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# A Qualitative Examination of Workplace Bullying Experiences Among Temporary-Laborers

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A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING  
EXPERIENCES AMONG TEMPORARY-LABORERS

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Sciences

By

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June 10, 2012

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I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my thesis chair Jerry Cleland and committee member Doug Cellar for their support and encouragement throughout this project.

VITA

The author was born in Los Angeles, California, October 11, 1972. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Psychology and Sociology from North Central College in 2008, and a Master of Sciences degree in Psychology from DePaul University in 2012. The author is also a member of Psi Chi National Psychology Honors Society, Alpha Kappa Delta National Honors Society, and Delta Alpha Pi International Honors Society. During her academic career she has also been awarded the Hearst Make a Difference Scholarship, the Fifth Third Bank Minority Achievement Scholarship, and the Ruby Endowed Academic Performance Scholarship. Additionally, she has presented her research at various national and international psychological conferences including, the Eastern Psychological Association's annual conference in March 2009, the Midwestern Psychological Association's annual conference in May 2009, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial International Conference on Procrastination in August 2009.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Violence at work is devastating for employees and damaging for organizations. Workplace bullying, the persistent exposure to interpersonal aggression, and mistreatment from colleagues, supervisors, subordinates or other work-related individuals, is a prevalent form of organizational violence that threatens the overall health of the individual and the workplace structure (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Bowie, Fisher, & Cooper, 2005). Indeed, it has been shown to create a toxic work environment, and this negative behavior imposes direct costs on both individuals and organizations (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Hence, this workplace phenomenon involves issues of worker rights, health and safety, and effective organizational management (Gouveia, 2007; Hoel, Faragher, & Cooper, 2004). Recent empirical evidence has also shown that bullying is commonplace and widespread among organizations, and that it is on the rise in many workplaces (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, Hodson, 2009). Given its prevalence and the negative outcomes that are associated with this behavior, workplace bullying has become an emerging concern for employers, scholars, and researchers.

A review of the literature indicated that workplace bullying exists across occupational sectors and organizational stratum. Bullying, however, unlike other forms of workplace violence, has most often been regarded as a form of psychological rather than physical harassment (Bowie, Fisher, & Cooper, 2005;

Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). In fact, some scholars have indicated that this behavior represents an attempt by one worker to assert psychological control (and hence demonstrate power) through the humiliation or harassment of another (Gouveia, 2007). With that said, these actions often result in an unhealthy and unproductive workplace (Glendinning, 2001). Consequently, some scholars have argued that bullying is one of the most catastrophic issues within contemporary organizations (Hoel, Faragher, & Cooper, 2004; Glendinning, 2001; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

As previously noted, bullying at work is an increasing problem. In fact, some researchers have claimed that incidents of workplace bullying have nearly doubled in the past decade, and recent studies have reported that between 80 and 90 percent of the workforce will suffer this type of abuse at some point in their careers (Glendinning, 2001; Gouveia, 2007; Thomas, 2010). Moreover, scholars have generally agreed that nearly all workers are affected by bullying at work, either directly as the targets of this behavior or indirectly as observers (Lewis, 2006; Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001; Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2001; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Researchers have also identified this behavior among organizations of all sizes and within a multitude of industries, and in workplaces throughout the world (Leonard, 2007; McIntosh, 2006; Daniel, 2009; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009).

Work is a defining factor in a person's life, identity, and well-being. Therefore, any form of harassment or abuse, in the workplace, may negatively impact the mental and physical health of an employee (Agervold, M., &

Mikkelsen, E.G., 2004; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Indeed, some researchers have indicated that the experience of being bullied at work has devastating immediate and long-term consequences, especially for the victims or targets of this behavior (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Moreover, several studies have shown that negative emotions, psychological disorders (e.g., depression) and a wide array of physical symptoms, commonly result from bullying at work, and a target's emotional injuries typically persist long after the bullying experience has ended (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Rosigno, Lopez, Hodson, 2009). Scholars have also widely indicated the various psychological effects of workplace bullying. For example, some research has shown that the symptoms of bullying are often consistent with those related to stress, anxiety, clinical depression, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (Einarsen, Hoel, Notelaers, 2009; Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Even though there is no universally accepted definition of workplace bullying, there is general agreement among researchers that this phenomenon is an experience of repeated and persistent negative acts toward one or more individuals, in a work-related environment (Salin, 2003; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Einarsen, Hoel, Notelaers, 2009; Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Some researchers have also argued that these negative behaviors are designed to belittle, humiliate, isolate and harass an intended target (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Dalton, 2007). Additionally, recent studies have shown that incidents of workplace bullying may be perpetrated onto a worker by various sources such as through the actions of one's supervisors and colleagues, the

organization's clients and customers or the organization itself (Harvey & Treadway, 2006; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Furthermore, previous findings have suggested that bullying is complex and variable, that it occurs vertically and horizontally, within the organizational hierarchy, and that in some cases, this behavior is perpetrated by those external to the organization of interest (Dalton, 2007). However, overall research has shown that the vast majority of workplace bullies are supervisors or managers, who hold organizational positions that are structurally higher than the individuals they target (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Consequently, some scholars have reported that an incident of bullying often represents the conflicts, power struggles, and inequalities that are embedded in a workplace (Glendinning, 2001; Mack, 2005; Gouveia, 2007).

The concept of bullying has evolved over time, and so has scholars' understanding of this phenomenon. Indeed, a review of the literature showed that the focus of bullying studies has recently moved away from the examination of incidents of overt physical violence or aggression, to experiences consisting of more subtle negative behaviors, usually psychological in nature (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Olender-Russo, 2009). These bullying experiences usually occur over prolonged periods of time and include behaviors such as constant criticism, gossip, blaming, and social exclusion, to name a few (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Olender-Russo, 2009). Interestingly, as with many forms of workplace aggression, bullying may begin as psychological harassment but ultimately escalate into physical acts of violence or abuse.

Several researchers have indicated that workplace bullying typically involves a perceived power imbalance, and that this behavior often ultimately results in a harmful and unhealthy work environment (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). This imbalance of power, between the perpetrator and the bullied worker, may be due to a disparity in job power (e.g., supervisor versus subordinate) or a group's perceived higher status (e.g., a permanent versus a temporary-employee), within an organization (Olender-Russo, 2009). Therefore, scholars have usually viewed workplace bullying as a form of interpersonal aggression, which is displayed through various anti-social and dysfunctional behaviors, which arise, in part, due to inequalities in organizational power, between a perpetrator and targeted worker (LaVan & Martin, 2007; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). In fact, researchers have indicated that bullying at work, does not commonly occur between two workers of equal strength or in similar positions of power (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006). Some studies have also demonstrated that, in most cases, the target of bullying is a relatively powerless worker who often lacks the resources or ability to defend oneself (Olender-Russo, 2009; McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004).

Workplace bullying is not only harmful to the individuals targeted in the experience, it is also damaging to non-bullied workers and to the vitality of organizations (Glendinning, 2001; Gouveia, 2007; La Van & Martin, 2007). For example, incidents of bullying have been shown to decrease the morale, productivity and the general work-quality of the bullied and non-bullied workers,

within an organization (Roscigno, Lopez & Hodson, 2009). This negative behavior is also capable of significantly impacting the overall success of an organization due to factors such as high rates of employee absenteeism and turnover (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Indeed, studies have shown that bullying is a common reason for why some workers leave jobs, especially within their first year of employment, thereby significantly increasing the costs of organizational recruiting, hiring and training (Simons, 2008; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Olender-Russo, 2009).

As previously stated, bullying has been identified across various occupational sectors and organizational roles; and in regards to the role of gender, it has been reported that men and women are equally targeted for workplace abuse (McGinley, 2008; Gouveia, 2007; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Moreover, even though bullying has been shown to be widespread among organizations, some researchers have found significant differences in the prevalence of this workplace behavior. For example, Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, and Olsen (2009) reported that incidents of bullying varied among job types, between gender-dominant occupations (i.e., male-dominated or female-dominated jobs) and within specific organizations. These variations are believed to be a result of the differences in the particular organizational culture prevailing in the workplace under study (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

Researchers have also reported that cross-cultural variants and societal norms may impact the types of bullying behaviors that are accepted or tolerated in various organizations (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). For example, Lewis,

Sheehan, and Davies (2008) suggested that these negative behaviors appear to be less prevalent in countries that have implemented legislation or governmental policies to address workplace bullying (e.g., particular areas in Canada) and in regions of the world that have been shown to have higher levels of worker-autonomy (e.g., particular areas in Europe). Additionally, studies have shown that all forms of harassment and abuse (e.g., sexual and non-sexual in nature) tend to emerge more commonly in workplaces characterized by physically demanding work and among minority work groups (Lopez, Hodson, & Roscigno, 2009). In fact, the harassment and abuse of workers in these types of workplaces has been shown to enforce formal and informal status hierarchies, inequalities and social exclusion in employment (Lopez, Hodson, & Roscigno, 2009; Salin, 2003).

Recently, researchers have presented evidence on the importance of an organization's institutional framework—organizational structures such as the formal policies, procedures and practices of a workplace, in the emergence of bullying (McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004; Lopez, Hodson, & Roscigno, 2009). For example, McGinley (2008) claimed that organizational (bullying) practices are commonly related to a workplace's structural masculinities—the subtle and unwritten guidelines and tendencies to promote and favor masculine-oriented identities and behaviors within an organization. It appears likely that these structured masculinities may define and reinforce certain work (e.g., nursing) or jobs (e.g., truck drivers) as masculine or feminine.

Some studies have indicated that the bullying practices and policies embedded, within organizations, may create potentially harmful and abusive



environments for workers, especially for those with conflicting gender and occupational roles (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Salin, 2003). For example, when a worker's gender violates that of the expected occupational norms for their profession (e.g., female truck drivers), he or she may be more vulnerable to bullying experiences (McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). This vulnerability is evidenced by research, which has indicated that increased incidents of bullying are frequently related to violations of occupational gender norms (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Indeed, bullying has also been shown to have disparate impacts on gender non-conforming men and women such as those who are employed in jobs (e.g., male nurses) traditionally performed by the opposite sex (McGinley, 2008). Additionally, the literature has indicated that both structured masculinities and gendered constructs may allow for or encourage ritualized forms of bullying—aggressive displays of behavior towards subordinates, newly hired workers, members of minority groups and other specifically targeted individuals in the workplace (McGinley, 2008; Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001).

Another group of individuals who consistently experience some of the highest levels of workplace bullying are unskilled workers, in male-dominated occupations, such as those in manual-labor construction jobs (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson (2009) have also identified several structural and social vulnerabilities that are predictive of these workers being bullied, such as racial minority membership and the holding of a low status occupational position within an organization (e.g., an entry level or

contingent position). With that said, the current study expanded on these findings by investigating workplace bullying in the temporary-labor industry, a sector of the workforce that has been shown to be especially vulnerable to work-related harassment and abuse (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). In fact, this industry vulnerability is due, in part, to the fact that most temporary-labor jobs are low in status, power, and pay (Cook, 2002; Grow, 2003; Martino & Bensman, 2008).

The phenomenon of bullying has been identified as a significant social issue, especially in schools and educational settings, but scholars have only recently begun to focus on the concept of workplace bullying and its role in modern organizational dynamics (Glendinning, 2001; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, Davies, 2008). Workplace bullying first emerged as a topic of research in the Scandinavian countries in the early 1980's, as researchers attempted to differentiate bullying behaviors from *normal* social stress in the workplace (Leymann, 1996; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). Over the last two decades, scholarly and public awareness of workplace bullying has increased significantly, particularly in Europe and the United Kingdom, where this behavior has been thoroughly established as an important issue in organizations and other workplace environments (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Harvey & Treadway, 2006; McGinley, 2008). In the United States, however, scholarly and organizational interest in the area of non-discriminatory harassment and abuse at work is still in its initial stages (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Nevertheless, recent empirical evidence has revealed that bullying is indeed a significant problem in

America's workforce. For example, recent studies have reported that between 10 and 20 percent of workers, in the United States, are subjected to workplace bullying each year and some research has indicated that this negative behavior is even more prevalent among certain occupations and within particular organizations (Glendinning, 2001; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Olender-Russo, 2009). These previous studies have been instrumental in establishing workplace bullying as a legitimate type of workplace harassment.

There have been various predictors of workplace bullying that have been presented in the literature, including personality, demographic, behavioral, structural and organizational variables (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000). Researchers, however, have largely focused on the psychological characteristics of bullies and their victims, when attempting to understand the negative behaviors at hand. In fact, it has only been during the last decade or so that scholars have started to consider the social and organizational components of bullying. For example, some recent studies have shown that certain workplace variables, including organizational leadership styles, relational power dynamics within organizations, and an individual's actual or perceived occupational status, are all factors that are capable of increasing a worker's likelihood of being bullied (Gouveia, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). These recent approaches to studying workplace bullying are due, in part, to the growing economic globalization and other economy related pressures, such as organizational competition from restructuring, downsizing, outsourcing, and so on (Harvey & Treadway, 2006;

Bauman, 2001; Burnell, 2002). Therefore, the current study, in line with other recent bullying research, examined various worker vulnerabilities (low pay, low levels of education, minority group status, ect.) and organizational factors (workplace power, organizational policies and practices, and so on) that have been indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying.

Researchers have traditionally examined workplace bullying by determining its prevalence among various occupations and identifying at risk groups within particular organizations (La Van & Martin, 2007; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Some of these studies have investigated bullying by focusing on specific professions (healthcare, education, etc.) while others have examined its frequency across different work sectors (Gouveia, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). The majority of this research, however, has focused almost exclusively on an organization's permanent workforce. Therefore, researchers have largely failed to adequately examine or account for temporary-workers (i.e., temporary-laborers). This is despite the fact that this group of workers is a substantial and important part of the workforce (Williams, 2009; Davidson, 2010). Indeed, the temporary-worker market employed well over 2 million workers in 2010, and some industry experts have speculated that in the next few years this group of workers will likely account for nearly a quarter of the American workforce (Davidson, 2010). This increase in the temporary-workforce may be especially likely under the current economical climate, where the outsourcing of workers is commonplace and widespread among organizations (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Ortega,

Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Hinshaw, 2010).

Empirical evidence has indicated that workers in low-status and low-paid jobs, such as those in the industrial, manual, and unskilled labor sectors of the workforce (positions that are prevalent in the temporary-labor industry) are more likely to be bullied than others (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Moreover, some studies have reported that workers low in job status (i.e., temporary-laborers) and power, within an organization, are most commonly the targets of disrespect and bullying by organizational supervisors (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). The literature has also shown that, when compared to an organization's permanent employees, temporary-laborers tend to be poorly paid for the same work, and that they are commonly exposed to increased levels and additional sources of bullying on the job (La Van & Martin, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). The current study expanded the literature by examining the bullying experiences of temporary-laborers, as stated above, a substantial and growing group of workers that has been largely ignored by researchers despite having an increased vulnerability to harassment and abuse at work (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Traditionally, workplace bullying has been viewed as an internal problem within organizations. Therefore, this type of bullying is usually considered to be an experience between two or more workers, within the same organization (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Leymann, 1996; Baron & Neuman,

1996). Moreover, until now, research has largely ignored bullying that is work-related but perpetrated by individuals outside of one's organization of employment (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). This is despite the fact that it is often necessary for workers, in certain occupations (i.e., temporary-laborers), to have regular and, sometimes, prolonged interactions with individuals (patients, clients, customers, vendors, etc.) from outside of their organization of employment, while at work (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Consequently, these workers may be exposed to negative and abusive behaviors that are perpetrated by individuals, such as clients, who are related, yet external, to their organization (Glendinning, 2001; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Previously, bullying research has largely focused on workplace bullying experiences that are perpetrated by supervisors onto subordinates (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, and Hodson, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). However, a substantial amount of empirical evidence suggests that in certain sectors of the workforce, including the service and health care fields, bullying is just as likely to be perpetrated by individuals external to a victim's organization of employment, such as by an organization's clients or customers, as it is by those internal to an organization, such as by one's supervisors or co-workers (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). A review of the literature has also indicated that the structural inequalities (e.g., policies and practices) of organizations themselves may stimulate worker bullying. For example, some research has suggested that organizations, which are structured in

a more hierarchical manner, may create an environment that leads to increased incidents of workplace bullying. In fact, this may be especially true when an organization's ranks (e.g., a chain of command) are clearly marked by levels of power and prestige (Roscigno, Lopez, and Hodson, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

Overall, it has only been relatively recently that workplace bullying has been scientifically studied, and not until the last ten years or so has there been a substantial increase of interest and activity, among scholars and researchers trying to understand and deal with the problems of non-discriminatory harassment and abuse at work (La Van & Martin, 2008; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Therefore, there are still many things that are not understood about this dysfunctional behavior, in the context of organizations (McGinley, 2008; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). For example, many questions still remain about the underpinnings of workplace bullying and the many material and social-psychological costs that arise from the harassment and abuse of employees at work (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003).

With all of the above stated, in an effort to further expand the literature, on the topic at hand, the current study utilized in-depth interviews, in order to examine, self-reported experiences of work-related bullying, among temporary-laborers and to collect rich and detailed data about this organizational phenomenon. The primary aim of this research was to better understand the roles of worker vulnerabilities (poorly paid, low-status positions, minority membership,

and so on) and organizational factors (policies, practices, organizational culture, and so on), in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers, while identifying the perpetrators of these negative behaviors, in the temporary-labor industry.

### The History of Workplace Bullying Research

Even though the concept of bullying has been discussed for decades, the original research, on this behavior, focused almost exclusively on school-aged children, within academic settings (Olender-Russo, 2009; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). More recently, however, this phenomenon has been identified and investigated in professional settings (i.e., workplaces). With that said, recent studies have shown that this negative behavior is indeed prevalent among organizations and that it exists at many levels within the organizational hierarchy (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Olender-Russo, 2009). However, one of the challenges of understanding an organizational phenomenon as complex and widespread as workplace bullying, is the numerous labels and terms that are used interchangeably by researchers, media and the public, when describing the behavior (Glendinning, 2001; Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Indeed, Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies (2008) claimed that the various terms used to label different types of tensions between members of an organization's workforce, including words such as bullying, abuse, mobbing, negative behaviors, harassment, incivility, toxicity, violence, and aggression, have not been robustly established and their boundaries have not been clearly defined. Additionally, due



in part to the multi-faceted nature of workplace bullying, its definition has also varied considerably among studies, and researchers have struggled to arrive at an agreed-upon meaning (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & Cuyper, 2009). Therefore, identifying and labeling bullying has been a challenging task for researchers and also for bullied-workers, observers, and administrators within organizations (Lewis, 2006; Dalton, 2007; Leymann, 1996).

Nonetheless, scholars have agreed that defining workplace bullying is a necessary step in understanding how this organizational behavior emerges and in identifying employment factors that influence and exacerbate this work-related issue (Glendinning, 2001; Gouveia, 2007; McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004).

Researchers have also largely acknowledged that the behaviors identified as bullying, by whom and how, are key issues in developing the construct of workplace bullying, a phenomenon that may be more accurately defined as complex patterns of interactions rather than incidents of specific behaviors (Lewis, 2006; Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001).

#### Definitions of Workplace Bullying

As previously stated, a review of the literature showed that even though researchers have presented various definitions of workplace bullying there is still no one agreed or accepted meaning for this organizational issue. For example, researchers in the U.K. and Europe have historically used the word bullying to describe this pattern of abusive and negative behaviors, whereas German researchers have used the term mobbing for the same work-related behaviors (Zapf, Knorz, & Kulla, 1996). Also, in America, some researchers have also

grouped a similar and often overlapping set of negative behaviors, but they have referred to them by using different terms such as employee abuse and workplace aggression (Keashley, 1998; Keashley & Jagatic, 2003; Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Even though there have been numerous terminologies presented to describe workplace bullying, some commonalities in the definitions have emerged. Specifically, there appears to be a general agreement among scholars about the most salient features of the phenomenon at hand. For example, most researchers have reported that a bullying experience is—a frequent, ongoing, and a detrimental incidence of inappropriate behaviors (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, Hodson, 2009; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Scholars have also, generally, suggested that single negative acts, at work, are not considered to be experiences of workplace bullying (La Van & Martin, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). In other words, bullying does not occur as an isolated event rather it is usually defined by the persistence of negative behaviors over a continuous duration of time (Dalton, 2007; Harvey & Treadway, 2006).

Researchers have indicated that the victim of a bullying incident usually faces an increasing frequency and intensity in the negative behaviors they experience (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). For example, Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) reported that one defining characteristic of bullying is, its prolonged exposure to repeated negative acts. In fact, some researchers have suggested that it is actually the pattern of negative acts that shows intent, in that bullies may be able to explain individual incidents but cannot usually provide an

explanation for the pattern of their behavior (Dalton, 2007). Research has also shown that bullying is most often targeted toward one or a few particular victims rather than being a form of widespread or generalized workplace abuse (LaVan & Martin, 2007; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009).

It is worthwhile to note that the target of bullying behaviors, at work, usually views these negative acts as extremely offensive, degrading, and unjustified (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; La Van & Martin, 2007). Moreover, researchers have argued that certain definitions of bullying may actually marginalize some workers' accounts (e.g., those of minorities and women), and related studies have found that these workers are more likely, than others, to self-doubt and to be blamed by others for their bullying experiences (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & Cuyper, 2009; Lewis, 2006). Several recent studies have also shown that bullying commonly involves a power imbalance or a victim-perpetrator dimension, in which the target is subjected to negative behaviors in such a way that he or she is unable to defend himself or herself in the situation (La Van & Martin, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009, Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

The various negative actions and behaviors that are classified as workplace bullying, however, appear to be somewhat unclear, and researchers have included a wide variety of items ranging from physical violence to the more subtle managerial tactics of harassment (Glendinning, 2001; Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Craig & Pepler, 2007). Indeed, researchers have argued, that

there are numerous ways in which bullies can subtly or overtly target their victim (Dalton, 2007). For example, some of the specific behaviors and actions that have been identified as constituting workplace bullying include: social isolation, silent treatment, rumors, excessive criticism or monitoring of one's work, verbal aggression, and public humiliation (O'Moore, & Seigne, 1998; Keashley, 1998; McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Also, because bullying experiences are each unique, they have often been described on a case-by-case or individual basis, and the behaviors identified in each incident usually vary greatly (Dalton, 2007).

Some researchers have suggested that incidents of bullying may entail and be grouped into either work-related or person-related types of actions and behaviors (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). The distinction between work-related bullying—negative behaviors of a psychological nature, and person-related bullying—negative behaviors that involve physical aggression, was introduced in the early 1990's in European studies that initially documented both types of bullying in order to explain the various negative behaviors and actions that emerged and persisted in organizations (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Researchers have also reported that both of the above types of bullying are widespread, among organizations, with work-related bullying usually appearing in relatively subtle forms, such as through the excessive monitoring of one's work, unreasonable deadlines, and unmanageable workloads; while person-related bullying usually takes a more obvious form through the display of demeaning behaviors, such as

yelling or name calling, verbal abuse, and overt threats (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

The challenge of arriving at an agreed-upon definition for the concept of bullying and the various actions and behaviors that have been constituted as workplace bullying or not, make comparisons between studies extremely difficult (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Calvert & O'Connell, 2008). It also appears that the definition of workplace bullying has been in a constant state of flux, and that the meaning of this behavior is continuing to evolve alongside the scholars' understanding of this phenomenon. For example, in the previous decade several European and U.K. workplace studies began defining bullying as situations in which a worker is repeatedly exposed to negative and abusive behaviors at work, primarily of a psychological nature, with the outcome of humiliating, intimidating, frightening or punishing the intended target (Glendinning, 2001; Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Craig & Pepler, 2007). These definitions specified that even though the negative and unwanted nature of the behavior involved was imperative to identifying workplace bullying, another important component of this organizational issue was that of the persistency of the experience (Vartia, 1996; Glendinning, 2001; La Van & Martin, 2007). Hence, an understanding of workplace bullying evolved that focused equally on the phenomenon's specific behaviors and the way they were carried out, as it did on the frequency and duration of the bullying experience (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). This evolved definition

also indicated that many researchers considered workplace bullying to be largely psychological rather than physical in nature (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Consequently, many of the studies that followed generally placed less emphasis on incidents of bullying that were physically intimidating or violent in nature, and instead focused primarily on the psychological components of bullying (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Hoel, Cooper, Faragher, 2001).

A large body of research has shown that bullying is not only commonplace in many organizations, but that this negative behavior, from a legal perspective, largely unregulated in most workplaces (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Moreover, many bullying experiences continue long-term without consequences or report of the incidents (La Van & Martin, 2007). Studies have also shown that bullying is usually an experience that constitutes an escalating and increasingly abusive work environment rather than as an occurrence of discrete and isolated behaviors (La Van & Martin, 2007; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Indeed, the literature showed that the repetition and duration of the bullying incidents have been reported as some of the most important characteristics of this work-related behavior (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Additionally, most scholars have shown workplace bullying to be a series of incidents that are predominantly psychological in nature, however some studies have reported cases of bullying that are primarily physical or sexual in nature (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Gouveia, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

### The Role of Power in Workplace Bullying

In an attempt to distinguish workplace bullying from more general conflicts at work, scholars have claimed that, unlike general conflicts, workplace bullying requires that a target be forced into a submissive or inferior position (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baron & Neuman, 1996). Moreover, studies suggest that bullying usually involves experiences in which the perpetrator believes that the target is helpless and incapable of stopping the behavior (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; McGinley, 2008). This idea of a submissive or inferior target, has led some experts in the field to re-define workplace bullying to include the additional concept of power in its definition (La Van & Martin, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Accordingly, researchers that view the concept of power as an important determinant in this negative workplace behavior tend to focus on the imbalance of authority, rights, resources and privileges between the individuals involved in a bullying experience (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). For example, some recent studies have shown that pre-existing or evolved imbalances of power, especially those related to job status, are key to many workplace-bullying incidents (McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Scholars have subsequently argued that it is indeed the power differential between the individuals involved in workplace bullying that limits the targets' ability to retaliate or successfully defend themselves (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Research has also indicated that an imbalance of power between a

target and his or her perpetrator (e.g., a superior-subordinate relationship), often reflects the formal power-structure of the organization in which the workplace bullying arises, as would be the case when a worker is being bullied by someone higher up in the organizational hierarchy (McGinley, 2008; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Alternatively, some researchers have claimed that the source of power between the individuals involved in workplace bullying, is not necessarily based on organizational structures or individual factors (e.g., one's job status), and that instead it is more informal in nature and linked to various variables, including a worker's occupational knowledge, education, experience, and access to social support (Gouveia, 2007; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Scholars agree however, that regardless of the source of the power differential between the individuals involved in a bullying experience, that because of the nature of workplace bullying, in terms of its frequency and duration, the target may increasingly become depleted of their coping resources, thus further reinforcing their position of powerlessness (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; McGinley, 2008).

