e.g., learned helplessness or substance abuse), external attributions, coupled with perceived intentionality, are likely to lead to negative emotions (such as anger) and behaviors directed toward others (such as aggression, revenge, or sabotage). This track needs to be explored. It is possible that the choice to bring an action against the harasser is a following consequence of these emotions and attributions. Consequently, further studies therefore need to include emotional answers.

Another limitation concerns the status of perpetrators and victims. First, we focus on the asymmetrical position (nonmanagerial vs. managerial). The hierarchical relationship of submission of the subordinate places him or her in a situation of imbalance (situation in which he or she can defend himself or herself with difficulty), and this imbalance of power can be accentuated by other dissymmetrical social relationship, such as the social asymmetrical relationship of sex or of generation. Such other variables could be manipulated.

We also wonder whether the results would have been the same if we had mentioned the existence of other victims. It will be helpful to understand the role of asymmetrical context to observe results in a reverse condition where a victim would be presented, not as a subordinate, but as a manager and conversely if the perpetrator was a subordinate. Such vignettes would deserve to be tested even if it is probable that the victim's stereotype would be less active in this case.

Finally, studies often examined workplace harassment from the perspective of the victim. Even if we have not really measure harasser's judgments, we tried to remediate to this limitation by taking all employees and not only bullied employees. It is also important to study bullying from the harasser's point of view, specifically because managers may use bullying acts without knowing that perhaps they bullied their employees.

## Practical Implications

This study has a crucial implication as it will help to develop a prevention program. The primary aim of this study was to identify how pieces of information about the perpetrators and the victims influence responsibility and help in decision making. More specifically, this study shows that when the behaviors of the perpetrators are considered as less serious as the isolation, the victims do not receive help. Furthermore, isolating and preventing the individual from communication by excluding him from his environment and keeping him away from his colleagues is an extremely common practice. This isolation also aims at excluding the individual, therefore depriving him of social relationship. Isolating and depriving an individual of affiliation not only affect health and increase distress but are a major cause of suicide. The research must encourage the HR services and occupational health and safety to be very vigilant against the practice of isolation. It contributes to increase the awakening of the influence of subtle but

determining information relating to the perpetrator and victim's behaviors on the judgments of bullying situations and on the intention of assistance. Within a company, the decision to intervene when a person is a witness of bullying is strongly related to the victim's behaviors. Various actions emitted by aggressors, such as isolation or deprivation of communication, are not only more or less visible but lead to weaker unfair judgments. In addition, these judgments impact, without doubt, the decisions of the courts and make the handling of situations unequal. Our findings indicate that attributions of responsibility do not allow a resolution of the bullying problem and do not induce a decision of assistance. They perpetuate on the contrary the process since speaking about responsibility focuses the organization on the actors. From the point of view of companies, two early warning indicators appear central. The first, the feeling of equity, exerts a role determining on the mobilization of the actors. The second indicator relates to the emission of the antisocial and prosocial behaviors, these last making it possible not only for the employee to leave his status of victim but also to find a sense with its work. To deal with bullying problems supposes to develop actions of support (Bauman & Newman, 2013) and to insist on the gravity of the privation of affiliation and to be aware in organizations of attributional and emotional processes.

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