Some research has indicated that a substantial amount of workplace bullying results, specifically, from an imbalance in relational power— a type of power that arises from organizational inequalities (e.g., job status) between two or more individuals in an organization (Gouveia, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Moreover, studies have consistently reported that incidents of bullying are, most often, carried out by a target's supervisor(s) or



other individuals who holds positions of power at work rather than by one's subordinates (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). In fact, with the exception of a few European studies, most research has shown that supervisors and managers are involved in between 50 and 70 percent of all bullying cases (Jefferson, 2008; McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). For example, in a recent national workplace study conducted in the United States, nearly 45 percent of the respondents reported working for an abusive supervisor at least once in their careers (Leonard, 2007).

More recently, researchers have also considered the structural power that is embedded within organizational practices and policies and various workplace inequalities (e.g., job status) as predictors of workplace bullying. For example, some studies have examined the ways that power exacerbates or mitigates the development of, and one's vulnerability to, harassment and abuse at work (Lewis, Sheehan and Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Moreover, scholars have suggested that worker harassment by immediate supervisors and the hierarchical abuses of work-related power, two issues that result from organizational power differentials, are both critical to the study of workplace bullying (McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

In the past few years, research has indicated that the relational and organizational features of work environments, specifically, those that involve power differentials, are often instrumental in the emergence of workplace bullying (McGinley 2008; Einarsen, Hoel, Notelaers, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, &

Hodson, 2009). This power differential between workers may derive from a physical advantage (e.g., size and strength), but it also arises from social or workplace advantages such as dominant organizational roles (e.g., supervisor compared to a subordinate), higher social status in a work-group (e.g., a well-liked versus rejected worker), strength in numbers (e.g., group of workers bullying a single peer), and through structural/systematic power (racial groups, sexual minorities, economic disadvantage, etc.) (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Some studies have also shown that power can develop by knowing another worker's vulnerability (e.g., low socio-economic status) and using that knowledge to harass or abuse the individual (Craig & Pepler, 2007).

Some of this bullying literature has drawn on classic theoretical work pertaining to power and organizational constraint, such as Cohen and Felson's Framework of Routine Activities—a theory suggesting that harmful workplace conduct emerges out of the routine activities of targets, is stimulated by perpetrators and conditioned by the presence or absence of certain organizational attributes (Gouveia, 2007; McGinley, 2008 Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). With that stated, the above theory appears to suggest that organizations, with clear and established anti-bullying policies (and practices), would likely discourage potential perpetrators from bullying potential victims at work.

Several researchers have examined various worker inequalities (e.g., job status) and relational power (e.g., supervisor-subordinate relationship) in organizations, in an attempt to better understand the role of power and powerlessness in the emergence of workplace bullying. These findings have

suggested that the variables of power and powerlessness are not isolated attributes rather they are dependent on the relational contexts of the individuals involved, and are often defined by the perceived rights and relationships of individuals and groups at work (Gouveia, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Some researchers have also investigated the pre-existing relational power that is embedded in organizations (e.g., the hierarchical structure of management). Specifically, they have examined the ways that such power manifests in the form of bullying and is then conditioned, reinforced or mitigated by social and organizational structures in the work environment (and society) (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Indeed, related studies have shown that with each repeated bullying incident, power relations are often intensified in such a way that the individual who is bullying increases in power and the worker being bullied loses power (Craig & Pepler, 2007). Thus, bullying is considered to be an abusive relationship, in which individuals who bully learn to use power and aggression to control and harm others, and the workers who are bullied become increasingly powerless and unable to defend themselves from a perpetrator (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009).

#### The Prevalence of Workplace Bullying

As previously mentioned, since there is no universal agreement regarding a single definition of workplace bullying and because the literature has suggested that many victims of bullying do not report their experiences, the prevalence rates of this behavior may not be precise (La Van & Martin, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Even with this limitation, however, the empirical

evidence on the prevalence of workplace bullying in Europe and the U.S. has consistently show that this work-related issue is quite common and widespread (Gouveia, 2007; La Van & Martin, 2007; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, 2009, Thomas, 2010). In fact, some research has indicated that in the U.S. alone, approximately 1 in 6 workers (16.8 percent of workers) are victims of workplace bullying, and in Europe, workplace bullying is believed to impact at least 11 percent of the workforce annually (Namie, 2000; La Van & Martin, 2007).

Researchers have generally agreed, as previously mentioned, that the most prevalent incidents of bullying usually involve a supervisor or manager who bullies less-powerful co-workers. Scholars have labeled this specific type of organizational bullying, *downward bullying*—the intentional and repeated inflictions of physical and/or psychological harm by superiors (e.g., supervisors) on to subordinates, within an organization (Namie, 2000; La Van & Martin, 2007). This prevalence of downward bullying is evidenced, in part, by a significant study conducted in the U.S., which showed that downward bullying made up for over 80 percent of all workplace-bullying experiences (Namie, 2000). The prevalence of downward bullying is further supported by a significant study produced by the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Industry (2001) that reported the widespread existence of bullying in the U.K., with nearly 50 percent of respondents reporting that they had either been bullied or witnessed bullying-behaviors at work, and also showed that 75 percent of these bullying experiences included perpetrators that were supervisors of or held more powerful positions than their targets (La Van & Martin, 2007).

Research has also identified several types of downward bullying at work, including the misuse of power or job-status, verbal aggression or insults, and undermining another by work overloading or criticism (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; La Van, & Martin, 2007). However, as previously mentioned, since bullying behaviors are called by many different names, and because the terms targets use to report and describe these experiences can vary greatly, the actual prevalence of specific types of bullying (e.g., downward bullying) may not be completely known or entirely represented in studies (La Van & Martin, 2007). Moreover, researchers have suggested that one of the most difficult to overcome limitations of determining the actual occurrences of workplace bullying is the underreporting of this behavior (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baron & Neuman, 1996). Indeed, targets of workplace bullying frequently fail to report this behavior, in part, because some workers may not see themselves as bullied, and instead feel that they are to blame for provoking the harassment or abuse (La Van & Martin, 2007; McGinley, 2008). Additionally, some targets fail to report work-related bullying incidents, due to fear or shame, or because they believe that the perpetrator would not likely face consequences and/or might retaliate (Dalton, 2007; Jefferson, 2008).

#### Antecedents Related to the Development of Bullying in Organizations

According to scholars, workplace bullying is one subcategory of organizational violence that manifests in various negative workplace behaviors, and results in both emotional and physical injury and harm to workers (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Glendinning, 2001; Bowie, 2002; Gouveia, 2007). Indeed,

numerous studies have investigated these negative behaviors and thus have identified the potential variables that are predictive of this specific type of harassment and abuse at work (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

As previously stated, because it is often difficult for people to admit to being a perpetrator of bullying, researchers have found it challenging to collect information on the origins of this behavior from the individuals that initiate it (McGinley, 2008; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Therefore, most of the evidence on the development of workplace bullying has been gathered through targets' reports of their bullying experiences (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). Researchers have also largely focused on factors that are internal to organizations, such as the level of the worker, the job and the organization, in order to determine specific variables that are predictive of the emergence of workplace bullying, rather than examining factors or vulnerabilities (e.g., a worker's socioeconomic status) that are external to an organization, but still yet may contribute to this phenomenon (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

The literature indicated that there are indeed various antecedents of workplace bullying have been shown to contribute to interpersonal conflicts at work, and when these work-related conflicts are not readily resolved, they may continue to escalate and ultimately result in the abusive behavior of workplace bullying (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Interestingly, researchers have suggested that many work-related conflicts are initially content

oriented, but, when they are allowed to intensify, they eventually develop personal aspects (McGinley, 2008; La Van & Martin, 2007). In these cases, research has indicated that the level of power (e.g., either formal or informal) among those involved in bullying incidents is critical, in that powerful workers tend to become the perpetrators and the powerless workers usually become the targets in the experience (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Salin, 2003).

Researchers have presented various explanations to describe the relationship between bullying and both individual and organizational factors. For example, one line of research has reported that the antecedents of bullying may stimulate this negative behavior at work through the development of stressful and abusive environments (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Other research has indicated that individuals who violate work-related expectations or social norms may encourage negative reactions from co-workers or other members of an organization towards the violating worker (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). In fact, some research has provided evidence that perpetrators may bully in response to the stress that the victim's norm violation creates for them (Hoel & Salin, 2003).

Some scholars, as previously mentioned, have argued that the antecedents of bullying first contribute to interpersonal conflict between workers (Zapf & Gross, 2001; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Aquino & Bradfield). These interpersonal conflicts, if left unresolved, are then capable of escalating into destructive behaviors such as workplace bullying (Zapf & Gross, 2001). Some researchers have also provided a step-by-step development of bullying, in which

they suggest that bullying may be initiated not only by ineffective coping with frustration and as a result of unresolved interpersonal conflicts, but that this negative behavior may also originate directly from team or organizational characteristics (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). In fact, this research indicated that there is likely no single cause for becoming a target or perpetrator of bullying at work, and therefore focusing on only one aspect of the process does not thoroughly explain why bullying occurs.

Antecedent behaviors related to the target. A large body of research has examined the bullied targets' attributes and individual indicators of weakness, such as specific personality types when seeking to better understand workplace bullying (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). These studies have shown that workplace bullying may be related to several specific targets' attributes, including shyness, pre-existing conditions of anxiety and depression, and low social skills (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Moreover, research has shown that targets of bullying tend to be: (1) submissive and non-controversial, often preferring to avoid conflict; (2) conscientious, traditional and dependable; (3) quiet and reserved, often favoring familiar settings; (4) anxious and sensitive, often having a difficult time coping with stressful environments (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000). For example, work by Strandmark and Hallberg (2007) suggested that targets of workplace bullying commonly possess certain attributes such as low-levels of self-esteem, and may be seen as *different* (e.g., more traditional or too quiet) by their peers.



Some studies, however, have indicated differences in the degree to which attributes of the targets are involved in the emergence of workplace bullying. For example, some researchers have argued that these individual characteristics are not as important as they were once perceived to be, and others have completely excluded target attributes from their examination (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Further, the existence of, what some researchers have coined, a victim-type personality (e.g., the constant-complainer) was previously used to help explain incidents of bullying at work, but this explanation has recently begun to be questioned (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009).

Interestingly, some research has suggested that persons who were bullied as children at school are also more likely to be victimized later in life as adults in the workplace (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Salin, 2003; Leyman, 1996). Moreover, some studies have provided evidence for factors of continuity, in the risk of being bullied, and they have indicated that certain individual attributes, such as one's temperament, self-esteem, and ability to form protective relationships are likely important to the emergence of this negative behavior (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003). Some researchers have also reported that lessons of power and aggression learned in childhood may later lead to workplace harassment and bullying (Craig & Pepler, 2007).

Previously, researchers have examined a wide range of perpetrator personality types, such as the authoritarian-type and the abrasive-type personalities, in order to better understand the role of personality in the

emergence of bullying (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

Interestingly, individuals with these personality types have been shown to have low scores on perspective taking, and high scores on social dominance, attributes that have been reported to be predictive of bullying type behaviors (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000; Leyman, 1996). Also, in a related line of research, researchers have indicated that individuals who bully at work often possess a strong desire for power, therefore, they often seek out positions that allow them to tell others what to do (Glendinning, 2001). Indeed, once in these positions of power, bullies tend to project their insecurities and inadequacies onto their co-workers rather than dealing with them in some constructive way (Dalton, 2007; Olender-Russo, 2009).

It appears that workplace bullies may also attack individuals who they perceive to be threats to their status or position at work. For example, research has shown that workplace bullies sometimes target co-workers who pose as a rival or competitor in the organization (Gouveia, 2007). Moreover, studies have suggested that a bully's perception of both real and imagined threats often lead to the emergence of bullying (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). In fact, bullies often falsely believe that their *power*, competence, and/or job security is under constant attack, and they may use bullying behaviors to remind other individuals in an organization that they are still powerful (Glendinning, 2001; McGinley, 2008). Further, some researchers have suggested that bullies tend to be insecure

individuals who often target highly competent individuals who they believe pose a threat to their authority (Dalton, 2007; Olender-Russo, 2009).

A substantial amount of evidence has suggested that workplace bullies intentionally seek out co-workers to abuse regularly, and that they rarely receive resistance from their targets, who are usually intimidated and silenced by a bully's power and status (Glendinning, 2001; Gouveia, 2007). This dysfunctional pattern of behavior is commonly present in perpetrators of bullying, and it frequently arises from specific individual characteristics, such as a distrust of others and an aggressive response to ambiguous situations, which often arise and are first used by the bully in childhood (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000). These bullying behaviors at work are often initially stimulated and/or increase in frequency when a perpetrator is promoted to a higher status position, within an organization, in part, because of the increased level of power a promotion usually brings (Glendinning, 2001; Gouveria, 2007). Once a bully gains additional power they may believe that by bullying others (down), they will continue to elevate themselves (Dalton, 2007).

Mixed and multiple-factor antecedants. Some studies have downplayed the importance of individual attributes and factors such as power and have argued instead for a mixed-factor explanation of bullying. This mixed-factor approach argues that specific characteristics of a perpetrator may interact with and be influenced by both organizational factors, such as a negative workplace climates or cultures, and by various individual factors or attributes, such as a target's pre-existing anxiety (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Researchers have reported

that the above combination of factors is then capable of stimulating aggressive or abusive behaviors in a potential perpetrator (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

There have been several multi-factor explanations proposed to account for the complex behavior of workplace bullying. Moreover, researchers have presented multi-dimensional frameworks that include both organizational issues and individual worker factors, when explaining the phenomenon at hand (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). For example, one line of research has shown that the various antecedents of workplace bullying contribute to stress at work which, in turn, is capable of causing bullying through a process by which an individual projects his or her negative emotions onto others (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009).

In related studies, researchers have examined organizational stress and identified specific workplace tensions (e.g., pressure and frustration) that together have been shown to trigger bullying behaviors (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). This mixed or multi-factor approach, to understanding the emergence of bullying, indicated that during stressful situations, the perpetrators of bullying commonly seek to reduce their various work-related tensions by transferring their feelings onto the targets they bully (Glendinning, 2001; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

Workplace inequalities as antecedents. The concept of power and its manifestations, in the form of workplace bullying, often emerges from situations of inequality between the victim and the perpetrator (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Research has suggested that relational power and powerlessness, in the workplace, are two important aspects of abuse in organizations (Ortega, Hogh,

Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Moreover, individuals who lack power in the workplace are often identifiable by visible markers, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and social class (Salin, 2003; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). The literature has also shown that race and ethnicity are visible markers of differential status and power among workers, and that these categories often create important vulnerabilities in a work environment (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). For example, the bullying of minority workers in organizations is motivated, in part, by racism, and research has shown that perpetrators of this behavior often select minority workers because they are easy targets for abuse at work (Salin, 2003). These findings have also indicated that workplace bullies often attempt to socially isolate and ostracize their victims, a goal more easily achieved by bullying racial and ethnic minorities, in part, because these workers already face significant social isolation in most organizations (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Additionally, it appears that one's gender and the inequalities between males and females in the workplace influence the likelihood of being bullied in certain organizations (e.g., female victims in male-dominated occupations). For example, several studies have argued that bullying is commonly linked to the gender of the job and those performing it (McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004; McGinley, 2008). There is also evidence, which has shown that, in certain situations, a victim's gender may increase the likelihood of being bullied at work, especially when sexual harassment is viewed as a form of bullying rather than as a different type of abuse in the workplace (McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004). In fact,

the literature has presented some reasons for treating sexual harassment as a form of work-related bullying. For example, some scholars have argued that bullying is similar in nature to sexual harassment, in that both types of work-related abuse are about power and creating or maintaining hierarchy at work, through the use of negative behaviors (McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, Hodson, 2009).

In terms of the more general forms of workplace bullying (i.e., non-sexually related), most researchers have argued that men and women have equal chances of becoming a target of these negative behaviors. However, some scholars have claimed that the minority gender, in an organization, is more likely to be bullied, regardless of the gender (McGinley, 2008; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Moreover, even though most bullying is considered to be gender-neutral in content, this negative behavior has been shown to occur, in part, in order to reinforce the masculinity of individuals, groups (e.g., the *tough* trucker stereotype) and of the job itself (McGinley, 2008).

Other inequalities among workers, such as one's social class status, occupational position and job experience, have also been showed to be important predictors of workplace bullying (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hudson, 2009; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). For example, workers who are poorly paid or hold low occupational positions in a workplace are the most common targets of workplace bullying, by organizations, supervisors, and others (Glendinning, 2001; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). On the contrary, well paid workers may be closer in status to their supervisors and have a somewhat built in source of protection that comes in the form of higher education, greater occupational experience and/or

from an understanding of their employee rights and a willingness to utilize an organization's grievance procedures for protection (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Research has also shown that the job types with the most bullying consisted largely of unskilled workers, while the job types with the lowest levels of bullying were management positions (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009).

The literature has indicated that workers holding minority membership and those who are poorly paid and/or hold a low job status, also frequently suffer from the work-related problem of job insecurity (Glendinning, 2001; Gouveia, 2007). This issue of job insecurity creates worker vulnerabilities to workplace bullying, because insecure employment frequently reduces a worker's power and status (temporary-workers versus permanent-workers) with respect to their bosses and within one's organization (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Moreover, research has shown that an increase in workplace bullying is often due to an insecure job environment triggered by a poor economy and the outsourcing of workers (i.e., the hiring of temporary workers) by organizations (Glendinning, 2001). Hence, insecure job environments commonly influence incidents of bullying as supervisors seek to intimidate and blame employees for mutually held fears about future job security (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Some researchers have argued for worker attribute or characteristics, opposite of those related to powerlessness (low job status, poorly paid, minority membership, and so on), when explaining increases in workplace bullying. For example, researchers have presented the idea that bullies may target not only the vulnerable, but also co-workers of a similar or higher job status who threaten their

sense of superiority or make them feel vulnerable (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Even though this bullying scenario is possible, most studies have shown that weak and vulnerable individuals and groups of workers are the most likely targets of workplace bullying (Gouveia, 2007; McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009).

Overall, this research has indicated that incidents of workplace bullying are often related to worker inequalities and usually targeted toward vulnerable individuals within organizations such as minority and/or female workforces, workers who are poorly paid or hold jobs of low status, and those individuals facing job insecurity (McGinley, 2008; Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Organizational antecedents of bullying. Many studies have shown that factors of an organization's culture, environment, and working arrangements commonly contribute to the emergence of workplace bullying (La Van & Martin, 2007; Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). For example, researchers have reported that the existence and effectiveness of anti-harassment policies and the quality of one's work environment are both factors related to incidents of bullying in organizations (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003). Several recent studies have also suggested that typical or routine organizational activities or arrangements are often responsible for creating perpetrators of bullying in work environments (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). For example, workplaces with ineffective (or non-existent) policies aimed at preventing harassment and abuse often report increased incidents of bullying (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Baillien, Neyens,



De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Additionally, the use of a direct supervision approach to the management of workers, a common control strategy in workplace environments, has been shown to leave supervisors and managers with few options for motivating their employees other than that of threats and abuse (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Hence, in the absence of any effective tools for managing a group of workers, many supervisors resort to bullying in an attempt to maintain an efficient and productive work environment (McGinley, 2008; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

Related studies, have suggested that when organizations have formal procedures and policies for advancement and promotion in place, that these guidelines have the ability to motivate workers and encourage organizational compliance without having to implement strategies of close supervision, bullying, and intimidation (Glendinning, 2001; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2009). Some studies have also indicated that without clear and consistent organizational procedures and policies, many managers often rely more on subjective judgment of employee productivity and performance (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). This subjectivity has been shown to put lower status workers at risk of abusive behaviors, and to expand the potential for targeted workplace bullying and negative treatment of minority and female workers (McGinley, 2008; Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Research has also reported that organizational control of the labor process itself (e.g. clear and formal organizational harassment policies), provides some protection against workplace bullying and managerial abuse of employees, as well as help to ensure that worker rights are not violated

due to unknown or nonexistent workplace policies and practices (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, Davies, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009).

Interestingly, research has indicated that although bullying can occur in any organizational environment, some organizations provide or encourage cultures (e.g., structurally hierarchical organizations) in which this behavior is able to develop (Olender-Russo, 2009; Dalton, 2007). This type of bullying has been termed *institutional bullying*—in which an organization tolerates, ignores or even encourages bullying tactics in the workplace (Liefoghe & Davey, 2010; Dalton, 2007). Consequently, researchers have investigated various organizational antecedents in an attempt to better understand workplace bullying. These studies have generally focused upon the antecedents of workplace bullying along three dimensions (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). The first dimension includes numerous job characteristics, such as role-related conflict, low levels of autonomy, unmanageable workload, job ambiguity, job insecurity, monotonous tasks, forced cooperation, and lack or goal clarity, among others that have been shown to be predictive of workplace bullying. The second dimension focuses on particular organizational issues in the workplace, including a lack of social support, competition between co-workers, and task-oriented, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles that have been shown to result in team or *group-bullying*—in which one or more perpetrator(s) target the same victim. The third dimension includes factors related to an organization's climate and hierarchy, such as the existence of formal power relationships and the use of a

directive communication style in the workplace that have been identified as predictive of workplace bullying.

In a related line of research, findings have shown that significantly fewer incidents of bullying occur in organizations with supportive work climates, established anti-bullying policies, and effective communication styles between employees and supervisors (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Indeed, some studies have shown that the culture and actions, of an organization, are capable of creating the ideal conditions for the emergence and maintenance of workplace bullying (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Researchers have also indicated that workplaces using the *top-down strategy of control and communication*—a form of organizational structure that is hierarchical and focuses on distancing the leadership from the rank, by using a chain of command management structure, are especially conducive to incidents of bullying (Glendinning, 2001; McGinley, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Additionally, the normative organizational culture that exists, within most American organizations, is largely masculine in nature, and thus readily promotes aggression and competition, which often result in worker-anxiety and ultimately increase workplace bullying (McGinley, 2008; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004).

Some research has suggested that organizations with a lower power distance between management and workers, and organizations that promote feminine instead of masculine values, tend to have fewer occurrences of bullying (Einarsen, 2000). Scholars have reported that one reason for this decrease in bullying, among these organizations, is due to the feminine working values that

are promoted in these workplaces; values that emphasize positive relationships and quality of life (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). These workplaces also tend to have a low power distance between management and workers, commonly have flat organizational hierarchies and usually allow for greater subordinate involvement in decision-making processes (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Not surprisingly, organizations characterized by having a low power distance between management and workers while giving importance to feminine values are more likely than other organizations to consider bullying behaviors, including those perpetrated by supervisors onto workers, unacceptable.

#### Client/Customer-Related Bullying

Researchers have reported that many incidents of workplace bullying derive from sources external to an organization. For example, client/customer-related bullying involves behaviors and actions perpetrated by individuals outside of the organization (Hoel, Rayner, & Cooper, 1999). These perpetrators may include clients, customers, service users and other persons that interact with workers in an organization. Studies have also suggested that exposure to bullying, from sources external to an organization, is often the result of the type of work that is performed by the organization and the outcome of the various clients with whom a worker interacts (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

Much of the literature on workplace bullying, as previously noted, has examined internal relationships within an organization (e.g., manager-employee relationship) instead of considering the negative behaviors and actions perpetrated by those external to an organization (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003;

Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). A large body of research, however, has indicated that clients and customers are commonly the source of workplace bullying in an organization, and that they frequently direct negative behaviors, such as swearing, name calling, and finger pointing, towards the workers they interact with (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003; Harvey & Treadway, 2006). Hence, scholars have argued that workers have the right and expectation to be protected by policies and procedures that address harassment and abuse perpetrated by individuals external to the organization (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

#### Relationship Bullying

Relationship bullying in the workplace occurs between two or more employees of an organization. One common type of relationship bullying at work is that of *managerial bullying*—the harassment and abuse of employees by managers (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Managerial bullying is often associated with behaviors such as excessive monitoring of one's work, ignoring a subordinate's views or opinions, and assigning unmanageable workloads (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Studies have shown that managerial bullying is widespread in the workplace, with a particularly high proportion of these bullying incidents occurring in medium- and small-sized organizations (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

*Peer-to-peer bullying*—harassment and abuse that occurs between workers that are relatively equal in power and status at work, is another type of relationship bullying that has been identified in organizations and well-

documented in the literature. Peer-to-peer bullying commonly includes behaviors, such as gossip and rumors, isolation, practical jokes, and teasing, to name a few (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Zapf et al., 2003; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Research has also indicated that peer-to-peer bullying may be a result of a workplace's organizational climate or culture (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). These findings suggest that a negative organizational environment (e.g., those lacking in supportive management and clear anti-bullying policies), more so than other organizational environments, may encourage unhealthy levels of competition that then result in tensions, anxieties, and frustrations, and ultimately lead to bullying behaviors and actions (Coyne, Craig, & Smith-Lee Chong, 2004). Studies have shown that in addition to the above organizational factors, those workers who clash with work-group or workplace norms are at a greater risk of being bullied by their peers than others (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vatia, 2003; Coyne, Seigne, Randall, 2000).

### Organizational Bullying

Research has indicated that an organization itself may be capable of encouraging or enabling negative behaviors at work. *Organizational bullying*—refers to the policies, practices, and processes of an organization that result in the feelings of oppression and controlling dominance (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). In essence, this type of bullying is commonly the result of enabling structures within an organization, and it usually emerges alongside other organizational issues, such as when there are multiple levels of worker status or differential group status, present in a workplace (LaVan & Martin, 2008). For

example when various departments in an organization have unequal status, the group with the greater status may bully groups with lesser status. Indeed, research has shown that organizational structures commonly result in some groups being inferior to other groups, with the higher status group taking advantage of this inequality in power (Salin, 2003; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Salin, 2003).

Scholars have also suggested that organizational bullying commonly emerges in situations where an organization fails to provide workers with the human and financial resources that are required, in order for its workers to successfully complete their required tasks and work-related goals. Therefore, the lack of these organizational resources may create a stressful working environment that results in worker abuse (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). Moreover, related research has indicated that a wide range of other types of poor working-conditions may contribute to or increase worker-stress and incidents of workplace bullying (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). For example, workers who are under constant high workloads or a continual pressure to perform may become unreasonably stressed, and thus be more likely to direct their frustration onto co-workers through the use of bullying behaviors.

The presence of organizational chaos is yet another factor predictive of organizational bullying. Research has indicated that organizational chaos emerges in workplaces that lack orderly functioning and rationality (Rosigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). Indeed, it is not just personal authority (e.g., positions of management) that leads to bullying behaviors, but also the increased levels of power that become available in

organizational situations of chaos and uncertainty (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Moreover, studies have provided evidence that coherent organizational procedures are essential for the maintenance of civility and mutual respect in a workplace (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Hegtvedt & Johnson, 2000). Hence, in the absence of an effective and coherent organization, supervisors may resort to bullying in an attempt to ensure that workers complete their job assignments and meet the organizational goals (Glendinning, 2001). Further, findings have shown that bullying behaviors at work are much more likely when organizational chaos exists, and that bullies tend to emerge more readily out of disorganized and chaotic workplaces (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Salin, 2003; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996).

#### Consequences of Workplace Bullying

The consequences of bullying vary greatly with each incident, and this negative behavior has been shown to impact individuals who are directly involved in the experience. These include, the victim and the perpetrator as well as individuals who are indirectly involved in the experience, such as those tasked with managing or resolving the situation, those who are observers, and the friends and/or family members offering support to the parties involved in the bullying incident (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Moreover, the individuals involved in an experience of workplace bullying are commonly impacted financially or emotionally or both by the experience (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Studies have also shown that exposure to bullying behaviors at work results in numerous psychological and



psychosomatic health complaints (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Unfortunately, there are only a few studies that have investigated the differences in the reported health complaints of those who are bullied themselves and those who only report witnessing incidents of bullying (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; O'Moore & Seigne, 1998). Therefore, it is unclear if the witnesses of bullying incidents tend to experience the same types of health complaints as individuals who have actually been bullied.

Workplace bullying has also been shown to significantly impact organizations in terms of the dysfunctional work environment that this negative behavior creates, such as when targeted-workers decide to avoid situations (e.g., going to work) where the bullying behaviors are likely to occur (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Hoel & Salin, 2003). Moreover, scholars have indicated that workplace bullying commonly leads to poor job performance, diminished psychological well-being, and strong desires to leave the job or environment where the bullying occurred, among targeted-workers, and all of these outcomes are capable of affecting the overall health of the workforce and the vitality of an organization (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Additionally, this negative behavior can also have a cumulative effect on a targeted-worker and an organization, especially because bullying experiences are often a series of negative behaviors that have escalated overtime and impacted not only the target but also numerous other workers such as witnesses of the bullying (Hutchinson,

Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006). Therefore, workplace bullying can have a plethora of negative effects on the overall organization that progressively worsen over time (Olender-Russo, 2009).

The impact of bullying on the target. A review of the literature shows that workplace bullying impacts the targeted individual in numerous ways. The consequences of this behavior range from mild to severe, and include physical, physiological, psychological, and psychosomatic problems (Zapf, Knorz, & Kulla, 1996; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). The physical problems include fatigue, pain, and the results of physical abuse; the physiological problems include feelings of shame, diminished self-esteem, and emotional exhaustion; the psychological problems include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety; the psychosomatic problems include victimization and sleeplessness; and all of these problems are capable of resulting in thoughts and attempts of suicide or in actual incidents of suicide (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

In addition to the ways it affects individuals' health, researchers have also identified several other ways that the experience of bullying negatively impacts workers. These include the loss of work-related confidence, decreased enthusiasm for the job and a decrease of one's economic resources (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Moreover, some studies have indicated that the targets of bullying commonly have difficulty maintaining commitments to the workplace, where the experience occurred, and that they may

lose trust for their managers, and the overall organization (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Lewis, 2006). With that said, once a worker's commitment to and trust for his or her employer decreases it may manifest in various work-related ways. For example, researchers have identified relationships between workplace bullying and other work-related issues, such as low job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and high staff turnover (Olender-Russo, 2009).

Researchers have indicated that bullied workers also commonly experience problems with their long-term health and well-being (Zapf & Gross, 2001; McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004). Moreover, scholars have indicated that the problems, which arise from workplace bullying, should be considered to be extreme social stressors, and if a bullied worker's stress is prolonged or severe, it may result in an increased risk of hypertension, coronary artery disease, depression or other mental health disorders (Kivimaki, Virtanen, Vartia, Vahtera, & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2003). For example, studies have shown, that workers who experience bullying, over a lengthy period, may develop symptoms similar to those of posttraumatic stress disorder (Einarsen, 2000; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008).

Some research has suggested that other disturbing changes can take place in the targets of workplace bullying, usually as a response to the harassment and abuse or working in a *toxic organization*—one in which bullying, antisocial, and other negative behaviors are the norm, over a period of time (Vickers, 2007). These changes are commonly vastly different from one's normal behavior and coping mechanisms at work. For example, a bullied worker may become more

defensive, secretive, tactical, or passive-aggressive, to name a few of the possible behaviors that may arise. Moreover, some research has suggested that these changes in a worker's behavior may be a form of retaliation or a *tit for tat* approach to coping and dealing with bullying experiences (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). In fact, research has indicated that targets of bullying commonly use both problem-focused (e.g., reporting the incident) and emotion-focused (e.g., retaliatory behaviors) coping strategies, at similar frequencies, as they struggle to effectively deal with these negative behaviors (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

The impact of bullying on witnesses and other organizational employees.

The effects of workplace bullying have been shown to be widespread in organizations and, as previously noted, capable of impacting not just the targeted workers, but also other workers, who were not directly targeted (Glendinning, 2001; Lewis & Orford, 2005; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). In fact, studies have shown that workplace bullying often times impacts the witnesses of bullying in ways similar to those directly targeted by the behavior (Olender-Russo, 2009). For example, in addition to isolating targets, incidents of workplace bullying also commonly result in effectively threatening or harming witnesses and allies (Lewis & Orford, 2005). Research has also indicated that the occurrence of bullying may actually present risks for all individuals within an organization, especially because bullies often subtly or directly threaten others who might report the bullying incidents (Glendinning, 2001; Lewis & Orford, 2005). Indeed, the effects of bullying have been shown to lead to a workplace environment that is

dysfunctional, stressful, and generally unhealthy for all individuals in an organization, not just the bullied worker (Glendinning, 2001; Dalton, 2007).

The impact of bullying on organizations. Assessing the organizational costs of workplace bullying is not an easy task, and the specific consequences of this behavior are still not completely understood. Scholars have shown, however, that bullying commonly impacts an organization in numerous ways, some of which have been previously mentioned, such as through high staff turnover, higher rates of employee absenteeism, reduced employee commitment, and by decreasing employee loyalty, morale, and productivity (Glendinning, 2001; Lewis & Orford, 2005; Dalton, 2007; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). For example, one line of research has suggested that bullied workers are up to 50 percent less productive at work when compared to their non-bullied peers, and this productivity cost directly impacts an organization and its overall vitality (Dalton, 2007).

The negative behavior at hand may also lead to an increase in employee grievances, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) cases, and other legal consequences for an organization. For example, when incidents of workplace bullying create a *hostile work environment*—an organizational condition that arises when a legally protected worker (e.g., by minority or membership or age) is a target of work-related harassment or abuse, or when a bullying incident is shown to be related to sexual harassment an organization may have great financial loss, including the cost of investigating a worker's claim, defending their position

in court, and through the potential settlements that a victim may receive (Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, & Hanks, 2002).

Organizations may suffer indirect management costs due to incidents of workplace bullying, such as when abusive workplaces lead workers to become fearful, mistrusting, resentful, and, at times, even hostile (Gouveia, 2007). Moreover, workplace bullying may result in the loss of customers and possible damage to an organization's public image, due to the legalities that arise from such incidents, and these consequences commonly persist even after the bullying experience has ended (Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, & Hanks, 2002). However, scholars have argued, that even though the costs of bullying provide employers with financial incentives to address the negative behavior at hand, the current legal framework surrounding workplace bullying fails to require (or encourage) organizations to take a more proactive approach against this type of violence at work (Gouveia, 2007).

#### Legal Aspects of Workplace Bullying

Recently, some countries, including Sweden and Canada (in places like Quebec and Saskatchewan) have implemented legislation that addresses the issue of workplace bullying (Bryner, 2008). In the United States, however, there is currently no specific statute that governs incidents of bullying in organizations (Mack, 2005). This is despite the fact that scholars have consistently argued that the current law offers insufficient interventions to prevent and resolve workplace bullying (Ayoko, Callan, & Hartel, 2003; La Van & Martin, 2007). Nevertheless, several legal theories have acknowledged or addressed the problem of workplace

bullying, within U.S. organizations, in various limited ways. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, was established, in part, to ensure safe and healthful working conditions in most work-related environments, and under OSHA guidelines workplace bullying is considered to be an occupational hazard that is capable of exposing workers to psychological and/or physiological harm (Kivimaki et al., 2003; La Van & Martin, 2007). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (i.e., Title VII) has also provided legal protection, for a limited number of protected groups (e.g., those with minority membership), against harassment and discrimination. However, in order to be protected under this statute a worker must be able to show that they were a victim of workplace bullying due to their protected class status (race, age, disability, etc.). Consequently, the current anti-discrimination and harassment laws, in the U.S., do not offer any protection against workplace bullying for the majority of the workforce.

Interestingly, scholars have reported that most workers are not fully covered or protected from workplace bullying under Workers' Compensation statutes, which have defined this type of bullying as physical rather than psychological acts, and therefore excludes the most common forms of this negative behavior (Mack, 2005). Indeed, Workers' Compensation is a potential source of intervention only when workplace bullying has resulted in a worker's partial or full incapacitation, an outcome that is not always apparent in many emotional injury claims. Unfortunately, the courts have generally concluded that most bullying behaviors are not sufficiently extreme or harmful enough to be

covered by the existing Workers' Compensation laws (Heames, Garvey, & Treadway, 2006; La Van & Martin, 2007).

### Organizational Accountability and Workplace Bullying

The lack of legal protection against workplace bullying has led some scholars to argue that the development of effective employee policy, within organizations, may be the best approach to preventing and resolving bully-related harassment and abuse, among workers (La Van & Martin, 2007). This line of research has shown that workplace bullying is an organizational process, and that an organization's policies, procedures, practices, values and resources shape the regulation of bullying, and therefore they are either enabling structures or preventive measures of negative workplace behaviors (Salin, 2003; Lewis & Orford, 2005). Moreover, some researchers have argued that bullying, within organizations, is an institutionalized behavior that should be viewed as a whole rather than an individual or interpersonal issue (Liefoghe & Davey, 2010). Indeed, some researchers have adamantly argued that organizational officials are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all employees are protected from bullying experiences and that the workplace environment is safe and free of harm for all workers (Dalton, 2007; Liefoghe & Davey, 2010). However, it is important to note that most scholars still stress that bullies are fully responsible for their behavior, and that they should be held accountable for their actions.

Research has shown that the manner in which officials of an organization effectively enforce the existing policies and follow the established procedures, in regards to employee harassment and abuse, are important determinants in the



emergence and prevention of workplace bullying (La Van & Martin, 2007). For example, some research has suggested that organizations can be fully aware of the phenomenon at hand, and yet they may choose to ignore or fail to address incidents of workplace bullying (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006). In these situations, the targeted individual may become victimized not just by the bully, but by the organization as well (Olender-Russo, 2009).

Scholars have indicated that organizations should take various steps to prevent bullying rather than just attempting to resolve the harassment and abuse when it occurs. Moreover, researchers have suggested that some organizations, such as those with significant job status and power gaps between workers and management, should be particularly aware of the possibility of workplace bullying and take preventive measures to address this negative behavior (Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Some of the preventive measures that have been shown to decrease bullying incidents, within organizations, include the development and implementation of clear and concise policies and practices that effectively inhibit, address and resolve bullying related behaviors, and the availability of appropriate grievance procedures for bullied-workers.

Even though scholars have indicated that organizations should take the appropriate steps to prevent workplace bullying, they have also reported that organizational officials face substantial challenges in doing so. For example, research has shown that one of the difficulties in effectively addressing bullying, in the workplace, is in identifying the behavior (Dalton, 2007; Lewis, 2006). Also, as previously mentioned, the targets of this negative behavior often fail to

report incidents of bullying, especially when the perpetrator is a supervisor or an co-worker with a higher job status or more seniority (Gouveia, 2007).

Subsequently, those with the power to thwart bullying in organizations are not always aware that these negative behaviors have occurred or capable of readily recognizing workplace bullying when it arises.

Some scholars have argued that organizations and government agencies are together responsible for protecting the rights, health, and well-being of all workers, and that they have a responsibility to not allow or dismiss workplace bullying, regardless of the circumstances (Gouveia, 2007; Glendinning, 2001; Dalton, 2007; Olender-Russo, 2009). Subsequently, some scholars have suggested that workplace bullying should be included under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as this inclusion will legally recognize psychological abuse and harassment as specific forms of violence at work and ensure that organizational officials are aware of the seriousness and consequences of these negative behaviors (Gouveia, 2007; Glendinning, 2001; McGinley, 2008).

### Rationale

As previously stated, limited research exists regarding workplace bullying in the temporary workforce, especially among temporary-laborers. However, the literature on workplace bullying among the permanent workforce does indicate that workers in low-status and low-paid jobs (i.e., temporary-laborers) are more likely to be bullied than others, and that all forms of work-related harassment and abuse tend to emerge more commonly in workplaces characterized by physically

demanding and unskilled work and among minority workgroups in male-dominated occupations. With that said, it is important to note, as previously stated that all of the above characteristics are commonly used to describe temporary-laborers and/or the jobs they work.

The current study contributes to the research topic at hand in several ways. First, as previously mentioned, most research on workplace bullying has examined workers in the permanent workforce, and while research on work-related bullying among permanent-workers is imperative, it is also essential in my opinion, to examine workplace bullying among temporary-laborers. This may be especially important because as previously stated, temporary-laborers are one group of workers that are substantial, growing rapidly, and especially vulnerable to work-related bullying, harassment and abuse.

Second, the current research adds to the existing literature by examining the individual or worker vulnerabilities and organizational factors that have been indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, within the temporary-labor industry. This is important, because many studies have asserted that various worker vulnerabilities and organizational factors influence or increase a worker's risk of being bullied, but no literature could be found that examine worker vulnerabilities or organizational factors, among temporary-laborers' workplace bullying experiences.

The current study also considers bullying that is work-related, but perpetrated by individuals outside of or external to an individual's organization of employment. This is important because, as previously mentioned, researchers

have commonly viewed workplace bullying as an internal problem that occurs within organizations, despite the fact that scholars have continually reported that many workers are indeed bullied by individuals who are external to their organization of employment. With that said, in an attempt to expand the literature, the current research considers not only individuals internal to an organization, but also those individuals (e.g., temporary-labor-jobsite supervisors) that are external to an organization, yet still interactive with an organization's employees, as potential perpetrators of bullying. Further, the current study, in line with other recent research, examines organizational factors such as practices, policies, inequalities, and organizational culture as potential sources of workplace bullying.

The primary aim of the current research, as previously stated, is to examine the specific organizational factors and worker vulnerabilities that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, within the temporary-labor industry, while identifying the sources and/or perpetrators of these negative behaviors, among temporary-laborers. Therefore, the current study utilizes in-depth interviews to examine the self-reported, workplace bullying experiences of temporary-laborers, and to collect rich and detailed data about the organizational phenomenon at hand.

### Research Questions

Research Question I: What worker vulnerabilities are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers?

Research Question II: What organizational factors are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers?

Research Question III: What/who are the sources/perpetrators of workplace bullying in the temporary-labor industry?

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

Temporary-laborers are, for the most part, an untapped group of workers within psychological research. The general purpose of the current study is to better understand temporary-laborers, the temporary-labor industry, and some of the challenges that temporary-laborers face while performing temporary-labor jobs. More specifically, this examination focuses on the work-related bullying that temporary-laborers experience due to the various organizational factors and worker vulnerabilities, which are indicated in the emergence of this negative behavior. The current study also considers the various perpetrators and sources of workplace bullying. With the above stated, in order to thoroughly examine the topic at hand, face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted with temporary-laborers in targeted neighborhoods (e.g., diverse, low-income, close proximity to temporary-labor agencies, and so on), within the city of Aurora, Illinois, a racially diverse, western suburb in the greater Chicago area. Additionally, it is important to note, that reliance on face-to-face interviews is essential, in my opinion, to better understanding the workplace phenomenon above, especially because I believe that this research tool provided me, with an effective means of collecting first-hand knowledge and rich, detailed data from a group of workers that has traditionally been under-represented in the literature.

While many psychological inquiries rely on quantitative research methods, as a way to examine psychological phenomenon, the current research utilized a

largely qualitative approach. In general, I believe that quantitative studies use more analytical and mathematical measures of behavior that are designed to be subjected to rigorous statistical analysis, while qualitative studies focus on observing and describing events as they occur or as they are later recalled, by the individuals who experienced them, with the goal of more thoroughly documenting the complexity of specific human behaviors and experiences. Moreover, qualitative studies have the advantage of providing rich details and a depth of understanding of a psychological phenomenon, which are often missed in more analytical or quantitative examinations (Stangor, 2007). Scholars have also argued that a qualitative research approach is particularly useful in revealing the meanings people attribute to particular events or behaviors, and that it is especially appropriate for understanding complicated social processes in context or through the lived-experience of another (Esterberg, 2002). Therefore, in my opinion, a qualitative research approach is quite appropriate when examining the subjective work-related experiences of temporary-laborers, especially when a researcher, such as myself, is seeking to identify the numerous factors that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among a relatively underrepresented group of workers.

Qualitative research methods are generally, in my opinion, a better research tool for examining the types of questions the current study aims to answer. Moreover, I believe that they will also provide a more complete and detailed account of the growing phenomenon of workplace bullying. In fact, qualitative research, and in-person interview studies, in particular, have been

shown to be capable of vividly describing human behavior in its original form, while providing a relatively complete understanding of a complex organizational issue (i.e., workplace bullying), by collecting data that is especially full of specific details and rich in meaning (Stangor, 2007; Esterberg, 2002). Therefore, for purpose of the current study, I believe that in-person interviewing provides me with a highly appropriate research tool, with which to obtain detailed and relevant information from temporary-laborers, in order to thoroughly examine workplace bullying, within the temporary-labor industry.

Based on a review of similar workplace studies, I have found that there are several key benefits, to utilizing in-person interviews in the current study, in comparison to more objective methods, such as a strictly quantitative questionnaire or survey. These advantages include: (1) the fact that interviews offer greater flexibility in the type and format of research questions, (2) provide the opportunity to clarify questions and often result in more detailed responses, and (3) frequently have higher response rates. Moreover, in-person interviews, in particular, have been shown to allow for more lengthy interviews and complex questions, whereas it would be much more difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish these research objectives through the use of telephone, mail or Internet based interviews (Singleton & Straits, 2005).

Still yet, I believe that another advantage of in-person interviewing is found in this method's unique ability to assist a researcher, such as myself, in preventing or overcoming literacy issues. This is important, in my opinion, because certain research methods, such as Internet surveys, are based on the



assumption that every participant can read and comprehend the questions at the same level, and this is often not accurate. Moreover, during in-person interviews, a researcher such as myself has the ability to make sure that the interview questions make sense to the participants and if not, they have an opportunity to rephrase a question or modify the language being used in a way that is helpful for each individual (Esterberg, 2002). Also, by utilizing in-person interviews, a researcher can also ask a participant to provide additional examples or further explanation, during the interview, in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of what a participant has said and to ensure that they have accurately understood exactly what an individual is attempting to communicate (Esterberg, 2002). Therefore, I believe that the above research tools are especially important in the current study and in other studies, in which the population of interest (i.e., temporary-laborers) has been previously underrepresented in research. In fact, in my opinion, this flexibility in interviewing and the ability to circumvent literacy issues is especially important when interviewing temporary-laborers, because, as previously mentioned, in general, the education (and literacy levels) of this group of workers tends to be quite low when compared to other groups of workers.

In summary, I believe that the richness of meaning and the depth of understanding that derives from qualitative studies and in-person interviews, in particular, are critical to sufficiently examining a complex organizational phenomenon, such as workplace bullying, especially among a group of workers that researchers currently know relatively little about. Further, scholars have confirmed that qualitative research allows researchers to ask and answer a wide

range of psychologically relevant questions, on diverse topics, and that this approach to research results in data with both descriptive and explanatory power (Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004).

### Research Participants

The participants, in the current study, were male and female volunteers between the ages of 25 and 59 years old due to the fact that the research at hand revealed that the majority of temporary-laborers are over 20 and under 60 years of age. A total of 25 people participated in the current study, including 21 males and only 4 females due to the fact that, based on the current study's findings, the majority of temporary-laborers are reportedly male. Moreover, it is important to note, that even though I knew relatively early in the current study, that it would be difficult to locate female temporary-laborers, I believed that it was important to include those that I could find in the research at hand, especially because, in my opinion, the above group of workers would likely experience workplace bullying differently than their male co-workers. Further, I was quite pleased to have found at least a few female temporary-laborers to participate in the current study, as the above group of workers have also been, in my experience, the most unrepresented in the literature.

The racial or ethnic demographics of the participants, in this study, were as follows: a.) 6 Black males, b.) 2 Black females, c.) 8 White males, d.) 2 White females, e.) 2 Mexican American females, (f) 4 Hispanic or Latino (Non-Mexican descent) males, and (g) 1 Native American male. In regards to

education level, all but one participant in the above study reported being a high school graduate or equivalent, and 12 of the participants reported having at least some college education. However, it is worth mentioning, that the average education level, which was reported by participants, in the current study (i.e., high school graduate with some college), is, as previously mentioned, somewhat higher than the typical education level (i.e., ninth or tenth grade) of temporary-laborers, as a group.

The participants in the current study reported working, as temporary-laborers, for between 4 months and 10 or more years, with the majority of these individuals indicating that they had worked, as temporary-laborers for between 4 and 5 years. Also, the above participants reported either currently working or last working a temporary-labor job as follows: (a) 8 participants reported currently working a temporary-labor job, (b) 7 participants reported having worked a temporary-job within the last 6 months, and (c) 10 participants reported having worked a temporary-job within the last 12 months. Additionally, all participants, in the current study, reported having worked at least two different temporary-labor jobs, and many of these individuals indicating that they had worked dozens of temporary-labor jobs. Further, all of the above participants reported having worked for a minimum of two or more temporary-labor agencies, and a few of these individuals reported that they had worked for five or more agencies.

The participants in the current study were recruited from two separate, non-profit job development programs, both of which were part of social service, community centers, in a diverse area of Aurora, IL. These unaffiliated programs

were established in order to provide job services to low-income and underserved individuals (e.g., homeless, recently released from prison, poverty stricken) within the surrounding geographic area. To my good fortune, the directors of both job development programs were able to help me pre-screen and recruit appropriate individuals for this study. Moreover, the above program directors also agreed to schedule and help coordinate the interview dates and times (e.g., having the participants available at the appropriate times), and, in my opinion, the help I received from the above individuals was instrumental in ensuring that I had access to a relatively difficult to find group of workers.

In the current study, the above program directors agreed to post interview sign-up sheets, for me, in the common areas of each respective community center, in order to help me recruit potential participants for the research at hand. These interview sign-up sheets stated that a university graduate student was interested in interviewing individuals, who were currently or had recently (within the last year) performed work as a temporary-laborer, and that qualified individuals would be paid \$10 each for participating in a confidential study, which included an in-person interview about their temporary-labor experiences.

The above participants, who self-identified as being current or recent temporary-laborers on the interview sign-up sheets, were then briefly pre-screened, by the job development program directors and later by myself, prior to the actual interviews in order to help ensure that they were indeed currently working or had recently worked a temporary-labor job. Specifically, the above pre-screening process was aimed at qualifying individuals, to participate in the

current study based on the following criteria: (1) they had worked in temporary-labor for a minimum of two months, (2) they were either current or recent (within the previous 12 months) temporary-laborers, and (3) they had worked for at least one official temporary-labor agency (e.g., a licensed brick and mortar business).

### Procedure

The current study, as previously noted, was conducted onsite at two unaffiliated community centers, which each provide various social services to underserved populations in Aurora, Illinois. Moreover, as previously stated, in order to collect thorough information about workplace bullying experiences among temporary-laborers, I utilized in-person interviews, each of which lasted between 30 and 120 minutes, with the majority of these interviews lasting between 40 and 60 minutes. Also, to my good fortune, both of the above community centers had private and appropriate areas (e.g., offices) available, in which to conduct the interviews, and, in my opinion, this not only helped ensure interview confidentiality, but also provided the participants with a quiet environment that was removed from outside distractions. Additionally, it is important to note, that the participants, in the study above, were each paid \$10 for participating in the interviews at hand, regardless of how short or long an interview was, and they received this payment immediately after the conclusion of their interview.

The current study employed a combination of structured and in-depth interviewing techniques—which are sometimes also referred to as *semi-*

*structured techniques*. Moreover, even though a significant portion of the interviews above were more structured in nature, in that the sequence of questions were pre-established and the pace of the interview was monitored (targeted to last between 30 and 60 minutes), it also included a substantial amount of open-ended and follow-up questions, an approach to interviewing that allows participants the flexibility to respond in their own words and provides them with opportunities to expand on a particular thought or idea (Esterberg, 2002).

As previously discussed, researchers have noted that in-depth interviews are particularly useful for exploring complex or sensitive topics and an especially appropriate way to study marginalized groups (Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; Esterberg, 2002). Therefore, I utilized in-depth interviewing in the current study, as other researchers have in similar studies, in order to sufficiently examine the workplace bullying experiences among temporary-laborers. With this said, even though I followed an interview guide (see Appendix A) and conducted largely structured interviews, in that I covered the same ideas, topics and questions in each interview, I still allowed the participant's responses to guide the order, structure, and overall flow of the interviews, especially when it appeared advantageous to do so. I also asked many open-ended and follow-up questions throughout the interview, thereby encouraging the participants to expand and explain rather than just answering yes or no, in response to a question. This combination of interviewing strategies helped me adjust each interview to the preferences and needs of each participant, thus, providing a much more

comfortable, open and free-flowing verbal exchange between the participant and myself.

The structured interview guide that was utilized in the current study was developed through readings of research literature on bullying, sexual harassment, and other issues of workplace abuse, among temporary-laborers and other groups of marginalized workers. Also, due to the subjective nature of workplace bullying, I recognized the challenges of developing a complete list of all behaviors that may be considered to be examples of bullying at work. Therefore, I opted to adapt questionnaire items that had been used or were similar to the ones that had been used in previous studies, a practice that is common among qualitative researchers, especially those who are examining relatively new areas of research and/or working with research participants from groups or populations that little is known about (Finnis, Robbins, & Bender, 1993; Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, & Hanks, 2002; Lewis & Orford, 2005; Lewis, 2006). Therefore, many of the questions in this interview, particularly those that asked about specific bullying-behaviors, were adapted from an instrument utilized in a workplace-bullying project on marginalized workers at Minnesota State University, which was conducted by consultants from Wayne State University and State University of New York at New Paltz (Keashly & Neuman, 2008). However, a primary objective, in the adaptation of these (and other questions) and in the development of this interview, was to keep the comprehension level of the interview questions at a relatively low level (i.e., approximately at the ninth-grade level) due to the likely educational backgrounds of the participants in this study. In fact, this

strategy of question-adaptation has also been used by other researchers, who have interviewed groups of workers with similar levels of education, such as production-line workers in a manufacturing plant (Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, & Hanks, 2002).

The interview sessions, in the current study, were conducted in four steps as follows: (1) pre-interview screening questions (see Appendix B), (2) demographic data questions (see Appendix C), (3) a brief questionnaire about typical temporary jobs (see Appendix D), and (4) interview guide questions. It is important to note, as previously mentioned, that before beginning an interview session, I informed each potential participant that I would, first, need to ask them a few pre-interview *screening questions*, in order to determine whether or not they were qualified to participate in the study, and that if they were not qualified that they would not be able to participate in the study or asked to complete an interview or be paid ten dollars. The screening questions asked potential participants the following: (1) *When did you last work in temporary-labor?*; (2) *How long did you work in temporary-labor?*; (3) *Did you work through a temporary-labor agency? If so, what was the name of the agency/ies?*; (4) *What types of temporary-labor jobs did you perform?*

Before beginning part two of the above interview, I briefly discussed the purpose of the research at hand with the qualified participants, by explaining that my study was designed to examine various working conditions in the temporary-labor industry and that these interviews were also being conducted to identify various negative behaviors, which may or may not exist in temporary-labor



agencies/halls and on temporary-labor job sites. I also explained that I was a graduate student and researcher at DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

Additionally, I assured participants that the entire interview and any information they provided would be kept strictly confidential and without any personal identifiers. Finally, I informed the participants that their participation in this interview was voluntary, that they would be paid \$10, at the conclusion of the interview, for their participation in my study; that they were free to not answer any question that they were uncomfortable with, and that they could end the interview at anytime if they did not wish to continue.

In part two of the above interview participants were asked to answer a five-item, *Demographic Data* questionnaire, in which they provided their birth year, birthplace, gender, race/ethnicity, and highest level of education.

In part three of the above interview, participants completed a brief survey—*A Typical Temporary Job*, which was comprised of several short statements of job characteristics (e.g., physically strenuous, respectful supervisors, minimum wage job, and so on), and participants were asked to rate each statement based on how well it described the temporary-labor jobs that they usually work (or worked). The survey utilized a numerical rating scale from 1 to 5, with verbal ratings provided for each numerical point on a scale, as follows:

1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always.

Also, the participants were provided with the following directions before being asked to complete the survey:

*Next, I would like to know how well the following statements describe the temporary-labor jobs you usually work. Please rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5 to indicate how well the statement describes the temporary-labor jobs you work (or have worked). The scale ranges from 1 (never applies to the temporary-labor jobs I work) to 5 (always applies to the temporary-labor jobs I work). Use the numbers in the middle of the scale if the temporary-labor jobs you work fall between the extremes.*

For the fourth and final part of the above interview, I utilized an interview guide comprised of the following sections: (1) Section I: *Organizational and Personal Experiences*—asked questions about the general working conditions in temporary-labor agencies/halls and on temporary-labor job sites, and asked participants about their personal experiences in the temporary-labor industry; (2) Section II-a: *Instances of Negative Behaviors in the Workplace*—asked questions about whether or not the participants had experienced certain kinds of behaviors in a temporary-labor agency/labor hall or on a temporary-labor job site during the previous 12 months, how often they had been subjected to that behavior (daily, weekly, once or twice, and so on), and who was most responsible for perpetrating the identified behavior; (3) Section II-b: *Personal Bullying Experiences*—asked questions about actual work-related bullying events that the participants may have experienced or observed while working as a temporary-laborer. It is important to note that before beginning this section, I provided participants with the following definition of workplace bullying (from the literature): *Bullying takes place when a person is repeatedly treated in a mean or degrading way and finds it difficult to*

*defend him or herself against the behavior* (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Moreover, I decided to utilize the above definition of bullying in the study at hand from among the numerous definitions available in the literature, because I believe that it is the most straightforward and easy-to-understand definition of this negative behavior that I could find, especially when compared to the others, many of which, in my opinion, may have been difficult for the participants to readily comprehend, as they are verbose and collegiate in nature; (4) Section III:

*Organizational Policies and Practices*—asked questions about the various organizational practices and policies that are commonly found in temporary-labor industry.

It is helpful to note that the above three sections, in the current study's interview guide, employed three major types or styles of questions: (1) Informational questions—to assist a participant's reporting of incidents (e.g., *How many hours do you usually wait in the labor hall before being assigned a job?*); (2) Reflective questions—to examine the impact of events or experiences on a participant (e.g., *Did you do anything in response to seeing the bullying and did it help?*); (3) Feeling questions—to explore a participant's emotional state at the time of event or experience (e.g., *Did seeing this bullying bother you?*). These types or categories of questions have been used effectively by other researchers, especially to explore work-related bullying in marginalized groups of people, such as women or other minority workers (Lewis & Orford, 2005).

At the conclusion of the above interviews, I asked the participants if they had any other comments to make about negative behavior in the temporary-labor

industry. Also, I asked if they had any questions about the interview or the research project. Additionally, participants were thanked again for their time and for participating in the interview. Finally, participants were paid ten dollars for participating in this survey.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The main purpose of the current study is to determine the organizational factors and worker vulnerabilities that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying among temporary-laborers and to identify the perpetrators of this negative behavior. Therefore, the following analysis examines the three research questions that were presented earlier in the current study. They are as follows: (1) What worker vulnerabilities are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers? (2) What organizational factors are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers? (3) What/who are the sources or perpetrators of workplace bullying in the temporary-labor industry?

#### Organizational Factors and Worker Vulnerabilities

##### Indicated in Workplace Bullying

Researchers have identified numerous organizational and individual factors as potential antecedents of workplace bullying, however, these factors have not been previously examined in the temporary-labor industry. Therefore, this study identified various organizational and individual factors that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers.

The following sections present the various organizational factors, both within temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-jobsites, and the worker vulnerabilities or individual factors that were identified and indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers in the current study.

### Organizational Factors and Workplace Bullying

As previously discussed, the literature has suggested that workplace bullying often results from organizational factors that directly stimulate bullying or enable the emergence of this negative behavior. These identified factors include an organization's culture, practices and policies, all of which are capable of increasing or decreasing the prevalence of bullying experiences at work.

Based on the interviews conducted in the current study, there are various organizational factors that are not only prevalent within some temporary-labor agencies and on some temporary-labor jobsites, but also largely indicated in the workplace bullying experiences of some temporary-laborers. In particular, the culture, policies, and practices, of temporary-labor agencies and temporary-jobsites have all been identified as organizational factors that are, reportedly, capable of stimulating a negative work-related environment—one that is profuse with harassment, discrimination and abuse. Moreover, some specific organizational practices and policies are, reportedly, prevalent in or stimulated by certain types of workplace cultures (e.g., those with a hierarchical workforce). Indeed, several of these practices and policies were identified and commonly indicated in the workplace bullying experiences, among temporary-laborers. Specifically, the practices and policies that were identified in this study include the utilization of a labor hall setting (and the related policies that govern these halls) and the temporary-labor work assignment process, within temporary-labor agencies, and the negative attitudes and behaviors that are directed at the

temporary-laborers, by agency employees and the supervisors and permanent workers, on certain temporary-jobsites (see Table 1).

Table 1

## Organizational Factors Indicated in Workplace Bullying

No.	Participant ID	Age	Labor Hall Setting		Temporary-labor Work Assignment Process		Agency Employees	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	TEMPBM1	31	1		1		1	
2	TEMPBM2	46	1		1		1	
3	TEMPBM3	41		1	1			1
4	TEMPBM4	46	1		1		1	
5	TEMPBM5	52	1		1		1	
6	TEMPBM6	46	1		1		1	
7	TEMPHM1	38	1		1		1	
8	TEMPHM2	44	1		1		1	
9	TEMPHM3	40	1		1		1	
10	TEMPHM4	54	1			1	1	
11	TEMPBF1	26		1		1		1
12	TEMPBF2	57	1		1		1	
13	TEMPWM1	28	1			1	1	
14	TEMPWM2	26	1		1		1	
15	TEMPWM3	51	1		1		1	
16	TEMPWM4	32	1			1	1	
17	TEMPWM5	33	1		1		1	
18	TEMPWM6	39	1		1		1	
19	TEMPWM7	48	1		1		1	
20	TEMPWM8	29	1		1		1	
21	TEMPMF1	27	1		1		1	
22	TEMPMF2	52	1		1		1	
23	TEMPNM1	34	1		1		1	
24	TEMPWF1	51	1			1	1	
25	TEMPWF2	59	1		1		1	
Totals (Yes/No):			23	2	20	5	23	2
Percentages (Yes/No):			92%	8%	80%	20%	92%	8%

Utilization of a labor hall setting was indicated in workplace bullying.

Based on the interviews, in the study at hand, many temporary-labor agencies utilize *labor halls*—an open waiting-space, within an agency that is often comprised of nothing more than several rows of metal fold-up or plastic, stackable lawn chairs and a dated television. Moreover, these labor halls are apparently employed by the above agencies, in order to keep temporary-laborers in the agency, on stand-by and readily available for the potential needs of an agency's clients. In fact, reportedly, some of these above agencies have either formal or informal policies that require *potential temporary-laborers*—individuals, who are seeking their first or next temporary-labor *work assignment*—the temporary-labor job that a temporary-laborer will perform on a particular client's jobsite, while employed by the agency, to report to an agency's labor hall in-person, each day, to sit and wait for a the possibility of attaining a temporary-labor job. In fact, potential temporary-laborers are often required to report, to a labor hall, well in advance (e.g., four or more hours) of being selected for a work assignment or sent out to a jobsite.

In the temporary-labor industry, a work assignment is usually referred to as a *work-ticket*—an actual paper ticket that is given to the individual, who is selected for a temporary-labor job, and it includes information about the job type, duration and location of the work that a temporary-laborer will be expected to perform. Moreover, reportedly, in many temporary-labor agencies, temporary-laborers are required to check-in with the agency, in order to pick-up a new work-



ticket, on a daily basis, regardless of whether the temporary-labor jobs are ongoing (e.g., more than one day of work) or not.

Reportedly, some of the above agencies, commonly require not just potential temporary-laborers, but also *active temporary-laborers*—individuals, who already have a *regular-work assignment*—a long-term or *temp-permanent-assignment*—a work assignment that starts out as a temporary position, but that has the potential to later become permanent, if and when a client decides to hire a temporary-laborer from the agency, to adhere to the aforementioned check-in policy. Moreover, these regular-work assignments, which are also referred to as *weekly-work-tickets*, in some if the above agencies, are jobs that although still temporary in nature, typically continue for quite an extended period of time (e.g., weeks or months or even years). Therefore, regardless of the inconveniences (e.g., additional travel time, cost of fuel, distance and so on), temporary-laborers, who are assigned these regular-work assignments, are still expected to make an extra-trip to the labor hall, each and every morning, in order to check-in with the agency's employees first, before reporting to their assigned jobsite.

Based on the interviews, the largest, local temporary-labor agency has reportedly set the industry standard, in regards to labor hall waiting-policies, and this particular agency usually requires both potential and active temporary-laborers to report to its labor hall, by as early as 4 or 5 A.M. each morning, depending on the day of week (i.e., weekdays versus weekends). Moreover, several participants indicated that the above agency's employees also expect potential temporary-laborers to wait in the labor hall for a minimum of four hours,

each morning, without being paid for the time they spend waiting to be informed, as to whether or not work assignments are even available for that particular day.

The above check-in policy appears to be a common practice, not just in the above mentioned agency, but also among many other temporary-labor agencies. For example, participant TEMPWM6, a 39-year-old White male, reported that, while he was seeking a temporary-labor job, in one particular agency, the agency's employees expected him to wait in the agency's labor hall between the hours of 5:00 and 10:00 A.M. However, the above participant would often arrive to the agency even earlier, by 4:30 A.M., in order to make a good impression on the above agency's employees, because he believed that this strategy might increase his odds of attaining a work assignment.

Not surprisingly, despite the fact that potential temporary-laborers are not paid for the time they spend waiting in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall, most participants, in the current study, indicated that they were still willing to wait for extended periods of time, while seeking a temporary-labor job. Moreover, some of the above participants reported that they often decided to wait for long hours in a labor hall, because they believed that they had no other viable options for immediate employment or that this was their only source for finding a job or that they would be penalized by an agency's employees for not waiting (e.g., not being selected for future work assignments) or had previously been successful in attaining a temporary-labor job, by waiting long hours.

Even though most of the above participants were able to justify the strategy of waiting long hours in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall, in order to

attain a work assignment, many of these individuals indicated that they did not believe that this policy was fair or in some cases legal. For example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, reported that he usually waited in a labor hall, for five or more hours, while seeking a temporary-labor job. He also explained, “I don’t think it [the hours spent waiting in the labor hall without pay] should be legal, but if I need to work bad...bad enough, I’ll wait as long as it [being selected for a work assignment] takes.” In a second example, participant TEMPWM1, a 28-year-old White male, stated that, “It [the long hours of waiting for a work assignment] takes a toll on you, but I got to work...so I wait.” In fact, the above participant also reported commonly waiting from 5:30A.M. to 9:00 or 10:00 A.M., in a particular temporary-labor agency’s labor hall, while seeking a temporary-labor job.

The majority of participants, in the current study, reported typically spending 3 or 4 hours per day, while waiting in a temporary-labor agency’s labor hall, regardless of whether they were a potential temporary-laborer who was seeking a work assignment or already an active temporary-laborer who had a regular work assignment, but was still required to report to the agency that employed them nonetheless, before going onto his or her jobsite.

A few participants, in the current study, indicated that, on occasion, they had spent an entire day, in a labor hall (e.g., from 5:00 A.M. until 5:00 or 6:00 P.M.), while waiting to be selected for a work assignment. This is not surprising, due to the fact that, as previously mentioned many potential temporary-laborers are often required or instructed, by a temporary-labor agency’s employees, to wait

in a labor hall for many hours. However, it is important to note, that many of the participants indicated that they were willing to wait, even beyond what was expected of them, and often for as long as it might take, on any given day, in order to attain a temporary-labor job.

When participants, in the current study, were asked how many hours they typically waited in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall while seeking a temporary-labor job, as mentioned above, the majority of individuals reported usually waiting for at least 3 or 4 hours. For example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, indicated that he usually spent a minimum of 4 or 5 hours, in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall, and sometimes much longer (i.e., up to 8 hours), waiting for a work assignment, while, in his words, "Praying to be sent out." In a second example, participant TEMPWM5, a 33-year-old White male, reported that some temporary-labor agencies did not have an official policy, with regards to how long one must wait in the labor hall, while seeking a temporary-labor job, but based on his experience, he believed that if a potential temporary-laborer left too early, on any given day, that an agency's employees would likely penalize that individual, by deliberately failing to send him or her out for the next day or two. Also, in a third example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female, indicated that an employee of one particular temporary-labor agency had repeatedly told her, "If you stay and wait, I'll remember it [the fact that you stayed and waited], and you'll go [be selected for a work assignment] first tomorrow." Therefore, the above participant would often wait, in the above agency's labor hall from 5:00 A.M. until the afternoon hours.

Additionally, in a fourth example, participant TEMPBM5, a 52-year-old Black male, indicated that the above strategy, of waiting in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall for long hours, does not always help, because he reported that there have been times when he has waited, in a particular labor hall, for 7 or more hours and that, in these instances, he was still not successful in attaining a work assignment, because in his words, "They [the agency employees] play favorites." Furthermore, in a fifth example, participant TEMPWM7, a 48-year-old White male, reported that, in one particular temporary-labor agency's labor hall, he had often waited 6 hours a day, before being selected for a work assignment, and that is if he was sent out at all, because in his words, "I was not an ass kisser."

Not surprisingly, numerous participants in the current study indicated that these extended periods of waiting, in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall, were capable of intensifying the competition for the available jobs, among the potential temporary-laborers. Especially because, reportedly, the longer a potential temporary-laborer spent waiting to be selected for a work assignment, the less likely it was that he or she would attain a temporary-labor job, for that day. In fact, many of the above participants indicated that the majority of work assignments, within most temporary-labor agencies, are usually filled in the earliest hours of an agency's business day (e.g., between 5 A.M. – 9 A.M.). For example, participant TEMPWM3, a 51-year-old White male, explained, "If you ain't out [selected for a work assignment] by 9 [A.M.], you ain't going out [working a temporary-job that day] and you start getting mad at the ones [the individuals that are selected for work assignments] going out." In a second

example, participant TEMPWM5, a 33-year-old White male, indicated that while waiting in one particular labor hall, he has witnessed many potential temporary-laborers, who in his words “Get mad as hell when someone else [another potential temporary-laborer] gets one [selected for a work assignment].” Also, in a third example, participant TEMPBM6, a 46-year-old Black male, stated that, “It gets ugly at times [among the potential temporary-laborers in a labor hall]...cause everybody wants to work...people be making threats and [begin] booing the one [the individual, who is selected for a work assignment] that gets the next one [a temporary-labor job].” Additionally, in a fourth example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female, reported witnessing several situations, in one particular labor hall, in which potential temporary-laborers, who were still waiting to be selected for work assignments, started verbal arguments with the individuals who were selected for work assignments. In fact, the above participant also recalled one incident between two potential temporary laborers, in another labor hall, which began as a verbal argument over a work assignment issue, and then escalated into a fist-fight, outside, in the temporary-labor agency’s parking-lot.

Based on the interviews, in the current study, these long periods of waiting in a temporary-labor agency’s labor hall not only increase the competition for work assignments among potential temporary-laborers, but also stimulate feelings of irritation and tension among this bored and idle group of workers. For example, participant TEMPBM1, a 31-year-old Black male, reported that he would often become increasingly frustrated and anxious, as he waited to be selected for a work assignment, while in a particular agency’s labor hall, and that

he often left this agency after 4 or 5 hours, feeling irritated and angry that he had wasted such a large part of his day, and yet had still not attained a temporary-labor job or gained anything (i.e., compensation for the time he had spent waiting in the labor hall) in return. In a second example, participant TEMPHM2, a 44-year-old Hispanic male, recalled that sometimes after he had waited for an hour or so, in one particular labor hall, that he and some of the other potential temporary-laborers would start saying that they felt, in his words, “Down or bad or angry,” about not being selected for a work assignment, and that then some of these individuals would start to get aggressive with those around them. The above participant also indicated that, in some labor halls, there was competition to secure the most desirable waiting areas (e.g., certain chairs or standing areas), among the potential temporary-laborers. Reportedly, these desirable waiting areas were usually near the *dispatch-counter*—the counter high dividing-wall that separates an agency’s employee office area from the labor hall area. For example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, reported that one time, while he was talking to a temporary-labor agency’s employee, over the dispatch-counter, in one particular labor hall, that the agency’s phone rang and it was a client calling for temporary-laborers, and he had to, in his words, “Push and shove,” individuals off of him, who were trying to rush up to the dispatch-counter and attempting to, in his words, “Cut in front of him.” The above participant also indicated that, in another temporary-labor agency’s labor hall, he almost had, in his words, “A fist fight,” over a similar situation, in which other potential

temporary-laborers were trying to, in his words, “Push in front of him,” in order to get closer to the dispatch-counter.

Based on the interviews, in the current study, the competition to be near a temporary-labor agency’s dispatch-counter, reportedly, increases when potential temporary-laborers believe that an agency’s employee is about to select individuals for a work assignment. Moreover, many participants indicated that some potential temporary-laborers believe that the above aggressive strategies, which are used to get closer to the dispatch-counter, may help them get selected for a work assignment before others, thereby decreasing the time they spend waiting in a labor hall. For example, participant TEMPMN1, a 34-year-old Native-American male, reported that the employees, of one particular temporary-labor agency, usually encouraged him to wait for many hours (i.e., through the afternoon hours) in the agency’s labor hall, but he indicated that he did not like to spend time waiting, in his words, “In that kind of place,” especially because some of the other potential temporary-laborers would, in his words, “Get bored and start trouble.” The above participant also indicated that a few individuals had gotten, in his words, “Rough or acted like tough-guys,” with him, while in his words, “I’m doing my own thing,” in the labor hall (i.e., approaching the dispatch counter, in order to ask an agency employee a question).

Based on the interviews, in the current study, potential temporary-laborers also develop feelings of frustration and anger, which are stimulated by specific organizational policies, which regulate temporary-labor agencies’ labor halls. These policies, as indicated by participants, include the expected (and often



required) in-person, daily check-ins, for all temporary-laborers, who have regular-work assignments and the long waiting periods, within a labor hall, for those individuals, who are seeking a work assignment. For example, TEMPMF2, a 52-year-old Mexican American female, discussed the fact that she did not like to wait in labor halls, while seeking a work assignment and stated that the above policies were in her words, “Stupid and a big waste of time,” and she stated that, “Sometimes my days [in a labor hall] are spent waiting and waiting and waiting...I get nothing out of it [all of the hours spent waiting to be selected for a work assignment].” The above participant also indicated that she was instructed, by an employee in one particular temporary- labor agency, to report to the agency’s labor hall by 5:00 A.M., each morning, and told that if she did not that she would not be considered for a work assignment for that particular day. In fact, she found the above policy to be in her words, “Stupid and useless.” Moreover, she reported believing that these agency-required in-person, check-in and labor hall-waiting policies were not fair and perhaps illegal, especially because she indicated that she was not paid for any of the numerous hours that she spent waiting in the above agency’s labor hall, and that even after waiting as instructed, she was often still not selected for a work assignment.

As previously stated, a temporary-labor agency’s policies, either formal or informal, may encourage or expect or require a potential temporary-laborer to continue waiting in an agency’s labor hall, well into the afternoon hours, on the premise that a client could call and request temporary-laborers at anytime during the course of an agency’s business day. However, reportedly, even if a particular

temporary-labor agency does not have such policies in place, many potential temporary-laborers believe that the act of waiting long hours, in a labor hall, is a viable strategy for securing a work assignment. For example, participant TEMPMN1, a 34-year-old Native American male, reported that the employees, of one particular temporary-labor agency, had never instructed or encouraged him to wait in the agency's labor hall, as a requirement or strategy for securing a temporary-labor job, but he did indicate believing that the strategy of waiting was beneficial, and he explained, "You should wait if you want work [a work assignment], because they [a temporary-labor agency's clients] could call any minute [and request temporary-laborers]." The above participant also indicated that he usually spent between 4 to 6 hours, in a labor hall, waiting to be selected for a work assignment, despite the fact that he had never been instructed to do so. Moreover, even though he finds these long hours of waiting to be frustrating, he indicated that he often continues to wait because in his experience there is still a chance to be selected for a work assignment, up until the afternoon hours, and he stated, "I keep hoping [while waiting for a temporary-labor job in an agency's labor hall] but it kind of makes me angry when I see all the others [the individuals selected for work assignments] going first [leaving before him, for a jobsite]." It is important to note that the above participant indicated that he has been using this strategy of waiting long hours, in his current agency's labor hall, for over a month, and during this time period, he reportedly has only been selected for a total of two 1-day work assignments.

There were a few participants that reported that they were rarely willing to wait, in a labor hall, while seeking a temporary-labor job, for more than a few hours, regardless of the consequences. For example, participant TEMPBM3, a 31-year-old Black male, indicated that typically after waiting, in an agency's labor hall, for 4 hours that he would leave and in his words, "Call it a loss for the day." In another example, participant TEMPBF2, a 46-year-old Black female, reported that even though she realized that many individuals were willing to wait for an entire day, in order to attain a temporary-labor job, that she was not and she stated, "I usually won't stay [wait in a agency's labor hall] for more than 2 hours...because I know better."

Based on the interviews, the previously discussed policy of a temporary-labor agency's policy of an in-person labor hall check-in, which is required of many individuals, who have regular work assignments or weekly-work-tickets, reportedly results in feeling of frustration and anger, among some temporary-laborers. For example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female, stated, "I was happy to have a [temporary-labor] job, but going in [to the agency for a daily check-in] sucked...I hated it." Moreover, the negative feelings about this policy are largely related to the fact that temporary-laborers believe that they are wasting hours of their day doing little other than waiting to go to their regularly assigned jobsite. For example, participant TEMPWM5, a 33-year-old White male, reported that, even when he was on a weekly-work-ticket, he was still, almost always, required to check-in with the agency that employed him and that he also had to wait in the agency's labor hall for a couple hours each

morning, before going on to his assigned jobsite. The above participant also stated, “All that waiting gets on my nerves, cause I’m wasting my time.”

The above policy of an in-person daily check-in, which is widespread among temporary-labor agencies, apparently does not just stimulate negative feelings, among temporary-laborers, it also reportedly results in many additional work-related hours, miles of travel, and transportation expenses, for the individuals (e.g., those on regular work assignments), who are impacted by this policy. For example, participant TEMPBM6, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that while working for one particular temporary-labor agency, which had such a daily check-in policy, that he was on a weekly-work-ticket for over a month, and yet was still required to report to this agency’s labor hall by 4:00 A.M. each morning, despite the fact that he was not scheduled to start work, on his assigned jobsite until 8:00 A.M. The above participant also reported that this policy led to, in his words, “Wasting gas...a lot of gas... and I’m riding to the wrong side [the side of the city opposite to that of his jobsite] every [work] day... and that was not right...and not cheap.” In a second example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female, indicated that she had been on one ongoing temporary work assignment for a 3-month period, while working through one particular agency that required her to report in-person to the labor hall every day. The above participant also indicated that while performing the above work assignment, she was usually relying on public transportation or walking by foot, in order to make the 2 mile, daily trips between this temporary-labor agency and her assigned jobsite, and in regards to the above she stated, “It was tough, I’ll tell you that.”

The temporary-labor work assignment process was indicated in workplace bullying. As previously mentioned, the competition for temporary-labor jobs among potential temporary-laborers, is often intensified for individuals who are waiting in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall, an organizational environment and culture that many temporary-labor agencies implement. Moreover, reportedly, this competition among temporary-laborers arises in part from the fact that there are rarely as many temporary-labor jobs available as there are individuals who would like to attain one on any given day. For example, participant TEMPWM3, a 51-year-old White male, described the competition for temporary-labor jobs, among potential temporary-laborers, in his words as, "Damn or dangerously competitive," and he also stated, "There's not enough jobs for all." In a second example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, stated that, " [At many temporary-labor agencies] the jobs run out quickly," but also noted that, "If you get there [arrive to the agency's labor hall] really early...you might have a chance." The above participant also indicated that, at one of the local temporary-labor agencies, individuals arrive as early as 2:00 or 3:00 A.M., in order to line-up in front of the agency's labor hall door, well before the agency at hand is open for business.

The competition for temporary-labor jobs, among potential temporary-laborers, is further heightened at certain temporary-labor agencies by the fact that, reportedly, the available work assignments are usually not assigned in fair and consistent ways. For example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, indicated that one particular temporary-labor agency requires every

individual, who is seeking a work assignment, to put his or her name on an *Available for Work List*—a sign-in sheet that tracks the chronological order of when each individual arrives at the above agency’s labor hall. The above participant also reported that this agency’s list is not only utilized to signify the order in which individuals arrived at the labor hall, but also the order in which they are suppose to be selected for work assignments. However, the above participant was quick to note that this list was seldom followed, and instead indicated that the agency’s employees usually selected the individuals, who they in his words, “Liked or favored”, first, for an available work assignment regardless of when the selected individual had arrived to the labor hall or what his or her position on the *Available for Work List*. Indeed, in a second example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, indicated that he had worked for one particular temporary-labor agency with a similar available-for-work sign-in sheet process, and he stated, “It [the sign-in sheet] ain’t ever followed...it was for show... there’s nothing fair about it.” In a third example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, discussed the sign-in process at another local temporary-labor agency and he indicated that the employees of this agency were suppose to, in his words, “Go down the list,” when selecting individuals for work assignments, but he indicated that it does not always happen that way, because there is, in his words, “Favoritism,” and he stated, “The people [the potential temporary-laborers] that the [agency’s] employees like go first [get selected for a work assignment before the others].” The above participant also

indicated that an individual's appearance (e.g., clean and tidy), was a deciding factor in whether or not he or she would be selected for a work assignment.

As previously mentioned, many participants reported that they believed that certain potential temporary-laborers received preferential treatment, from some employees in certain temporary-labor agencies, in regards to the selection order of the temporary-laborers and the work assignment process. Moreover, several participants reported that this preferential treatment was often based on a potential temporary-laborer's race. For example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male reported that he had witnessed several employees, at various temporary-labor agencies, consistently and unfairly selecting individuals, who were of a particular race (e.g., Latino), for work assignments, rather than selecting individuals of other races (e.g., Black or White). In another example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, indicated that, at one particular temporary-labor agency, the agency's employees commonly selected individuals from a sign-in list based on non work-related characteristics, such as one's appearance, race and attire, and that some employees only selected the individuals who they knew well or were at least familiar with for the available work assignments. Also, in a third example, participant TEMPBM3, a 41-year-old Black male, reported that, at one particular temporary-labor agency, the agency's employees commonly played, in his word, "God," by selecting workers based on race, gender, and their own personal preferences. The above participant also indicated that he has witnessed race-based discrimination, in regards to the work assignment process on a regular basis, particularly toward Black individuals and especially at

temporary-labor agencies that are located in Aurora, Illinois, an area that reportedly has a high population of Latino temporary-laborers and Latino staffed/managed temporary-labor agencies. Additionally, in a third example, participant TEMPBM6, a 46-year-old Black male, stated that, “The list [the agency’s sign-in sheet] ain’t followed there [in temporary-labor agencies]...it isn’t first come first serve, because they [the temporary-labor agencies’ employees] show favoritism [by] sending [assigning work assignments] their buddies and friends that are similar [racially] to them first.”

The majority of participants, in the current study, reported that most temporary-labor agencies utilized work assignment practices that were largely unfair and often discriminating in nature. Moreover, participants indicated that these practices commonly resulted in various negative feelings among potential temporary-laborers. In particular, many participants reported that they had experienced or witnessed others who had experienced feelings of anger or resentment due to a particular temporary-labor agency’s biased work assignment (and selection) practice, in which one potential temporary-laborer would be unfairly selected over another, for an available temporary-labor job. Also, participants indicated that these negative feelings, which reportedly derived from the above practice, were directed towards not only the temporary-labor agencies and their employees, but also towards the *unfairly* selected temporary-laborers. For example, participant TEMPHM1, a 38-year-old Hispanic male, reported that sometimes, in one particular temporary-labor agency, the potential temporary-laborers would verbally challenge the agency’s employees’ selection decisions or



make threatening remarks or gestures to the temporary-laborer, who had been selected for a work assignment. The above participant reported that these negative behaviors were especially common when the potential temporary-laborers, who were waiting in an agency's labor hall, believed that the work assignment (and selection process) that had been utilized, by the agency's employees was unfair. Also, in a second example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, reported that he has witnessed several incidents in which potential temporary-laborers, who were waiting alongside him in a particular temporary-labor agency's labor hall, became visibly angry when they noticed an unfair pattern in an agency's employee's work assignment process. He also indicated that he had witnessed several situations in which a temporary-laborer, who appeared to be the same race (i.e., Mexican) and to speak the same native language (e.g., Spanish) as an employee of the above temporary-labor agency, had arrived to the agency's labor hall late (and long after many other potential temporary-laborers), but that this individual was still sent out on a work assignment before those individuals, who had arrived before him or her, without any explanation from the agency's employee. Indeed, in a third example, participant TEMPMF1, a 27-year-old Mexican American female, also reported witnessing instances in which certain individuals were shown favoritism during the work assignment (and selection) process, at various temporary-labor agencies, and she explained that many of these agencies, are in the Aurora, Illinois area and that they are staffed by Latino employees, and therefore, in her experience, they usually first send out the Latino temporary-laborers, especially those that speak

fluent Spanish. Also, in a fourth example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, reported that he has witnessed several potential temporary-laborers glare at or give threatening looks to an individual, who had been selected for a work assignment, in what they believed was an unfair selection process.

Additionally, in a fifth example, participant TEMPWM1, a 28-year-old white male, indicated that some potential temporary-laborers give other temporary-laborers, who they believe have been unfairly selected for a work assignment, a difficult time in the labor hall and sometimes later on a jobsite, because they believed that these individuals must have been, in his words, “Sucking-up” or had, “Sucked-up,” in their native language (e.g., Spanish) to the temporary-labor agency’s employees, in order to get preferential treatment in the work assignment process. Furthermore, in a sixth example, participant TEMPMF2, a 52-year-old Mexican American female, indicated that those individuals, who were perceived as being unfairly selected (i.e., due to one’s race being the same, as an agency’s employee’s race) for a work assignment, were often later targeted on jobsites or after work hours, and teased, bullied or harassed.

Temporary-labor agency employees are indicated in workplace bullying experiences. Based on the interviews, most employees of temporary-labor agencies commonly treat temporary-laborers in degrading ways and with a general lack of respect. Moreover, the majority of participants stated that they had witnessed incidents of harassment and discrimination (above and beyond the previously mentioned work-assignment selection process) in various temporary-labor agencies, which were perpetrated by an agency’s employees. Also, based

on the interviews, many employees of temporary-labor agencies allow or dismiss or fail to acknowledge, and at times may even provoke or encourage some of the harassment, abuse and bullying that occurs among temporary-laborers.

Participants reported that a great deal of the harassment and abuse that is perpetrated, by employees of temporary-labor agencies onto temporary laborers, occurs in agencies' labor halls. Moreover, reportedly, many of these negative behaviors are primarily directed at certain targeted groups of workers (e.g., particular racial groups). For example, according to participant TEMPWM1, a 28-year-old White male, the employees of one particular temporary-labor agency have repeatedly harassed him, while he was in the agency's labor hall, and that these employees have also encouraged or allowed other temporary-laborers, in the labor hall, to harass and bully him as well. Moreover, the above participant indicated that, while he was in the above agency's labor hall, he was called a "Honky," by one employee, a Hispanic male, because the employee believed that he had excessive facial hair (which he has since removed) and he was accused of being unclean, because he wore the same shirt, to his assigned jobsite, several times during the same week, even though he insisted that the shirt had been cleaned and laundered each time he wore it. Also, reportedly, the above agency's employee allowed and encouraged various Hispanic and Black temporary-laborers, in the labor hall at hand, to call, the above participant, "Honky," on an ongoing basis, and the above participant indicated that this negative behavior continued on to his assigned jobsite. Additionally, the above participant reported that after he failed to comply with the above employee's requests, to shave his

face and change his shirt daily, and after he had filed a complaint with this agency's management about the name calling that he had experienced, both in the labor hall and on his assigned jobsite, he indicated that he was unable to attain additional work assignments at this particular temporary-labor agency.

In a second example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, reported that the employees of one particular temporary-labor agency consistently made him feel like, in his word, "Garbage," by ignoring and talking, in his word, "Down," to him, and he recalled one particular incident in which, while waiting in the above agency's labor hall, he had approached the dispatch counter, in order to ask the agency's employees a question about his chances of getting a work-assignment for the day, due to the fact that he had already spent more than 4 hours waiting in the labor hall, and that the agency's manager, who is, reportedly, a Mexican American male, yelled at him to, in his words, "Sit down White boy, it's not your turn." However, participant TEMPWM2 indicated that he still persisted in trying to get his question answered, and that because of this, the above manager glared at him and gave him a, in his words, "Challenging-look," which he reportedly interpreted as, in his words, "You're not going out today." Also, participant TEMPWM2 reported that, for several days after the above incident, a few of the other temporary-laborers, in this labor hall, who, reportedly, were Mexican American males, also began to refer to him as, in his words, "White boy and White honky," while the agency's employees joined in and laughed about it.

In a third example, participant TEMPBM4, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that some of the employees of the temporary-agencies that he has worked

for, in his words, “Look at you [a temporary-laborer] like you are a dime a dozen,” and indicated that many of these employees would, in his words, “Send me away [tell him that there were no work-assignments available], because I’m Black.” Moreover, participant TEMPBM4 reported that in one particular temporary-labor agency, which was, in his words, “Runned [staffed/managed] by Mexicans,” that it was common practice to treat the Black temporary-laborers, in his words, “Like garbage.” Also, participant TEMPBM4 indicated that, at this agency, the employees would, in his words, “Treat the [allegedly] illegal Mexicans [temporary-laborers] better [than the Black temporary-laborers] and give them all the jobs [work-assignments]. Additionally, participant TEMPBM4 reported that because of the above, reportedly, discriminating, work-assignment practice that, in his words, “Mexican [temporary-laborers] workers would treat the Blacks [the Black temporary-laborers] the same [as the agency’s employees, i.e., like garbage] way,” especially because they reportedly believed that the Black temporary-laborers were, in his words, “A threat and trying to take their [the Mexican temporary-laborers] jobs [work-assignments].”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPBF2, a 42-year-old Black female reported that, based on her experience, most employees of temporary-labor agencies treat temporary-laborers with respect, however, in her opinion, one particular temporary-labor agency often mistreats Black temporary-laborers, and seldom selects this group of individuals for work-assignments. Moreover, participant TEMPBF2 indicated that the employees, in the above agency, are reportedly exclusively Hispanic, and she reported that these employees, in her

opinion, believed that Black temporary-laborers were lazy, and that on more than one occasion, she witnessed one particular employee, in this agency, call black temporary-laborers, in her word, “Lazy,” while attempting to justify his decision for not selecting a Black temporary-laborer for a work-assignment. Also, participant TEMPBF2 reported that the reportedly Hispanic temporary-laborers, in the above agency, would often follow the agency’s employees’ behaviors and, in her words, “Act like they [the Hispanic temporary-laborers] were better than you [the Black or White temporary-laborers].” Additionally, TEMPBF2 indicated that there was racial tension between the Black and Hispanic temporary-laborers, in the above agency, and reported that she believed that most of this tension arose from the fact that the agency’s employees preferred Hispanic temporary-laborers over the other temporary-laborers (e.g., Black and White temporary-laborers) and therefore frequently, in her words, “Played these guys [the Black and Hispanic temporary-laborers] against each other, so they would work harder [when they went to their assigned jobsites].”

In a fifth example, participant TEMPMF1, a 27-year-old Mexican American female reported that, in one particular temporary-labor agency, the conflicts that arose between temporary-laborers, in the agency’s labor hall, were rarely resolved fairly, by the agency’s employees, because the employees often, in her words, “Picked sides and showed special treatment for a Hispanic worker [temporary-laborer] over another [temporary-laborer of a differing race].” Moreover, participant TEMPMF1 indicated that she believed that the fact that the above agency’s employees, in her words, “Showed favoritism to the Hispanic

workers [temporary-laborers] caused a lot of problems between the workers [the Hispanic temporary laborers and temporary-laborers of differing races, in the agency's labor hall].”

### Worker Vulnerabilities and Workplace Bullying

As previously discussed the literature has identified various worker vulnerabilities, some of which are visibly apparent (e.g., race), among temporary-laborers that reportedly make this group of workers a commonly chosen target of bullying behaviors. Moreover, as previously noted, temporary-laborers, as a group, have relatively little social or workplace power, and work-related relational powerlessness—a power disparity between two or more interacting individuals, is often an important determinant of workplace bullying. Moreover, in my opinion, it is usually not difficult to identify a relatively powerless worker, as race and ethnicity can both be visual markers of one's status and power, in our society. Also, as previously stated, when the readily identified, minority workers are bullied, the perpetrators are motivated not just by racism, but also by the fact that this group of workers is usually an easy to target, because these workers are often already socially isolated in workplace-settings.

The worker vulnerabilities of social class status and occupational position, as previously discussed, are also instrumental factors in the emergence of workplace bullying. In fact, workers, who are paid low-wages and have extremely limited financial resources, are usually the easiest targets for disrespect and bullying, especially by those with authority and power in workplace-settings. Moreover, workers in low-status occupations (i.e., temporary-laborers) usually

have relatively low levels of education (e.g., high school diploma or less) and limited relationships with employee-advocates (e.g., operational or HR managers) at work, and therefore lack the knowledge (e.g., their employee rights and protections) or a willingness to seek organizational grievance procedures or to officially report the bullying incidents. Also, as previously mentioned, workers facing job insecurity, which is a constant issue for temporary-laborers, but perhaps even more so in the current economy, are even less likely to report bullying behaviors, because individuals in an insecure job environment are usually significantly lower in status, power, and job security, and therefore they may believe that they are more *disposable* than their perpetrators (e.g., a supervisor).

There is, as previously discussed, evidence suggesting that individuals, who were bullied as children in school, are much more likely to later be bullied as adults in the workplace. In fact, these previously bullied individuals may have certain attributes, such as one's temperament, self-esteem, and ability to form protective relationships, factors that have been suggested as being important to the emergence of bullying incidents. Also, as previously noted, the lessons of power and aggression which one learns in childhood may play a role in either making a individual more or less vulnerable to workplace bullying, as an adult. Therefore, temporary-laborers, who have been bullied as children, as well as those who have learned certain lessons of power and aggression may be more vulnerable to experiencing negative behaviors, such as bullying, as adults, in work-related settings.



Based on the interviews, several worker vulnerabilities, among temporary-laborers, were indicated in workplace bullying experiences. Moreover, some of these vulnerabilities, such as low pay and low occupational status (i.e., temporary-laborer versus permanent-worker), two factors that, as previously mentioned, have been shown to lead to job insecurity, appear to be nearly universal, among temporary-laborers (see Table 2). The participants, in the current study, also reported that a temporary-laborer's racial or ethnic membership is another vulnerability that reportedly plays a role in a plethora of bullying incidents (see Table 2). Additionally, previous childhood bullying experiences, both those that occurred at school (i.e., bullying perpetrated by peers) and those that were experienced in one's home (i.e., bullying perpetrated by a parent, sibling, or other family member) are yet another type of vulnerability that was indicated in bullying among temporary-laborers (see Table 2). Further, previous childhood bullying experiences also apparently make temporary-laborers more likely to experience, witness, and report bullying behaviors as an adult, while in work-related settings, a finding that will be discussed later in this paper.

Table 2

## Worker Vulnerabilities Contributing to Workplace Bullying

No.	Participant ID	Age	Minority Membership		Low Pay/Low Status Position(s)		Childhood Bullying Experience(s)	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	TEMPBM1	31	1			1	1	
2	TEMPBM2	46		1	1			1
3	TEMPBM3	41		1	1		1	
4	TEMPBM4	46	1		1		1	
5	TEMPBM5	52		1	1		1	
6	TEMPBM6	46	1		1		1	
7	TEMPHM1	38	1		1		1	
8	TEMPHM2	44	1		1		1	
9	TEMPHM3	40		1	1		1	
10	TEMPHM4	54	1		1			1
11	TEMPBF1	26		1		1	1	
12	TEMPBF2	57	1		1		1	
13	TEMPWM1	28		1	1		1	
14	TEMPWM2	26	1		1		1	
15	TEMPWM3	51	1		1		1	
16	TEMPWM4	32	1			1	1	
17	TEMPWM5	33	1		1		1	
18	TEMPWM6	39	1		1		1	
19	TEMPWM7	48	1		1		1	
20	TEMPWM8	29	1		1		1	
21	TEMPMF1	27	1		1		1	
22	TEMPMF2	52	1		1			1
23	TEMPNM1	34	1		1		1	
24	TEMPWF1	51	1		1		1	
25	TEMPWF2	59		1	1		1	
Totals (Yes/No):			18	7	22	3	22	3
Percentages (Yes/No):			72%	28%	88%	12%	88%	12%

Minority membership indicated in bullying experiences. Based on the interviews, a temporary-laborer's racial and/or ethnic membership is reportedly a worker vulnerability that is indicated in numerous bullying experiences. Participants, of various races (e.g., Black, White, Mexican, and Hispanic)

reported that they had experienced or witnessed bullying behaviors that arose from racial or ethnic tension, prejudice, or discrimination. Indeed, when asked the question, “*Do you believe that the bullied individual’s race or ethnicity may have been the reason for the bullying experience(s) that you reported earlier,*” nearly all of the participants answered, “Yes.” It is important to note, that when answering the above question the participants had the option to select from the following choices: (1) Yes, (2) No, (3) Maybe or (4) Unknown.

Not surprisingly, participants, who reported being bullied, in a temporary-labor agency’s labor hall or on an assigned jobsite, commonly identified an individual of another race, as the perpetrator of the negative behavior(s). Moreover, participants who reported having witnessed the bullying experience of another temporary-laborer usually indicated that the incidents occurred between a perpetrator(s) and a victim(s) of differing races. For example, participant TEMPWM7, a 48-year-old White male, reported that nearly all of the bullying experiences, which he has witnessed, while working in the temporary-labor industry, have been comprised of a Black male perpetrator, often a *jobsite supervisor*—an individual, who is permanently employed by the jobsite’s employer and in a position of power or in-charge of supervising the other workers on a jobsite or a *permanent-worker*—an individual, who is permanently employed by the employer of a jobsite, and a White male victim, who was usually a temporary-laborer.

In a second example, participant TEMPBF2, a 57-year-old Black female, reported a bullying experience, which she described as, in her words, “Being quite

disturbing,” in which a Black female permanent-worker repeatedly bullied a White female temporary-laborer, for weeks, on one of her assigned jobsites. Also, participant TEMPBF2 indicated that she adamantly believed, in regards to the above bullying experience, that the victim’s race was at least one of the perpetrator’s primary motivating factors.

In a third example, participant TEMPHM2, a 44-year-old Hispanic male, reported that he had been bullied in several temporary-labor agencies’ labor halls, primarily by other temporary-laborers of differing races (i.e., Black and White), and on his assigned jobsites, primarily by White male supervisors. Moreover, participant TEMPHM2 indicated that he was able to recall several bullying experiences in which White male supervisors had bullied him, on a jobsite, for the entire duration of his work-assignment, and he stated that these bullying experiences, in his words, “Made me feel like, [I was] worthless, like I was a nobody.” Also, participant TEMPHM2 indicated that he usually missed work approximately once every 2 weeks, due to the above bullying experience. In other words, participant TEMPHM2 did not want to return to his assigned temporary-labor jobsite, on several occasions, because he could not continually tolerate the relentless abusive and negative behaviors that he was enduring at work.

Participants, in the current study, reported that when the perpetrator(s) of bullying was a group, instead of an individual, that by and large, the group of bullies was almost always made up of individuals of the same race or ethnicity, while the victim usually belonged to a differing race or ethnicity. In one such

example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, reported a bullying incident that he had witnessed between a reportedly Mexican jobsite supervisor and a Black temporary-laborer, on a particular assigned jobsite. This incident later escalated into group bullying, which was perpetrated by several of the jobsite's permanent-workers, who were reportedly Mexican males. Moreover, participant TEMPWM2 indicated that he believed that these permanent-workers, first, had witnessed their supervisor's bullying behaviors toward this Black temporary-laborer, and then determined that they had *permission* to act in a similar way and that there would not likely be consequences, for their negative behaviors. Participant TEMPWM2 also reported that he had tried to assist this bullied temporary-laborer by, in his words, "Watching his back," on the jobsite, and that he had ultimately reported the above incident to the jobsite's general manager and his temporary-labor agency's manager, but to his knowledge nothing was ever done about this bullying incident(s). Additionally, TEMPWM2 indicated that he believed that he was, in his word, "Canned," because he had reported the above bullying incident. Consequently, TEMPWM2 reported that he was not allowed to return to this particular jobsite, on the following day, even though this work-assignment had been originally scheduled to continue for another week.

In a second example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female, reported that several, reportedly, Mexican permanent-workers on one particular jobsite had bullied her for over a year. Moreover, she indicated that the perpetrators motivation for bullying her, was due to the fact that she was, in her

words, “Doing a good job [performing her job to the best of her abilities] and making the others [the permanent-workers] look bad [appear as if they were not working as hard, as her],” but she also speculated that this bullying experience may have had something to do with the fact that she was White and not Mexican and that she did not speak Spanish, the native language of the perpetrators.

Participant TEMPWF2 also indicated that some of the, reportedly, Mexican permanent-workers, on this jobsite, had told her to, in her words, “Slow down,” while she was performing her work, and that another, reportedly, Mexican permanent-worker had told her, in her words, “We hate you temps [temporary-laborers] for making us [the permanent-workers] look bad,” and that yet another, reportedly, Mexican permanent-worker had told her, in her words, “Ass-kissing [performing the job well and acting respectful and friendly towards the jobsite’s supervisor] ain’t going to get you anywhere, you’ll still be a temp [a temporary-laborer].” Additionally, participant TEMPWF2 reported that once the above group of permanent-workers began to bully her, that none of the other permanent-workers, who were reportedly almost all Hispanic, on this particular jobsite, would talk to her on breaks or sit by her at lunch or have anything to do with her at work. Furthermore, participant TEMPWF2 indicated that several of the, reportedly, Mexican permanent-workers would frequently walk by and mumble a phrase in Spanish to her and immediately begin laughing, thus she felt, in her words, “Picked-on, alone and isolated,” on this jobsite.

Based on the interviews, racial tensions among certain groups of workers (e.g., Mexican and Black workers) are prevalent not just in the temporary-labor

industry (and on the temporary-labor jobsites), but also in a plethora of other industries (and jobsites), in the City of Aurora, IL. For example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, stated that, “[In Aurora] it has been always the Mexicans verses the Blacks [in work-related settings].” In another example, participant TEMPBM6, a 39-year-old Black male, reported that the racial tensions, on jobsites, in Aurora, IL, is often due to the fact that, in his words, “Employers want the Mexicans...Mexicans get the work [because] they [this group of workers] claim they don’t want lunch [will continue to work through the lunch hour], [they] will work overtime, [and they] will work the cheapest [accept a lower pay rate than other groups of workers].” Moreover participant TEMPBM6 indicated that it was not just the employers, within the city of Aurora, who wanted, in his words “The Mexicans,” but that the temporary-labor agencies, in this city, also preferred this group of workers over other groups of workers. Participant TEMPBM6 also reported that he had heard the employees of one temporary-agency state, in his words, “Get all the Mexicans...others [temporary-laborers of other races] are fill-ins...Mexicans are number one [the client’s preferred race of worker],” while they were attempting to select temporary-laborer’s, from among those in their labor hall, for one particular work-assignment.

Overall, participants, in the current study, reported that the racial tensions that already existed, on jobsites in Aurora, IL, could readily intensify when temporary-laborers of one race (i.e., Black or White) were sent to a jobsite dominated by permanent-workers of a differing race (i.e., Latino or Hispanic or

Mexican-American), especially because the permanent-workers on these jobsites, reportedly, often perceived the temporary-laborers to be, *workplace-outsiders*, *racial-outsiders* and *threats*, to their jobs. For example, participant TEMPMF1, a 27-year-old Mexican American female, reported that she had witnessed several, reportedly, Mexican supervisors and permanent-workers who bullied Black and White temporary-laborers on several of her assigned jobsites. It is important to note, that even though participant TEMPMF1 self-identified as Mexican American, she also indicated that a same-race perpetrator, reportedly a Mexican American male supervisor, had bullied her on one of her assigned jobsites. Moreover, she reported that she believes that this individual targeted her, because he viewed her as not, in her words, “Mexican enough,” due to the fact that she did not speak Spanish fluently.

In a second example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he had witnessed several bullying incidents on his assigned jobsites in which, reportedly, Mexican supervisors and permanent-workers would commonly bully both Black and Mexican American female temporary-laborers. Moreover, he indicated that when he asked the victims why they tolerated these negative behaviors and why the name-calling didn’t bother them, he said that they told him, in his words, “We’re used to it.”

In a third example, participant TEMPHM3, a 40-year-old Hispanic male, reported that he had been bullied by a group of, reportedly, Mexican male permanent-workers on one of his assigned jobsites because even though he was of Hispanic origin (i.e., Cuban), the bullies still perceived him to be an, in his words,



“Outsider,” and he indicated that they had told him the following, “You’re not our kind of people.” Moreover, in addition to being bullied by this group of permanent-workers, participant TEMPHM3 stated that, “They [the, reportedly, Mexican permanent-workers] make training difficult for me, because I’m not one [a Mexican].” Also, participant TEMPHM3 indicated that he believes that the reason why the above group of permanent-workers had been motivated to bully him on an ongoing basis is because, in his words, “It’s a cultural thing...it’s what they [Mexican males] do,” and that this group of workers was, in his words, “Insecure about losing their jobs [to a temporary-laborer]...most likely because of their [reportedly] illegal status.”

Participants, in the current study, who reported that they had witnessed other temporary-laborers being bullied, while performing work in the temporary-labor industry, usually indicated that these incidents were comprised of a victim and perpetrator of differing races or ethnicities. Moreover, several participants also reported that one’s native language (i.e., Spanish) could be used as a bullying tool, in that the perpetrators, of bullying, commonly used language as a way to isolate, frustrate, and/or taunt a victim, who was not able to understand or respond to what was being said. In one such example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, reported that, while he was on one particular jobsite, he was desperately attempting to find a bathroom, and that every, reportedly, Mexican permanent-worker, on the jobsite, who he approached, in order to ask for directions to the bathroom, in his word, “Pretended,” not to speak English. However, participant TEMPWM2 indicated that he believes that these permanent-

workers did in fact understand him, because several of these individuals were laughing at him, while they ran around and grabbed at their genital area, as if, in his words, “They had to piss.”

In a second example, participant TEMPWM, a 28-year-old White male, indicated that the, reportedly, Mexican permanent-workers, on one of his assigned jobsites, had utilized their native language, Spanish, in order to make him feel, in his words, “Isolated” and “Not one of them,” and he reported that, often times, during his lunch hour, these workers would, in his words, “Skid by” altogether in their cars, to go pick-up lunch, and that they would yell comments in Spanish at him and laugh. Although, participant TEMPWM1 stated that he did not fully understand what was being said, in regards to the above comments, he indicated that he believes that they were making negative comments about him, because he was the only individual, on this jobsite, that was always left behind, during lunch, even though the other workers, on this jobsite, were aware of the fact that he had no transportation or alternate way to leave the jobsite, in order to go buy something to eat for lunch. Participant TEMPWM1 also reported that he was one of just a few White workers, on the above jobsite, and that most of the individuals, both the temporary-laborers and permanent-workers, on this jobsite were, reportedly, Mexican.

In a third example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that, on one particular jobsite, he had witnessed a, reportedly, Mexican male, jobsite supervisor and several Mexican male, permanent-workers bully a Black male, temporary-laborer. Moreover, participant TEMPBM2 indicated that

this group of bullies would commonly, in his words, “Curse and use vulgar words in Spanish [words with which he was familiar and, therefore, understood that they were directed at the bullied temporary-laborer],” while they, in his words, “Played-rough” with or “Roughed-up” (i.e., pushing, tripping, kicking, punching and poking),” the bullied-victim. Also, even though, participant TEMPBM2 stated that he was “Extremely,” bothered by the above bullying experience, he reported that he did not do anything, in response to having had witnessed this bullying, because, in his words, “What am I going to do...first of all it’s none of my business...and I can’t report what they [the bullies] are say’in, if I can understand a little [of the Spanish language] but can’t speak it [the Spanish language]...so it was a lost cause.”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPWM5, a 33-year-old White male, reported that he had witnessed an ongoing bullying experience, on one of his assigned jobsites, in which a White, female supervisor bullied a, reportedly, Mexican, female temporary-laborer, who, spoke very little English. Moreover, participant TEMPWM5 indicated that the above supervisor would continually, in his words, “Verbally threaten and tease,” the temporary-laborer, and he reported, one particular incident, in which the supervisor was, in his words, “Yelling at the top of her lungs and telling her [the bullied temporary-laborer], oh you don’t know this...oh you don’t know that,” and he stressed that this supervisor was relentless, in her attack on the temporary-laborer, despite the fact that, the above victim was already in tears, while being attacked, and that, reportedly, she

obviously did not understand what her supervisor was attempting to communicate to her.

Low pay, low status occupational position, low education, and low socio-economic status indicated in bullying experiences. Based on the interviews, temporary-laborers' relatively low level of pay is one worker vulnerability that makes this group of workers more vulnerable to workplace bullying. In fact, several participants reported that the permanent-workers, on their assigned jobsites, would often be paid double or triple the amount that the temporary-laborers were paid to perform the same work. This pay disparity was, reportedly, troubling for many participants who indicated being angry, frustrated, or irritated by this inequality. Moreover, some participants recalled incidents, in which they had been teased, taunted, laughed at, or picked-on, by permanent-employees, and belittled, disrespected or mistreated, by supervisors, on jobsites, because of their low pay rate.

When discussing the typical low pay of most temporary-labor jobs, participant TEMPWM1, a 28-year-old White male, reported that the permanent-workers, on jobsites, were often aware that the temporary-laborers were paid far less for the same work, and therefore, indicated that this group of workers commonly, in his words, "Acted superior [to the temporary-laborers]," by treating the temporary-laborers, as if, in his words, "They're beneath them [the permanent-workers]" and as if, the temporary-laborers are, in his words, "Slaves or something." Moreover, participant TEMPWM1 stated, "They [the permanent-

workers] all get paid more [than the temporary-laborers] and they know it, and they throw it in your [a temporary-laborer's] face.”

In a second example, participant TEMPBM1, a 31-year-old Black male, reported that, on one of his assigned jobsites, a supervisor had told him that he had paid the temporary-labor agency, “Top dollar,” for him (a temporary-laborer), and that even though he was aware of the fact that the temporary-laborers were only paid minimum wage, that he still expected him to, in his words, “Earn his keep.” Participant TEMPBM1 also indicated that the above supervisor had then proceeded to have him pick-up trash all day, while the other workers, on the jobsite laughed at him.” Additionally, at one point, during his shift, on the above jobsite, participant TEMPBM1 was required to stand in one exact place, for over an hour, doing nothing, and that when he moved slightly off of the spot, which he had been told to stand on, that this supervisor yelled at him like, in his words, “A dog,” and ordered him to get back in his spot.

In a third example, participant TEMPHM2, a 44-year-old Hispanic male, reported that the jobsite supervisors, on most of the jobsites that he had been assigned to, rarely treated the temporary-laborers with respect and that they often, in his words, “Look down at you,” especially because, in his words, “They know that you are desperate...and willing to work for almost nothing [relatively low pay], so they [the jobsite supervisors] treat you anyway they please.”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPWM3, a 51-year-old White male, reported that, because of the fact that many jobsite supervisor's know, in his words, “That you're [a temporary-laborer] a chump-change [low-paid] worker,

but you still want it [a temporary-labor job]... [that] they [the jobsite supervisors] will work you to death and give you no respect, [because] to them [the jobsite supervisors] you're trash.”

The majority of participants, in the current study reported that performing work as a temporary-laborer typically resulted in pay that was so low that it was inadequate to cover basic living costs. Indeed, almost all participants stated that they were paid no more than minimum wage for most of the temporary-labor jobs that they had worked. Moreover, due to these low levels of pay, participants reported that they were often unable to afford to buy lunch or appropriate safety equipment (e.g., work shoes/boots) while working in the temporary-labor industry, and that by lacking these basic work-related necessities, that they often stood-out from other workers, on an assigned jobsite, and therefore they were often ridiculed and teased for not coming to the jobsite prepared or in appropriate attire. For example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he did not earn a large enough pay-check, as a temporary-laborer, in order to purchase work boots, which were required at one of the jobsites that he was assigned to perform work at. Moreover, participant TEMPBM2 indicated that when some of the permanent-employees, on the above jobsite, noticed that he was without work boots they teased and taunted him the entire workday, and that one particular permanent-worker, on this jobsite, told him, in his words, “You [are] so poor I'm embarrassed for you.”

In a second example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, reported that, while working in the temporary-labor industry, he often could not

afford to buy the required safety-equipment, which was needed or required, on some of his assigned jobsites. Moreover, participant TEMPWM8 reported that he had broke his foot, on one particular jobsite, because he had not been wearing the appropriate work-boots, and that the permanent-workers, on this jobsite, laughed at and made-fun of him, in regards to his broken foot, and one particular permanent-workers said, in his words, “Boy, you should’ve brought the [proper] boots...even if you’re poor, you gotta find a way, cause now you got a busted foot.”

Several participants reported that some temporary-labor agencies would provide safety equipment, such as gloves, safety-goggles, and protective smocks, to those individuals that did not have their own equipment, but they also indicated that the fees for these items were usually inflated and automatically deducted from their paycheck. These equipment-related deductions often resulted in paychecks that were so low, that some participants indicated that they would rather go to a jobsite without these items, despite the consequences. For example, participant TEMPBM1, 31-year-old Black male, reported that there were several times when he had to pay one particular temporary-agency for gloves (which, reportedly, are so low quality that they only *hold-up* to one day’s work) or other safety items, in order to secure a temporary-labor job, but that there were other times when he could not afford to buy the required equipment, but regardless, he still needed to work, so he would tell the temporary-agency’s employees that he already had the appropriate safety-equipment, even though he

did not, and he stated that based on his, “Word,” they would then send him out to a jobsite.

In another example, participant TEMPWM7, a 48-year-old White male, reported that, based on his experience, most temporary-labor agencies require the temporary-laborers to, in his words, “Buy everything [the required safety equipment] from them [the agencies],” and that the safety equipment, which these agencies sells to the temporary-laborers, is, in his words, “Over-priced garbage.”

Based on the interviews, in the current study, the low occupational position of temporary-laborer was another worker vulnerability that was indicated in bullying experiences. Indeed, most participants reported that they believe that a worker’s temporary-laborer status was likely one of the reasons, for why the victim, in the workplace bullying experiences they reported, had been bullied. For example, participant TEMPBF2, a 46-year-old Black female, reported a bullying experience that she had witnessed, on one of her assigned jobsites, and stressed that she believes that the bullied victim was targeted, by the perpetrator, not only because of her race, but also due to the fact that she was a temporary-laborer, especially because the perpetrator made a comment about being, in her words, “Tired of training you temporary-idiots...cause you ain’t even gonna be around for long.” Also, Participant TEMPBF2, reported that she had witnessed a bullying experience, in which, a temporary-laborer was bullied, by a permanent-worker, on one of her assigned jobsites, and she indicated that this perpetrator had told his victim, in her words, “You ain’t go’in to get anywhere for kissing [the supervisor’s] ass, you’re just a temp...you dumb-temp.”



In a second example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female, reported that, on one particular jobsite, almost all of the permanent-workers treated the temporary-laborers poorly, and that the permanent-workers would not sit with or have anything to do with the temporary-laborers on breaks or during lunch. Participant TEMPWF2 also stated that she had been bullied, on the above jobsite, by several permanent-workers and a supervisor. Moreover, she indicated that she believes that she was bullied, because of her temporary-laborer status. Additionally, participant TEMPWF2 indicated that the temporary-laborers who, in her words, “Worked hard,” on several of the jobsites that she had been assigned to, were even more likely to be bullied than the temporary-laborers, who were mediocre performers. Furthermore, TEMPWF2 reported that, on several occasions, she was told, by permanent-workers, on one of her assigned jobsites, to, in her words, “Slow down” and “Stop trying so hard,” while performing her job, and that one particular permanent-worker, on the above jobsite, had told her, in her words, “Stop trying to make the others [the permanent-workers] look bad, by working so hard...you temps [the temporary-laborers] are always do ‘in that... you’re so desperate to get our [the permanent-workers] jobs.’”

Interestingly, several other participants, in the current study, indicated that a temporary-laborer might be bullied, on some jobsites, for working *too hard* or doing *too good* of a job. For example, participant TEMPWM4, a 32-year-old White male, reported that he witnessed a bullying experience, on one of his assigned jobsites, in which the victim, a, reportedly, Hispanic, male temporary-laborer was bullied by, a White male permanent-worker, and that this perpetrator

was, in his words, “A redneck.” Moreover, TEMPWM4 indicated that the above perpetrator called the bullied temporary-laborer, in his words, “A show-off,” and stated that, “He [the bullied temporary-laborer] was trying to work too hard and that’ll make us all [the other workers on the jobsite] look bad.” Participant TEMPWM4 also reported that the above perpetrator proceeded to shove and throw things (e.g., nails) at the targeted temporary-laborer, who ignored these negative behaviors and continued to work diligently, the entire workday.

In a second example, participant TEMPNM1, a 34-year-old Native American male, reported that, on one particular jobsite, he was bullied by a couple permanent-workers, one of who told him, in his words, “Don’t try and prove yourself,” which he said meant, “Not to work too hard and show off.” Participant TEMPNM1 also explain that the permanent-workers, on many of his assigned jobsites, knew that they had, in his words, “A little more juice [more work-related power than the temporary-laborers had]... so they would run you over [mistreat you].” Additionally, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that, on some of his assigned jobsites, the supervisors had encouraged or, in his words, “Egged-on,” a permanent-worker, who was in the process of bullying a temporary-laborer, at least until the situation, in his words, “Got out of control...or until punches were going to start flying.” Furthermore, TEMPNM1 reported that most jobsite supervisors would usually show favoritism to the permanent-workers, who were involved in a bullying-incident instead of the temporary-laborer, who was often the victim, and that the jobsite management almost always sided with the permanent-worker instead of the temporary-laborer,

regardless of who was bullying who, and therefore many of the bullied temporary-laborers, would ultimately and unfairly lose their job.

Based on interviews, the relatively low education-level, of most temporary-laborers, was yet another work vulnerability that was indicated in bullying experiences. Moreover, participants reported, that even when they were a high school graduate or better, that while working temporary-labor jobs, most people assumed that they were poorly educated or uneducated, altogether. For example, participant TEMPWM3, a 51-year-old White male, reported that even though he had attended college (for two-years) that most of the supervisors and permanent-workers, on the jobsites that he has been assigned to, treated him as if he was less educated than he actually was, which made him feel like an, in his word, “Idiot.” Moreover, participant TEMPWM3 indicated that, on a couple of jobsites, supervisors have told him, in his words, “You’re stupid” and “You can’t read,” even before they gave him an opportunity to do so.

In a second example, participant TEMPMF2, a 52-year-old Mexican American female, stated, “I’m educated [a high school graduate] and some workers [permanent-workers] don’t like that, because they think we’re all [the temporary-laborers] dumb.” Participant TEMPMF2 also indicated that temporary-laborers were often, in her word, “Belittled,” by the permanent-workers and supervisors, on jobsites, because, as she stated, “They think they’re smarter [than the temporary-laborers].”

In a third example, participant TEMPBM1, a 31-year-old Black male, reported that if a particular temporary-laborer is perceived, by others, to be, in his

words, “Very uneducated or really dumb,” then he or she is at the greatest risk of being bullied, by the employees of temporary-labor agencies and by the permanent-workers and supervisors, on jobsites, because, as he stated, “Then they [The agencies’ employees, supervisors and permanent-workers, on jobsites, and other temporary-laborers] all feel superior.” Moreover, participant TEMPBM1 indicated that he had witnessed several incidents, in which the supervisors and permanent-workers, on his assigned jobsites, had referred to temporary-laborers, as, in his words, “Stupid, dumb-ass, and idiot.”

Based on the interviews, the relatively low socio-economic status, of most temporary-laborers, has been yet another worker vulnerability that is indicated in workplace bullying experiences. For example, participant TEMPWM7, a 48-year-old White male, reported that some supervisors, on the jobsites that he has been assigned to, failed to show respect to the temporary-laborers, because, as he stated, “Some of them think you are low-level or poor [from a low socio-economic group].” Moreover, participant TEMPWM7 indicated that he believes that many permanent-workers and even a few of the supervisors or other temporary-laborers, on a jobsite, might mistreat a particular temporary-laborer, in his words, “[If] they [the workers and supervisors] think that they are better than the guy [a targeted temporary-laborer]...better off moneywise [financially], but they might be in the same boat [socio-economic group or financial position, as the targeted temporary-laborer].

In a second example, participant TEMPBF2, a 46-year-old Black female, reported that she believes that the supervisors, on temporary-labor jobsites, in her

words, “Can fire you for any reason and treat you [a temporary-laborer] poorly...and you [a temporary-laborer] don’t tell, because you need the job [and] you need to make money...so you shut-up and swallow it [stay quiet and fail to report the negative behaviors].” Moreover, participant TEMPBF2 indicated that, based on her experience, many of the temporary-laborers, who have been abused, mistreated or bullied, in a labor hall or on a jobsite, usually have no one to go to, and that the perpetrators often realize that this group of workers is, in her words, “Helpless,” or that they, “Can’t hire an attorney, because they [temporary-laborers] don’t have the money.”

In a third example, participant TEMPMF2, a 52-year-old Mexican American female, stated, in regards to the permanent-workers, on jobsites, “ They got pull, so they try to blame us [the temporary-laborers] for everything [anything that goes wrong on a jobsite]...they push us around and abuse us, [because] who are we gonna tell...they [the permanent-workers] know we got no [social or financial] power out there [in society].”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPHM1, a 38-year-old Hispanic male, reported that temporary-laborers were often bullied, by jobsite supervisors and permanent workers and by, the temporary-labor agencies’ employees, because of their, in his words, “Status in the community...low class...low income...because, they [the perpetrators of bullying] know you’re [a temporary-laborer] weak...and [that a temporary-laborer] can’t fight [defend oneself against the bullying] back.”

In a fifth example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29-year-old White male, reported that he had witnessed a few incidents, in which a temporary-laborer had been

bullied, by permanent-workers, on a jobsite, for no other reason than because, of the fact that, in his words, “[The temporary-laborer] looked poor or low class...that he has no pull at the company...in the community...a nobody, [therefore] he got no way to do anything about it [the bullying].”

Childhood bullying experiences in the home increase the likelihood that a temporary-laborer will experience, witness incidents of and respond to or report bullying, at work. Specifically, participants in the current study who reported previous childhood bullying experiences in the home which were perpetrated by a family member, were more likely than participants who had not experienced childhood bullying in the home, to indicate that they had been bullied and/or had witnessed incidents of bullying, while working in the temporary-labor industry (see Table 3). Moreover, the majority of these participants were also more likely than participants who had not experienced childhood bullying in the home to indicate that they had responded to (e.g., attempted to assist a bullied victim) or reported (e.g., to the jobsite’s or temporary-labor agency’s management) a bullying incident(s), while performing work as a temporary-laborer (see Table 3). Interestingly, participants who reported previous, childhood bullying experiences at school were no more likely than participants, who had not been bullied at school, to indicate that they had been bullied and/or had witnessed incidents of bullying, while working in the temporary-labor industry. However, the above participants were more likely than participants who had not been bullied at school to indicate that they had responded to or reported a bullying incident(s), while performing work as a temporary-laborer (see Table 3).

Table 3

## Bullying Experiences of Participants

No.	Participant ID	Age	Witnessed Bullying	Responded to Bullying Witnessed	Experienced Bullying	Responded to Bullying Experienced	Experienced Childhood Bullying at School	Experienced Childhood Bullying at Home
			Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
1	TEMPBM1	31	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	TEMPBM2	46	Y	N	N	-	Y	N
3	TEMPBM3	41	N	-	N	-	Y	Y
4	TEMPBM4	46	Y	N	N	-	Y	Y
5	TEMPBM5	52	N	-	N	-	Y	N
6	TEMPBM6	46	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
7	TEMPHM1	38	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	TEMPHM2	44	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9	TEMPHM3	40	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
10	TEMPHM4	54	Y	Y	N	-	Y	N
11	TEMPBF1	26	N	-	N	-	Y	N
12	TEMPBF2	57	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
13	TEMPWM1	28	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y
14	TEMPWM2	26	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y
15	TEMPWM3	51	Y	N	N	-	Y	Y
16	TEMPWM4	32	Y	Y	N	-	Y	N
17	TEMPWM5	33	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
18	TEMPWM6	39	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
19	TEMPWM7	48	Y	Y	N	-	Y	N
20	TEMPWM8	29	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y
21	TEMPMF1	27	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
22	TEMPMF2	52	Y	N	N	-	N	N
23	TEMPNM1	34	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
24	TEMPWF1	51	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
25	TEMPWF2	59	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Totals:	YES		22	13	12	6	23	16
	NO		3	9	13	6	2	9
	N/A		0	3	0	13	0	0
Percentages:	YES		88.0%	52.0%	48.0%	24.0%	92.0%	64.0%
	NO		12.0%	36.0%	52.0%	24.0%	8.0%	36.0%
	N/A		0.0%	12.0%	0.0%	52.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Those who experienced bullying at school resulted the	YES		87.0%	52.2%	47.8%	21.7%		
	NO		13.0%	34.8%	52.2%	26.1%		

following:	N/A		0.0%	13.0%	0.0%	52.2%	
Those who DID NOT experienced bullying at school resulted the following:	YES		100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	
	NO		0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	
	N/A		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	
Those who experienced bullying at home resulted the following:	YES		93.8%	62.5%	62.5%	31.3%	93.8%
	NO		6.3%	31.3%	37.5%	31.3%	6.3%
	N/A		0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	37.5%	0.0%
Those who DID NOT experienced bullying at home resulted the following:	YES		77.8%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	88.9%
	NO		22.2%	44.4%	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%
	N/A		0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	77.8%	0.0%

Many participants who reported previous childhood bullying experiences, especially those individuals who reported having been bullied in their home, also indicated that they had been bullied while working as temporary-laborers. For example, participant TEMPHM1, a 38-year-old Hispanic male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by an older male-sibling, and he also indicated that he had been bullied several times while performing work as a temporary-laborer. Moreover, TEMPHM1 recalled a particular incident in which he was bullied on one of his assigned jobsites by a White male, jobsite supervisor, for 30 minutes to 1 hour, daily, and he stated, “I had enough [of the bullying]...I felt helpless... [I] didn’t know what to do...it sucks when a guy [a perpetrator] gets away with it [the bullying].” Participant TEMPHM1 also indicated that he was eventually able to end this bullying experience, but only after he decided not to return to the above jobsite and to quit this particular temporary-labor job.



In a second example, participant TEMPHM2, a 44-year-old Hispanic male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his father on a daily basis, and he also indicated that he had been bullied while working in the temporary-labor industry on some of his assigned jobsites. Moreover, participant TEMPHM2 reported that in most of these bullying incidents, that the perpetrators had been White males, jobsite supervisors. Participant TEMPHM2 also reported that he had been greatly impacted by the above bullying incidents, and that he had on occasion missed work and called in *sick*, because of the many emotional (e.g., feelings of worry and shame) and physical symptoms (e.g., anxiety and stomachaches) that the bullying behaviors resulted in. Additionally, when participant TEMPHM2 was asked during the interview how he felt and what he thought about these workplace bullying incidents, he stated, “It [the bullying] made me feel worthless...that I was a nobody.”

In a third example, participant TEMPHM3, a 40-year-old Hispanic male reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by an older step-brother. Moreover, he indicated that he had been bullied multiple times by individual and groups of permanent-workers, and by supervisors on some of his assigned jobsites. Participant TEMPHM3 also reported that the perpetrators, in the above bullying incidents, were almost always reportedly Mexican male, permanent-workers, and he stressed that although he was Hispanic and spoke Spanish as fluently as the above perpetrators did, they still considered him to be an *outsider* because of the fact that he was not, in his words, “ A

Mexican.” Additionally, participant TEMPHM3 reported that he had missed work a few times due to the bullying, because, in his words, “I couldn’t always put up with it [the bullying].” Furthermore, participant TEMPHM3 indicated that, in general, he did not try to defend himself from the bullying or attempt to confront the perpetrators, because as he stated, “It [bullying] is just part of life...the way it is.”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPBF2, a 57-year-old Black female, reported that she had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in her home by her father on an ongoing basis. Moreover, participant TEMPBF2 indicated that she had been bullied, a couple times, on her assigned jobsites while working as a temporary-laborer. Moreover, participant TEMPBF2 recalled that her most salient bullying experience had occurred while performing work on one particular jobsite, and that a White male supervisor had repeatedly bullied her during the entire duration of this work-assignment. Participant TEMPBF2 also reported that the above jobsite supervisor would yell at her and belittle her, many times, each work-day, and in her words, “[This supervisor] would make me cry...and feel so bad...like I couldn’t do nothing right.” Additionally, participant TEMPBF2 indicated that she did not know what to do about the above bullying incident(s), and she stated, “I had nowhere to turn... [there] was nothing I could do [about the bullying]...I needed to work.”

In a fifth example, participant TEMPWM5, a 33-year-old White male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his stepfather. Moreover, participant TEMPWM5 indicated that he had been

bullied, on one of his assigned jobsites, by a group of reportedly Mexican male permanent-workers. Participant TEMPWM5 also recalled that the above bullying incident had made him feel, in his word, “Angry,” and he stated, “I wanted to confront them [the bullies] but it wouldn’t have been a wise thing [to do] in that place [on his assigned jobsite], because it was [an] all Mexican [workforce]...[I] couldn’t do anything, I was outnumbered, by like a 100 to 1 or something.”

In a sixth example, participant TEMPBM1, a 31-year-old Black male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his parents, and especially by his father. Indeed, participant TEMPBM1 stated, “My parents were big bullies...and my father was the biggest bully of all.” Moreover, participant TEMPBM1 indicated that he had been bullied on several of his assigned jobsites, by reportedly Black and Jamaican male(s), jobsite supervisors, and he stated, “Them Jamaicans are the biggest bullies of all, at work.” Participant TEMPBM1 also recalled that on one particular jobsite, he was bullied for the entire duration of his work-assignment, by reportedly a Jamaican male jobsite supervisor. Additionally, participant TEMPBM1 indicated that he had reported the above bullying incident to the temporary-agency’s employees, but that nothing was ever done about his complaint, and he stated, “To save their [the temporary-labor agency’s] client, they [the temporary-agency’s employees] swept it [his complaint of bullying] under the rug and made it go away.” Furthermore, participant TEMPBM1 recalled that the above bullying experience had, in his words, “Felt terrible... [it was] unnecessary...it [the bullying] was ridiculous...I was treated like a dog...and overworked.”

Many of the participants, who reported previous bullying experiences in childhood also indicated that they had witnessed bullying incident(s), while working in the temporary-labor industry. For example, participant TEMPBM4, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his father. In fact, participant TEMPBM4 recalled that he was bullied by his father on an ongoing basis, and he stated, “I was terrified of my old man...all the time...the way he talked and looked at me.” Moreover, participant TEMPBM4 reported that he had witnessed, in his words, “A lot,” of bullying incidents that involved temporary-laborers on his assigned jobsites, and indicated that these bullied individuals were usually either, in his words, “Weak males or females,” who were bullied by permanent-workers or jobsite supervisors, and rarely by other temporary-laborers. Participant TEMPBM4 also indicated that the majority of these bullying incidents would often continue until, as he stated, “The weak person(s) [the victim] would leave [quit the job or refuse to return to the jobsite].”

In a second example, participant TEMPBM6, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his father. Moreover, participant TEMPBM6 indicated that he had witnessed a few bullying incidents that involved temporary-laborers on nearly every jobsite that he had been assigned to, and that the perpetrators in these incidents were almost always supervisors or permanent-workers on the jobsite(s). Participant TEMPBM6 also reported that these incidents were usually reportedly Mexican male, jobsite supervisors, who bullied White or Black male temporary-laborers.

Additionally, participant TEMPBM6 indicated that the above bullying experiences usually went on for some time, because the victims were, generally, afraid or unwilling to report the bullying, and he explained in his words, “It wouldn’t make a difference to report it [a bullying incident], [because] if you [a temporary-laborer] do [report the bullying] you might not [be allowed to] go back to the company [the jobsite]...you’ll get a DNR [a do not return],” and he went on to further explain that a supervisor, on a jobsite, has the ability to check off a DNR box, on a temporary-laborer’s work-ticket, an action that would indicate to the temporary-labor agency’s employees that a certain temporary-laborer is not to return to the jobsite. Furthermore, participant TEMPBM6 reported that the jobsite supervisors are not required to provide an explanation, or to indicate a reason for why they had checked the DNR box on a particular temporary-laborer’s work ticket, or why they do not want a certain temporary-laborer to return to their jobsite.

In a third example, participant TEMPMF1, a 27-year-old Mexican American female reported that she had previously been bullied in childhood, both at school and in her home by her older cousins. Moreover, participant TEMPMF1 indicated that she had witnessed several bullying incidents that involved temporary-laborers, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPMF1 also indicated that most of the bullying incidents that she witnessed had occurred on her assigned jobsites, and that these incidents were usually perpetrated by the jobsite supervisors. Additionally, participant TEMPMF1 recalled that she had witnessed one particular bullying incident, in which a

reportedly Hispanic male, jobsite supervisor, bullied and allegedly sexually harassed a Hispanic female, temporary-laborer, for about 2 weeks. Furthermore, participant TEMPWF1 expressed that she had been extremely bothered by the above bullying and sexual harassment, but that she had not done anything in response to having witnessed this incident. Furthermore, participant TEMPWF1 indicated that the victim, in the above incident, had eventually reported the bullying (and the sexual harassment) to the temporary-labor agency's employees, but that she believed that nothing was ever done about the victim's complaint, and instead recalled that the victim was then further harassed and given, in her words "Hard-work assignments," by the agency's employees, who now viewed the victim as a trouble-maker for having made the complaint.

In a fourth example, participant TEMPWF1, a 51-year-old White female reported that she had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in her home by her foster family. Moreover, participant TEMPWF1 indicated that she had witnessed a few bullying incidents that involved temporary-laborers while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPWF1 also indicated that most of these bullying incidents had occurred on her assigned jobsites, and they were typically comprised of White male, permanent-workers who bullied Hispanic or Black male, temporary-laborers. Additionally, participant TEMPWF1 reported that she did not attempt to do anything in response to having witnessed the above bullying incident, but she stated, "I should have done something, but [I] did not, because I wanted my job."

In a fifth example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his older brothers on an ongoing basis. Moreover, participant TEMPWM2 indicated that he had witnessed a few bullying incidents that involved temporary-laborers, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPWM2 also indicated that it was common practice for the reportedly Mexican males, jobsite supervisors, to bully the Black males, temporary-laborers, and sometimes the White males, temporary-laborers, as well. Additionally, participant TEMPWM2 recalled one particular bullying incident in which a reportedly a Mexican male, jobsite supervisor bullied a Black male, temporary-laborer, and in regards to this incident, he stated, “He [the jobsite supervisor] was relentless on the guy [the victim]...he [the jobsite supervisor] kept [verbally] attacking and attacking the guy [the victim].”

Childhood bullying experiences make a temporary-laborer more likely to respond to, or report bullying incidents at work. Indeed, the majority of participants who reported previous childhood bullying experiences, but especially those individuals who experienced bullying in their home, also indicated that they had attempted to respond to or report a bullying incident(s) that they had witnessed while performing work in the temporary-labor industry. These participants reported that they commonly responded to having witnessed a bullying incident, by emotionally (e.g., providing words of comfort) or physically (e.g., confronting the bully on a victim’s behalf) assisting or supporting a bullied victim. Moreover, many of these participants also indicated that they had

reported the bullying incidents, which they had witnessed while working as a temporary-laborer, either to a jobsite's or temporary-labor agency's management. For example, participant TEMPNM1, a 34-year-old Native American male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his older brother and mother. Moreover, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that he had witnessed quite a few bullying incidents, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPNM1 also reported that he had witnessed many of these incidents on his assigned jobsites, and that they were usually comprised of White males, jobsite supervisors and permanent-workers, who bullied Black males, temporary-laborers, and that even when the jobsite supervisors were not directly involved in a bullying incident, they often, in his words "Egged it [the bullying] on." Additionally, participant TEMPNM1 recalled that having witnessed this workplace bullying bothered him greatly, and he stated, "[I] don't like seeing people [the perpetrators] getting away with things [the bullying]." Furthermore, participant TEMPNM1 reported that after witnessing one particular incident of bullying, an incident in which he was quite bothered by, he had attempted to verbally comfort the victim, and he also informed the jobsite's general manager about the bullying behaviors. However, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that his immediate jobsite supervisor was displeased that he had, in his words, "Gone over his head [by reporting the incident to his supervisor's boss]," and therefore this supervisor confronted him and said, in his words, "What the freak did you do that [report the bullying incident to my boss] for, stupid," and that one of the above perpetrators, a permanent-worker, had told him, "Can't you



leave that alone [stay out of it]?” Finally, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that he had ultimately quit the above temporary-labor job, and failed to return to this jobsite because he did not want to have to keep dealing with the negative consequences, which he believed he would likely continue to face for reporting the above bullying incident, and he stated, “They [the jobsite supervisor and permanent-workers, the perpetrators] were gonna keep getting in my face [confronting] and harassing me about it [reporting the bullying]...[and] the money [the hourly pay rate for this temporary-labor job] was not enough for that treatment...[or] for being run over [treated harshly]...[because] they [the jobsite supervisor and permanent-workers, the perpetrators] were treating me like nothing but a piece of trash,...because I stood up to them.”

In a second example, participant TEMPWM1, a 28-year-old White male, reported that he had been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home, during his teen years by his stepfather. Moreover, participant TEMPWM1 indicated that he had witnessed many bullying incidents, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPWM1 also reported that he had attempted to respond to some of these incidents by assisting the victim and/or reporting the bullying behaviors to the temporary-labor agency’s management. Additionally, participant TEMPWM1 recalled one particular bullying incident in which a White male, jobsite supervisor, had bullied a Black male, temporary-laborer, and when describing this incident, he stated, “It [the bullying] was acts of cruelty...this guy [the jobsite supervisor] would treat the brothers [the Black temporary-laborers] like they are slaves or something.” It is important to note,

however, that participant TEMPWM1 had also indicated, early in the interview, that both the supervisors and permanent-workers on some jobsites would reportedly treat all temporary-laborers (himself included), regardless of race, as if they were, in his words, “Slaves or something.” Furthermore, participant TEMPWM1 reported that he had attempted to assist the above victim, by helping him with his heavy workload, but also indicated that the jobsite supervisor did not like it when he witnessed him helping the victim, thus the supervisor, reportedly, asked him, “Are you a n-lover?” It is important to note that participant TEMPWM1 did not indicate, during the interview, what the letter *n* stood for, in the above statement, however, it was clear to me that he believed that his jobsite supervisor had been referring to the bullied victim’s race in a derogatory way. Finally, participant TEMPWM1 recalled that he had in fact reported the above bullying incident to the temporary-agency’s management, but he stated, “[When I reported the bullying] they [the agency’s employee(s)] just asked me if it was my business...and then did nothing about it [the bullying incident].”

In a third example, participant TEMPWF2, a 59-year-old White female reported that in childhood, she had not been bullied at school, but that she had been bullied in her home by her father. Moreover, participant TEMPWF2 indicated that she had witnessed several bullying incidents, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPWF2 also reported that most of these bullying incidents were comprised of, reportedly Mexican males, permanent-workers, who had bullied White or Black or Mexican males, temporary-laborers. Additionally, participant TEMPWF2 recalled witnessing one particular bullying

incident in which a reportedly Mexican male, permanent-worker, bullied a Mexican male, temporary-laborer, because the supervisor had thought that the temporary-laborer was, in her words, “Kissing [the jobsite supervisor’s] ass.” In response to the above incident, participant TEMPWF2 recalled that she did in fact attempt to help the bullied victim by talking to him and by making an effort to befriend him, so that he had some emotional support, while at work. However, participant TEMPWF2 indicated that she had not reported this bullying incident, because, in her words, “[If you report bullying] you’re a big mouth and a snitch...and you could be next.” Furthermore, participant TEMPWF2 reported that she believed that the above victim had tolerated the workplace bullying, in her opinion and words, “Better than most [victims], [because he did not quit this particular job and] a lot of people [the targeted individuals] quit the job, because they couldn’t handle it [the bullying on this jobsite].”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPHM3 reported that he had previously been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by his older stepbrothers. Moreover, he indicated that he had witnessed several bullying incidents, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPHM3 also recalled a particular bullying incident that had occurred on one of his assigned jobsites in which a reportedly Mexican male, jobsite supervisor, along with a few Mexican males, permanent-workers had bullied both a Black male, temporary-laborer and a White male, temporary-laborer, who were from the same temporary-labor agency as he was. Additionally, participant TEMPHM3 recalled that he had tried to help one of the above victims, the Black male, temporary-

laborer, by telling him to, “Ignore it [the bullying] and stick by me,” so that he could, in his words, “Show him [the victim] the ropes [how to circumvent bullying, on this particular jobsite].” Furthermore, participant TEMPHM3 indicated that he had reported the above bullying to the jobsite’s “Head boss,” but he recalled that this individual did not like the fact that he had brought the bullying behaviors to his attention, and that the boss then reportedly told him to, in his words, “Stay out of it.”

In a fifth example, participant TEMPHM1, a 38-year-old Hispanic male reported that he had previously been bullied in childhood, both at school and in his home by an older brother. Moreover, participant TEMPHM1 indicated that he had witnessed many incidents of bullying, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Participant TEMPHM1 also recalled one particular bullying incident in which a White male, jobsite supervisor, had bullied a Black male, temporary-laborer, for at least a few weeks. Additionally, participant TEMPHM1 reported that he had been quite bothered by the above incident, and thus he attempted to talk to the victim about the bullying, and he reportedly told the victim to, in his words, “Let it roll off [try and ignore it] of you...keep going [move on].” Furthermore, participant TEMPHM1 indicated that he did attempt to report this incident to the jobsite’s general manager, but that the general manager had reportedly told him, in his words, “Don’t make his [the victim’s] problem your problem, cause you won’t like it [the consequences].”

Various Perpetrators of Workplace Bullying are indicated in the  
Temporary-Labor Industry

As previously discussed, a review of the literature shows that there are various perpetrators of workplace bullying; however, no researchers have investigated the specific source of these negative behaviors within the temporary-labor industry. The current study reveals that bullying experiences, among temporary-laborers, are perpetrated both by individuals within temporary-labor agencies (e.g., temporary-laborers and temporary-labor agencies' employees) and by individuals on a temporary-labor's assigned jobsite (e.g., jobsite supervisors and permanent-workers). Moreover, the incidents of bullying that occur among temporary-laborers, on their assigned jobsites, are most often perpetrated not by fellow temporary-laborers but by other individuals on temporary-laborers' assigned jobsites. These perpetrators, on temporary-labor jobsites, include the supervisors and permanent-workers that are external to a temporary-laborer agency, but nonetheless still capable of interacting with and potentially bullying this group of workers (see Table 4).

Table 4

## Various Perpetrators Contributing to Workplace Bullying

No.	Participant ID	Age	Temporary Laborers		Agencies' Employees		Jobsites' Permanent Workers/ Supervisors	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	TEMPBM1	31	1		1		1	
2	TEMPBM2	46	1		1		1	
3	TEMPBM3	41	1		1		1	
4	TEMPBM4	46	1		1		1	
5	TEMPBM5	52		1		1	1	
6	TEMPBM6	46	1		1		1	
7	TEMPHM1	38	1			1	1	
8	TEMPHM2	44	1		1		1	
9	TEMPHM3	40	1			1		1
10	TEMPHM4	54		1		1	1	
11	TEMPBF1	26		1		1		1
12	TEMPBF2	57	1		1		1	
13	TEMPWM1	28		1	1		1	
14	TEMPWM2	26	1		1		1	
15	TEMPWM3	51	1		1		1	
16	TEMPWM4	32	1		1		1	
17	TEMPWM5	33	1		1		1	
18	TEMPWM6	39	1			1	1	
19	TEMPWM7	48	1		1		1	
20	TEMPWM8	29		1	1			1
21	TEMPMF1	27		1	1			1
22	TEMPMF2	52	1		1		1	
23	TEMPNM1	34	1		1		1	
24	TEMPWF1	51		1	1		1	
25	TEMPWF2	59	1		1			1
Totals (Yes/No):			18	7	19	6	20	5
Percentages (Yes/No):			72%	28%	76%	24%	80%	20%

In the current study, there were some reports of temporary-laborer-to-temporary-laborer bullying experiences, which reportedly most often occurred in temporary-labor agencies' labor halls. However, participants indicated that most

of the bullying, among temporary-laborers, occurred on temporary-laborers' assigned jobsites, and that these experiences almost always involved perpetrators who had more work-related power or status than the temporary-laborers held. Moreover, participants rarely identified temporary-labor agency employees as the perpetrator(s) of bullying, but often indicated the supervisors and permanent-workers, on their assigned jobsites, as the perpetrators of this negative behavior. In fact, based on the interviews the most common perpetrators of bullying, among temporary-laborers, are the permanent-workers on temporary-labor jobsites. This is despite the fact that these permanent-workers reportedly usually have only a small amount of additional work-related power when compared to the temporary-laborers. Also, even though the occupational position of permanent-worker was perceived by some participants as having more power and status than the occupational position of temporary-laborer on temporary-labor jobsites, reportedly both of these groups of workers were typically assigned the same job titles (e.g., forklift driver) and performed the same type of work.

Based on the interviews, even though the employees of temporary-labor agencies, as previously mentioned, are rarely indicated as the perpetrator(s) of bullying among temporary-laborers; as a group these employees reportedly do little to prevent the supervisors and permanent-employees, on the temporary-labor jobsites, from bullying this group of workers. Moreover, participants reported that agencies' employees commonly fail to appropriately respond to temporary-laborers' reported bullying experience, especially when the bullying is perpetrated by a supervisor or permanent-worker, on a temporary-labor jobsite, and in certain

instances an agencies' employees may even penalize a bullied temporary-laborer for reporting the bullying. Also, participants indicated that some of the practices and policies that temporary-labor agencies employ are quite effective in preventing most incidents of temporary-laborer-to-temporary-laborer bullying from occurring in the agencies' labor halls, but that these practices and policies do little to thwart the bullying, which occurs among temporary-laborers on temporary-labor jobsites. Moreover, some participants reported that when temporary-laborer to temporary-laborer bullying did occur in an agency's labor hall that most agencies' employees did not typically resolve the situation in a fair or unbiased way; instead these employees often showed favoritism or were partial to particular temporary-laborers (e.g., those similar in race), regardless of who had been the perpetrator and who had been the victim in the bullying incident. Additionally, as previously discussed, the majority of participants reported that, in general, agencies' employees did not respect the temporary-laborers, and they indicated that numerous agencies' employees had mistreated, or harassed, or discriminated against them, while they were seeking or performing work, within the temporary-labor industry. However, it is important to note that most participants did not label the above undesirable behaviors that were perpetrated by the employees of temporary-labor agencies as incidents of bullying.

Employees of temporary-labor agencies were rarely indicated as perpetrators of bullying. Only a few participants, as previously mentioned, reported bullying experiences, in which the employees of temporary-labor agencies were the perpetrators. Moreover, participants tended to label any



negative behaviors, which were displayed by an agency's employees, as incidents of harassment, or abuse, or disrespect, or discrimination rather than labeling these negative behaviors as bullying. For example, participant TEMPWM2, a 26-year-old White male, reported that, in general, employees of temporary-labor agencies treated him and other temporary-laborers like, in his words, "Garbage."

Moreover, participant TEMPWM2 indicated that, in his opinion, some agencies' employees had discriminated against him, during the work-assignment selection process, by first assigning individuals of certain races (i.e., Hispanic), before those of his race and other races (i.e., White or Black), when the employees selected individuals to fill the available temporary-labor work assignments.

Participant TEMPWM2 also reported a particular incident, in which an employee of a particular agency, had repeatedly yelled at him and called him a, in his words, "White honky." However, it is important to note that participant TEMPWM2 did not define the above employee's behavior as bullying, and instead stated that this employee was, "Being racist."

In a second example, participant TEMPBM4, a 46-year-old Black male reported that while working in the temporary-labor industry, most employees of temporary-labor agencies had treated him, in his words, "Rudely, disrespectfully and meanly." Moreover, TEMPBM4 indicated that he believes temporary-labor agencies' employees commonly discriminated against him during the work-assignment process, and that this is likely because of his race. Also, even though participant TEMPBM4 reported that he had been glared at by agencies' employees, in his words, "In mean ways," and that he had been ignored, given the

silent treatment, and yelled at by one particular agency's employees, and that he had heard some agencies' employees make racist remarks and jokes, he believes that, by and large, these incidents were, in his words, "Prejudice-based behaviors and racial discrimination," and he did not label these negative behaviors as incidents of bullying.

In a third example, participant TEMPMPF2, a 52-year-old Mexican American female, reported that, in her opinion, she had been harassed, disrespected and abused by some of the employees in one particular temporary-labor agency. Moreover, participant TEMPMPF2 indicated that she believes that these employees may have treated her poorly, because in her words, "[The agency's employees] did not like educated, English speaking Hispanics." In fact, participant TEMPMPF2 reported that one of these agency-employees had once told her, in a mocking voice, the following, "You're too educated for our jobs [the types of jobs that this agency sent temporary-laborers out on]," and that when she persisted in trying to attain work through this agency, that the agency employees glared at her in mean ways and they began, in her words, "Snickering" [and] "Laughing," at her, whenever she would approach the dispatch counter to ask a question. Additionally, TEMPMPF2 indicated that when she was finally given a temporary work-assignment through this agency, that one of the agency's employees had said, the following, "Smarty-pants, you better be here promptly at 5:00 A.M. every morning or you can go back home," and that after this statement was made, several other agency employee began to laugh loudly. Furthermore, in regards to the above incident, participant TEMPMPF2 reported that she believes

these negative behaviors, which were directed at her by the above agency's employees, may have been incidents of bullying, but that she could not be certain, and therefore she speculated that these behaviors were likely instead racially motivated.

In a fourth example, participant TEMPHM2, a 44-year-old Hispanic male, indicated that he and other temporary-laborers had been bullied, by one particular temporary-labor agency's supervisor, on an ongoing basis. Moreover, in regards to the above bullying experience(s), participant TEMPHM2 reported that he believes that the above supervisor had directed negative behaviors towards many temporary-laborers, but especially those individuals that were, in his word, "Mexican," because of the fact that these workers tended to speak English poorly and some of them were, reportedly in his word, "Illegal," and therefore these workers were even more likely to tolerate rather than reporting their perpetrator's behaviors. Participant TEMPHM2 also indicated that the above supervisor had bullied one, reportedly, Mexican temporary-laborer, and in his words, "[The bullying began] from the moment he [the temporary-laborer] started working there [for this agency] and it [the bullying] is still going on." Additionally, it is important to note, as previously mentioned, that participant TEMPHM2 was one of only a few participants, in this study, who reported a bullying experience(s), among temporary-laborers, in which an employee of a temporary-labor-agency was the perpetrator.

In a fifth example, participant TEMPMF1, a 27-year-old Mexican American female, reported that she and several other female workers had been

bullied by a Hispanic, male supervisor, on one of her assigned jobsites.

Moreover, participant TEMPMF1 indicated that she had been emotionally distressed and embarrassed, due to the above bullying experience, and that on a few occasions she had even resorted to missing work (i.e., call in sick), in order to avoid her assigned jobsite's supervisor's abusive behaviors. Participant TEMPMF1 also reported that her bullying experience continued for over a month. Additionally, participant TEMPMF1 indicated that she had reported this bullying experience to the employees of the temporary-labor agency that employed her, but that nothing was ever done about the abusive behaviors and that she was offered, in her words, "No help," from any of the above agency's employees.

Temporary-laborers indicated as perpetrators of bullying. Based on the interviews, when bullying arises between two or more temporary-laborers it tends to occur in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall rather than on a temporary-labor jobsite. Indeed, many participants indicated that, within temporary-labor agencies' labor halls, the competition for work-assignments, among temporary-laborers, sometimes leads to incidents of bullying, but that on jobsites, incidents of bullying between temporary-laborers is rare because temporary-laborers usually bond as a group of workers due to the fact that, as previously mentioned, they are labeled by the permanent-workers on a temporary-labor jobsite as *outsiders*. Moreover, temporary-laborers, who work alongside one another on a temporary-labor jobsite, reportedly, are not just unlikely to direct negative behaviors towards one another, this group of workers are also more likely to come

to the aid of a fellow bullied temporary-laborer regardless of who the perpetrator is.

Based on the interviews, and as previously discussed, when bullying does occur between temporary laborers, the perpetrator and victim who are involved in a bullying incident are commonly of differing races. For example, participant TEMPBM4, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he has witnessed a few incidents of temporary-laborer to temporary-laborer bullying, in temporary-labor agencies' labor halls, and that these incidents were, reportedly, almost always comprised of Hispanic male temporary-labor perpetrators and Black male temporary-labor victim(s). Moreover, participant TEMPBM4 speculated that he believes that Black temporary-laborers are commonly the targets of bullying, in certain temporary-labor agencies, because of the fact that there are often only a few Black temporary-laborers among many Hispanic temporary-laborers, especially within temporary-labor agencies, which are located in certain neighborhoods (i.e., Aurora, IL) that have particular racial demographics (i.e., a high Hispanic population).

In a second example, participant TEMPWM6, a 39-year-old White male, reported that he had witnessed quite a few incidents, of temporary-laborer to temporary-laborer bullying, in temporary-labor agencies' labor halls, and noted that it is often, reportedly, Hispanic male temporary-laborers who bully Black male temporary-laborers. Moreover, participant TEMPWM6 stated, "They [the perpetrators] are very [racially] selective with the bullying." Participant TEMPWM6 also reported one incident of bullying that he had witnessed, in a

particular agency, in which a Black, male temporary-laborer was bullied by several Hispanic, male temporary-laborers, as well as by the Hispanic agency's employees for a 3-month duration. Additionally, when participant TEMPWM6 described his thoughts about the above bullying incident, he stated, "They [Black, male temporary-laborers] don't get a fair shake [in certain temporary-labor agencies]."

In a third example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he had witnessed a few temporary-laborer to temporary-laborer incidents of bullying, in temporary-labor agencies' labor halls, and that these incidents usually occur between a, reportedly, Hispanic male, perpetrator(s) and a Black male, victim. Moreover, participant TEMPBM2 indicated that he had witnessed most of the above bullying incidents in temporary-labor agencies that are located in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods, and that in these agencies it is, in his opinion, typical for an agency's Hispanic employees, in his words, "To look the other way [ignore a bullying incident]." Participant TEMPBM2 also reported that he believes that the primary reason why Hispanic male temporary-laborers bully Black male temporary-laborers is due to the fact that, in his words, "They [the Hispanic male, temporary-laborers] bully the Blacks [Black male, temporary-laborers] for coming into their area [neighborhood] looking for work."

In a fourth example, participant TEMPBM1, a 31-year-old Black male, reported that he had witnessed a few incidents of bullying, in temporary-labor agencies' labor halls, in which a Hispanic male temporary-laborers bullied Black or White temporary-laborers. Moreover, participant TEMPBM1 noted that by

and large, most of the bullying incidents between temporary-laborers are comprised of Hispanic male perpetrators and Black male victims. Participant TEMPBM1 also indicated that bullying between temporary-laborers of differing races usually occurs due to competition for work, and he stated, “[There is] always gonna be racial tensions for the [temporary-labor] jobs [and] for work.”

Permanent-workers, on temporary-labor jobsites, indicated as perpetrators of bullying. Based on the interviews, the permanent-workers, on temporary-laborers’ assigned jobsites, are commonly the perpetrators of bullying, among temporary-laborers. Indeed, the majority of participants, in the current study, reported either having been bullied or having witnessed bullying that was perpetrated by a permanent-worker onto a temporary-laborer, while performing work on an assigned jobsite. Moreover, participants indicated that, in general, temporary-labor agencies’ employees are much more likely to dismiss a reported incident of bullying, which is perpetrated by a permanent-worker onto a temporary-laborer than they are a reported incident of bullying that occurs between 2 or more temporary-laborers. In fact, a few participants speculated that this dismissal of bullying, by employees of temporary-labor agencies, may be due to the fact that most agencies’ employees do not want to make a bullying accusation against one of their client’s permanent-workers, as doing this could potentially jeopardize their client-agency-relationship, and ultimately result in the loss of business from that particular client. Also, numerous participants reported that many of the incidents of bullying, which are perpetrated by a permanent-worker onto a temporary-laborer, are typically ongoing and often racially

motivated. For example, participant TEMPWM4, a 32-year-old White male, reported that it was common practice, on many temporary-labor jobsites, for the White male, permanent-workers to bully the Hispanic male temporary-laborers. Moreover, participant TEMPWM4 stated, “They [the permanent-workers] bully to keep temps [the temporary-laborers] in their place.” Participant TEMPWM4 also indicated that Hispanic male temporary-laborers were often targeted for bullying by White male permanent-workers, because they often believed that this group of workers, in his words, “Showed-off,” by working too hard, and that when a Hispanic male, temporary-laborer, in his words, “Over-worked,” it made the permanent-workers, on a jobsite, look bad (to their supervisors or the jobsite’s management). Additionally, participant TEMPWM4 reported that these incidents of bullying, which were perpetrated by permanent-workers onto temporary-laborers, commonly included both verbal (e.g., name calling) and physical (e.g., pushing and shoving) forms of this negative behavior. Furthermore, participant TEMPWM4 indicated that the bullied temporary-laborers rarely, if ever, reported these incidents of bullying because, in his words, “They [the temporary-laborers] know that no one [the jobsite’s and temporary-labor agency’s management] is going to listen or do a thing about it [a reported incident of bullying].”

In a second example, participant TEMPWM3, a 51-year-old White male, reported that he had witnessed a few incidents of bullying that were perpetrated by permanent-workers onto temporary-laborers, while performing temporary-labor on his assigned jobsites. Moreover, participant TEMPWM3 indicated that he had witnessed one particular bullying experience that was ongoing for several



months, an incident in which, reportedly, a Black-Jamaican male permanent-worker bullied a Black (non-Jamaican) male temporary-laborer. In regards to the above bullying experience, participant TEMPWM3 reported that he believes that the reason why the victim was initially targeted for bullying, on this particular jobsite, was due to the fact that he was not Jamaican, as were the majority of Black males on this jobsite. Participant TEMPWM3 also stated, “Jamaicans [permanent-workers, who are Jamaican males] have it out for African Blacks [African-American/Black male, temporary-laborers] more than any other race...so they [Jamaican male, permanent-workers] work them [the Black male, temporary-laborers] really hard.”

In a third example, participant TEMPNM1, a 34-year-old Native American male, reported that he has witnessed quite a few incidents of bullying that were perpetrated by permanent-workers onto temporary-laborers, on his assigned jobsites. Moreover, participant TEMPNM1 noted that many of these incidents involved permanent-workers and temporary-laborers of differing races. Indeed, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that it was a common practice, on some temporary-labor jobsites, for the White male, permanent-workers to bully the Black male, temporary-laborers, and that, in his words, “[The jobsite’s] bosses [supervisors] show favoritism [in regards to incidents of bullying that involve a permanent-worker and a temporary-laborer] and they [the jobsite’s supervisors] side with the regular-workers [the jobsite’s permanent-workers], even if they [the permanent-workers] were in the wrong [the perpetrators of bullying].” Participant TEMPNM1 was also one of the only participants, in this study, who reported

having witnessed a bullying incident, on a temporary-labor jobsite that was comprised of a female permanent-worker perpetrator and a female temporary-laborer victim. Specifically, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that the above incident of bullying that he had witnessed involved a White female permanent-worker, who bullied a Hispanic female temporary-laborer, and that these 2 workers, in his words, “[Had gotten into] a *catfight*,” which included slapping and punching, because of the fact that the permanent-worker had been taunting and teasing the temporary-laborer about her ability to speak English properly, for the majority of the afternoon. Additionally, participant TEMPNM1 indicated that he had witnessed several White male permanent-workers, who verbally bullied Hispanic male temporary-laborers on many of his assigned jobsites. Furthermore, participant TEMPNM1 reported that he had witnessed several White male permanent-workers, on various jobsites, yell at the Hispanic male temporary-laborers and call them derogatory names such as, in his words, “Wetbacks” and “Border roaches.”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPWM1, a 28-year-old White male, reported that he had witnessed several incidents of bullying, on some of his assigned jobsites. Moreover, participant TEMPWM1 indicated that these incidents of bullying were often comprised of White male permanent-workers, who bullied and abused Black male temporary-laborers. In fact, participant TEMPWM1 stressed that the above negative behaviors were common practice, on many temporary-labor jobsites, due to the fact that many jobsite’s supervisors usually allowed the jobsite’s permanent-workers to, in his words, “Act superior,”

and to, “Treat [the temporary-laborers] like [they] are beneath them.” Participant TEMPWM1 also described one particular incident of bullying that he found to be especially disturbing, in which a White male permanent-worker bullied, picked-on and overworked several Black male temporary-laborers, on one of his assigned jobsites. Moreover, participant TEMPWM1 indicated that the above permanent-worker would often laugh with his jobsite’s co-workers and say the following, “Looks like we got a chain gang going,” in regards to the work (i.e., ditch digging on a construction site) that this group of temporary-laborers was performing, and that this permanent-worker also once said the following, “I’m gonna whip them [the Black male temporary-laborers] into shape,” while he made a whip-cracking sound and a whipping motion with his hand. Additionally, TEMPWM1 reported that he had been angry about the way that the permanent-worker above had mistreated the Black male temporary-laborers on his assigned jobsite, and when describing this permanent-workers negative behavior(s) he stated, “It’s plain and simple racism.”

In a fifth example, participant TEMPWM8, a 29 –year-old White male, reported that he had witnessed several incidents of bullying, on his assigned jobsites, and that these incidents were often comprised of permanent-workers, who bullied temporary-laborers. Moreover, he indicated that in the majority of these incidents that the perpetrator and victim were of differing races (i.e., Black perpetrator and White victim or a White perpetrator and Black victim). Participant TEMPWM8 described one such incident of bullying, in which a Black male permanent-worker bullied a White male temporary-laborer by pushing him

and calling him names such as the following, “White-trash” and “White-bum,” because the perpetrator was, reportedly, attempting to intimidate the bullied temporary-laborer into doing more than his share of work, on the jobsite. Additionally, participant TEMPWM8 reported that it was common practice, on some temporary-labor jobsites, for the permanent-workers to bully the temporary-laborers into doing their share of the work, so that the permanent-workers could, in his words, “Have a free ride [do less work] for the day.”

Supervisors, on temporary-labor jobsites, indicated as perpetrators of bullying. Based on the interviews, the supervisors (e.g., shift leaders and jobsite’s manager), on temporary-labor jobsites, are commonly the perpetrators of bullying among temporary-laborers. Indeed, the majority of participants reported either having witnessed a jobsite’s supervisor bully another temporary-laborer or indicated that he or she was the victim of bullying, which was perpetrated by his or her jobsite’s supervisor. Moreover, several participants indicated that the incidents of bullying that they experienced, which were perpetrated by a jobsite’s supervisor, often made them feel even more vulnerable and helpless, than the incidents of bullying that they experienced, which were perpetrated by a jobsite’s permanent-worker(s). In fact, in contrast to the above, participants typically reported that when the perpetrator of a bullying incident was a permanent-worker, they usually did not feel completely helpless because they knew that they could potentially report the incident to the jobsite’s supervisor, however, when the supervisor was the perpetrator of bullying they often felt even more vulnerable, because they were unsure of who they should report the incident to. This

uncertainty of how to report incidents of bullying that occur on an assigned jobsite, is apparently due to the fact that temporary-laborers are reportedly rarely informed of or knowledgeable about a jobsite's management hierarchy (e.g., an organization's chain of command) and seldom had access to an individual or department with more work-related power than their immediate supervisor, on an assigned jobsite. Participants also indicated that in the instances when they had reported incidents of bullying, which were perpetrated by a jobsite's supervisor, to employees of a temporary-labor agency that the agency's employees usually failed to document the incident or to take action against the jobsite's supervisor. In fact, a few participants reported that it was common practice, in some temporary-labor agencies, for the agencies' employees to not only dismiss a temporary-laborer's report of a jobsite's supervisor's perpetrated bullying, but also to retaliate against a temporary-laborer for reporting such an incident. This retaliation, reportedly, derives from the fact that many agencies' employees consider bullied temporary-laborers to be *troublemakers* or view this group of workers as opportunists, who were seeking to file a claim against the temporary-labor agency or the organization/jobsite where the incident had occurred. Therefore, most participants indicated that they had rarely, if ever, reported the incidents of bullying that they had experienced while performing temporary labor on a jobsite, particularly those incidents that were perpetrated by a jobsite's supervisor because they usually feared the consequences they would face for doing so. For example, participant TEMPHM2, a 44-year-old Hispanic male, reported that he had been bullied by several supervisors, on some of his assigned

jobsites, and that these incidents of bullying, in his words, “Made me feel like worthless...that I was a no-body.” Moreover, participant TEMPBM2 noted that he had failed to report these incidents to the jobsites’ management or to the employees of the temporary-labor agencies that employed him. Additionally, participant TEMPBM2 reported that he did not believe that employees of temporary-labor agencies respected or cared about temporary-laborers, and therefore he speculated that most agencies’ employees would be more likely to side with their clients (i.e., jobsite supervisors) rather than the temporary-laborers they employed. Furthermore, based on his experience, participant TEMPBM2 indicated that supervisors on temporary jobsites rarely treated the temporary-laborers with the same level of respect that they showed the jobsites’ permanent-workers, and he stated, “They [the jobsites’ supervisors] look down at you and see that you are desperate, so they treat you any way they please.”

In a second example, participant TEMPBM2, a 46-year-old Black male reported that he had witnessed a few incidents in which supervisors, on his assigned jobsites, had bullied temporary-laborers. Moreover, participant TEMPBM2 indicated that the jobsites’ supervisors commonly bullied temporary-laborers, and he stated, “They [the jobsites’ supervisors] bully [temporary-laborers] because they can,” and he went on to add, “Who are you [a temporary-laborer] gonna tell [report the bullying to]...I’m not about tattle-telling anyhow.” Participant TEMPBM2 also reported that he believes that jobsites’ supervisors fail to respect temporary-laborers, because, in his words, “They [the jobsites’ supervisors] don’t have to [respect temporary-laborers].” Additionally,

participant TEMPBM2 stated, “You [a temporary-laborer] have to do what they [a jobsite’s supervisor(s)] say or you lose your job...so I’m fearful of upsetting someone [a jobsite supervisor or permanent-worker] the entire time I’m working [on an assigned temporary-labor jobsite].

In a third example, participant TEMPHM1 reported that he has witnessed many bullying incidents, on his assigned jobsites, in which jobsites’ supervisors were the perpetrators of bullying among temporary-laborers. Moreover, participant TEMPHM1 indicated that the supervisors, on temporary-labor jobsites, would often take advantage of a temporary-laborer’s relatively low work-status, and he stated, “[The jobsites’ supervisors] overwork the temps [temporary-laborers and they] push us [the temporary-laborers] around.” Participant TEMPHM1 also reported that many jobsites’ supervisors allow the permanent-workers, on jobsites, to disrespect and mistreat the temporary-laborers. Additionally, participant TEMPHM1 indicated that he had often been anxious, while performing temporary-labor work, on his assigned jobsites, especially because he was constantly worried about the possibility of a jobsite’s supervisor abusing or mistreating him, and he stated, “[I worried about] supervisors being on my ass...am I working hard enough...the time pressure [on a jobsite]...[and about] them [the jobsites’ supervisors] just wanting to show you [a temporary-labor] who’s the boss.” Furthermore, participant TEMPHM1 reported, one bullying incident in particular, in which a supervisor on one of his assigned temporary jobsites had, in his words, “Pushed me around for days,” and “Rode [worked] me so hard that I felt like garbage.”

In a fourth example, participant TEMPWM1 reported that he had been bullied by a supervisor/trainer, on one of his assigned jobsites, and that he had eventually quit this temporary-labor job because he was so frustrated by the abuse and lack of respect that he had experienced, while working under this particular supervisor's abusive ways. In fact, participant TEMPWM1 indicated that the above jobsite's supervisor/trainer was, in his words, "Cruel and mean, and [he had] bad intentions...he [the jobsite's supervisor] was out to make it difficult for us [the temporary-laborers], by showing us the wrong way [to perform the work], [and by] laughing at us and calling us names for doing it [the work] wrong." Participant TEMPWM1 also reported that the above jobsite's supervisor yelled at and belittled the temporary-laborers, on a daily basis, and that this supervisor had, reportedly, regularly referred to the temporary-laborers, who he supervised, as the following, "You clowns," and "You bozos." Additionally, participant TEMPWM1 indicated that, in his opinion, it was common practice, on many temporary-labor jobsites, for the supervisors (and permanent-workers) to yell at and overwork the temporary-laborers.

In a fifth example, participant TEMPBM6, a 46-year-old Black male, reported that he had witnessed several incidents in which supervisors had bullied temporary-laborers, on his assigned jobsites, and that he himself had been a victim of bullying that was perpetrated by a jobsite's supervisor. Moreover, participant TEMPBM6 indicated that, on his assigned jobsites, about 50 percent of the supervisors had disrespected and mistreated temporary-laborers, and that most of these supervisors had expected the temporary-laborers to work harder and



faster than the jobsite's permanent-workers. Participant TEMPBM6 also reported, one bullying experience in particular, in which a jobsite's supervisor had treated temporary-laborers, as if they were, in his words, "Less than animals," and he further stated, "They [the jobsites' supervisors] know we [the temporary-laborers] have no choice other than to do what they say...and it *cuts* you up [emotionally hurts] to be treated like that [to be abused and bullied]."

## CHAPTER IV

## DISCUSSION

The overall purpose of the current study was to examine the phenomenon of workplace bullying among temporary-laborers. Specifically, the current research identified the organizational factors and worker vulnerabilities that are indicated in the emergence of bullying and the perpetrators of this negative behavior, in the temporary-labor industry. To date, limited research exists examining the psychological topic of workplace bullying, within organizational settings, and virtually no literature exists that examines this negative work-related behavior among temporary-laborers. Therefore, the current study offers an initial view of the emergence of workplace bullying, in the temporary-labor industry.

Three specific research questions are posed by the current research examination. First, what worker vulnerabilities are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying among temporary-laborers? As previously discussed, the bullying experiences of particular workers will likely differ based on one's individual vulnerabilities, and personal levels of social and work-related power. Therefore, I assert that due to the fact that various individual worker vulnerabilities, such as ones' level of personal power will differ among temporary-laborers, workplace bullying will be experienced differently and at varying frequencies by each temporary-laborer.

The second research question asks, what organizational factors are indicated in the emergence of bullying among temporary-laborers? As previously discussed, an individual's bullying experiences at work will vary, due to the

numerous positive and negative organizational factors that one may be exposed to. Therefore, due to the fact, that various organizational factors that are indicated in this negative behavior will vary among temporary-labor agencies and temporary-labor-jobsites, I assert that the presence or absence of these variants will impact the bullying experiences of temporary-laborers.

The third research question asks, who are the perpetrators of workplace bullying in the temporary-labor industry? As previously discussed, workers in certain occupations and industries are often required to have prolonged interactions with individuals from outside of their organization while at work, and consequently, these workers may be bullied by individuals who are external to their organization. In fact, as previously mentioned, temporary-laborers are at risk of abusive and negative behaviors that are perpetrated both by individuals within temporary-labor agencies (e.g., temporary-labor agencies' employees), and by the individuals such as a jobsite's supervisor and permanent-workers who they are required to interact with or work alongside, while performing temporary-labor, on their assigned jobsites. Therefore, I assert that workplace bullying will be perpetrated onto temporary-laborers, not just by individuals within temporary-labor agencies, but also by individuals who are external, yet related to a temporary-labor agency (e.g., supervisors and permanent-workers, on temporary-labor jobsites).

Workplace bullying does exist in the temporary-labor industry. In fact, based on the literature and the current study this group of workers may be even more likely to be bullied than others (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009;

Baillen, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Moreover, as previously stated, when compared to permanent employees, temporary-laborers tend to be poorly paid for the same work, and these workers are commonly exposed to increased levels and additional sources of harassment and abuse on the job. Therefore, based on the evidence that temporary-laborers, as a group, are relatively powerless and at an increased risk of being bullied at work, it is not surprising that harassment and abuse is common and widespread within this sector of the workforce. Also, even though the specific details of each temporary-laborer's bullying experience in the current study differed, these reported experiences, as a whole, contained common themes and contributing factors. These identified commonalities among the workplace bullying experiences of temporary laborers are significant, not only to the overall current study, but also for better understanding the topic at hand as it likely occurs among many workers in the temporary-labor industry and beyond.

In sum, even though empirical evidence has indicated that workers in low-status and low-paid jobs, such as those who perform temporary-labor are more likely to be bullied than others, and despite the fact that temporary-laborers, as a group, are a significant and important part of the workforce, to date this group of workers has largely been ignored by researchers who have examined the topic of workplace bullying (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Lewis, Sheehan & Davies, 2008). Workplace bullying has also traditionally been viewed as an internal problem, within organizations, and therefore bullying is usually considered to be an experience between two or more workers within the same

organization rather than an incident that is work-related but perpetrated by individuals outside of one's own organization (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Leymann, 1996; Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). This is despite the fact that recent research has indicated that bullying experiences are often perpetrated by individuals that are related yet external to one's organization. Therefore, it is critical when examining the sources of bullying, among a particular group of workers, to consider individuals not only internal to an organization, but also individuals external to an organization as potential perpetrators of bullying (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). Additionally, there are still numerous things that are not understood about workplace bullying in organizational settings, and little is known about the importance of specific organizational factors in the emergence of this dysfunctional work-related behavior (McGinley, 2008; Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

### Major Findings

The current study suggests that the phenomenon of workplace bullying is likely prevalent and widespread in the temporary-labor industry, especially because the group of workers in the study at hand reported commonly witnessing and experiencing this negative behavior, in temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-labor jobsites, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Also, the current research indicates that bullying experiences, among temporary-laborers are perpetrated both by individuals internal to (e.g., temporary-labor agencies' employees) and external to (e.g., temporary-labor jobsites' supervisors

and permanent employees) the temporary-labor agencies. Specifically, the interviews in the current study indicate that a considerable amount of the bullying experiences, among temporary-laborers, likely occur on their assigned jobsites. Additionally, through the utilization of in-depth, face-to-face interviews, the current study identified several previously reported organizational factors and worker vulnerabilities that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, among the temporary-laborers in the study at hand. Furthermore, the current research identified a previously unreported worker vulnerability that was shown in the current study to be a factor that is indicated in the workplace bullying experiences among some temporary-laborers.

#### Organizational Factors Indicated in

#### Workplace Bullying

Researchers have recently presented various organizational factors as predictors of workplace bullying (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Gouveia, 2007; McGinley, 2008). Similarly, in the current study several specific organizational factors are indicated in the emergence of bullying, among temporary-laborers. Moreover, even though these organizational factors were shown to differ in each temporary-laborer's bullying experience, certain similarities were shown to exist in the vast majority of these work-related experiences. In fact, the majority of participants reported that bullying experiences almost always occurred in work-related environments that were conducive to or stimulating of these negative behaviors. For example, temporary-labor agencies' labor halls were one of the work-related environments that were shown to be especially capable of

intensifying the competition for work, among temporary-laborers, and thus to increase the tension and negative attitudes among this group of workers. Participants also indicated that temporary-labor agencies' labor halls often stimulate feelings of boredom, stress, irritation, frustration, anger, and, ultimately, bullying behaviors among temporary-laborers. Additionally, the assigned (temporary-labor) jobsites was another environment that was shown to be conducive to workplace bullying among temporary-laborers, especially due to the fact that this group of workers is often considered to be "outsiders" on these jobsites. Moreover, temporary-laborers are almost always low in worker-status and power when compared to the permanent-workers on these jobsites.

Recent research has also presented evidence on the importance of formal organizational policies, procedures and practices, in the emergence and/or prevention of workplace bullying (McGinley, 2008; Lopez, Hodson, Roscigno, 2009). Similarly, in the current study, participants indicated that workplace bullying experiences nearly always arose in work-related environments (e.g., agencies' labor halls, jobsites, and so on) that either lacked effective organizational policies to prevent and/or inhibit these negative behaviors, or that implemented organizational policies that stimulated or tolerated harassment, abuse and bullying, among temporary-laborers. For example, many temporary-labor agencies implement a policy of a daily, in-person, worker check-in, in which potential and active temporary-laborers are required to report to an agency's labor hall hours before a scheduled job-start-time or before being selected for a new work-assignment. Hence, these required and extended periods

of time spent waiting, in labor halls, commonly result in negative attitudes and feelings, among temporary-laborers. Eventually, these feelings of frustration, irritation and anger, towards the above or similar policies, are often transferred by one temporary-laborer onto another, often resulting in bullying or other abusive behaviors. Participants also reported that, on their assigned temporary-labor jobsites, there were often no policies in place that addressed, inhibited, and/or prevented bullying behaviors among temporary-laborers or permanent-workers. Moreover, participants indicated that they were often unaware and usually not informed of how to report an incident of abuse, harassment, or bullying on these jobsites, and that they usually did not have contact with or knowledge of any organizational official with a higher level of workplace-power or authority than that of their immediate jobsite supervisor (e.g., a shift-leader).

Additionally, previous research has shown that certain organizational practices and policies may stimulate bullying behaviors and create potentially harmful and abusive environments for workers (Ortega, Høgh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). Similarly, in the current study, participants indicated that specific organizational practices, which are widespread in temporary-labor agencies and jobsites, were conducive to or stimulating of bullying, among temporary-laborers. For example, participants reported that many of the bullying experiences that occur in labor halls are related to a temporary-labor agency's work-assignment process. In fact, participants indicated that the work-assignment process, in many agencies, is biased and unfair (e.g., the agencies' available-worker-sign-in-sheets are not followed), and therefore capable of stimulating intense competition for the



few available temporary-labor jobs, and ultimately abusive and bullying behaviors among this group of workers. Further, participants reported that certain policies and practices that were implemented by temporary-labor agencies, which were related to performing work on their assigned temporary-labor jobsites, were often contributing factors in the emergence of bullying, among temporary-laborers. For example, it is common practice in many temporary-labor agencies to set a temporary-laborers' pay rate, for most jobs, far below the industry-standard, and significantly below the pay rates of most of the permanent-workers who perform identical work on the same jobsite. Moreover, participants indicated that the supervisors and permanent-workers, on most temporary-labor jobsites, were aware of this pay disparity, and therefore these individuals would often treat the temporary-laborers poorly (e.g., bullying) and they typically behaved as if this group of workers was "beneath" them, in terms of both workplace and social status.

#### Worker Vulnerabilities Indicated in Workplace Bullying

Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson (2009) recently reported that several worker vulnerabilities, such as racial minority membership, were predictive of workplace bullying, among particular groups of workers (e.g., unskilled workers). Similarly, in the current study, several worker vulnerabilities were indicated, in the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers. First, participants reported that minority membership is commonly a factor in the workplace bullying experiences among temporary-laborers. Indeed the majority of participants indicated that a victim's race or ethnicity was likely a contributing

factor, in the bullying experience(s) that they reported either experiencing or witnessing, while performing work as a temporary-laborer. Moreover, by and large, participants identified individuals of differing races as the perpetrator(s) and victim(s), in the bullying experiences they described. Participants also indicated that when the perpetrator(s) of bullying, among temporary-laborers, was a group instead of an individual that typically the group of bullies was almost always made up of individuals of the same race or ethnicity, while the victim usually belonged to a differing race or ethnicity.

Similar to previous research, several other worker vulnerabilities were identified, in the current study, as capable of stimulating bullying among temporary-laborers (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000; Aquino & Thau, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009). These worker vulnerabilities include the relatively low pay rate, low occupational status (or position), low level of education, and low socio-economic status that are common to most individuals who perform temporary-labor. For example, participants, in the current study, reported that the relatively low level of pay among temporary-laborers often results in this group of workers being teased, taunted, laughed-at, belittled, disrespected, mistreated and/or picked-on by their supervisors and the permanent-workers, on their assigned jobsites. In a second example, participants reported that the occupational position, of temporary-labor, often made a worker more susceptible to workplace bullying. Indeed the occupational position of the temporary-laborer was often a factor that was indicated in the reported bullying experiences, in this current study. The majority of participants also indicated that

one's temporary-laborer job-status was often the primary reason for why a worker was targeted for bullying, by the supervisor(s) and permanent-workers on a temporary-labor jobsite.

Interestingly some participants indicated that temporary-laborers are commonly targeted for bullying, by permanent-workers, on their assigned jobsites, for working *too hard* or *doing too good* of a job, especially because the permanent-workers may believe that hard-working or high-performing temporary-laborers directly threatens the job security of the permanent-workforce, on a jobsite, because the jobsite's management may notice that the temporary-laborers are able to outperform the permanent-workers, and thus decide to permanently hire the *harder-working* temporary-laborers to replace the *underperforming* permanent-workers.

Additionally, based on the interviews, the relatively low education-level of most temporary-laborers is a common factor that is indicated in bullying experiences among temporary-laborers. Moreover, participants reported that regardless of their actual education-level, that while performing temporary-labor, most people (e.g., temporary-labor agencies' employees) interacted with them as if they were poorly educated (or uneducated). This general perception, about a temporary-laborer's assumed education level, reportedly often resulted in name-calling, harassment, abuse, and bullying, onto temporary-laborers, which was perpetrated by the employees of temporary-labor-agencies and the permanent-workers and supervisors on the temporary-labor jobsites.

Furthermore, participants reported that the relatively low socio-economic status, of most temporary-laborers, is a contributing factor in many of the bullying experiences that they reported having witnessed or experienced, while working in the temporary-labor industry. In fact, many participants indicated that perpetrators are usually more likely to target a worker (e.g., a temporary-laborer), who they perceive to be of a low socio-economic status, because they are often aware of the fact that these targeted individuals have little workplace or social power, or other resources at their disposal and therefore they believe that this group of workers would be less likely, than others, to report an incident of work-related harassment, abuse, or bullying.

In addition, the current research identified a previously unexamined worker vulnerability that was indicated in the bullying experiences, among temporary-laborers. Specifically, even though some researchers have indicated that persons who were bullied as children at school are also more likely to be victimized later in life as adults in the workplace, no studies were found that have examined how the previous childhood bullying experiences that occur in one's home, such as those that are perpetrated by a child's parents, siblings or other family members, impact the incidents of workplace bullying that these individuals may experience and/or witness, as adult workers (Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Salin, 2003).

Surprisingly, the current study did not show, as previous research has, that participants who reported previous childhood bullying experiences at school, would also report a greater frequency and increased incidents of having been

bullied and/or having witnessed the bullying of others, while working in the temporary-labor industry. In fact, the participants in the current study, who reported not experiencing childhood bullying at school actually reported slightly more incidents of being bullied and witnessing others being bullied in the temporary-labor industry, when compared to participants that had reported experiencing childhood bullying at school. Interestingly, however, participants who reported previous childhood bullying experiences in their home were indeed more likely, than those who did not experienced previous childhood bullying in the home, to report that they had been bullied and/or had witnessed the bullying of others, while working as temporary-laborers. Also, worth noting, the participants, who reported previous childhood bullying experiences, both at school and at home were, as a group, more likely, than other participants, to indicate that they had responded to a witnessed bullying incident or attempted to help a bullied victim, or reported the bullying experiences of others, while working in the temporary-labor industry. In fact, many of these participants indicated that they had readily attempted to help or assist a bullied peer, in part, because they reportedly remembered how it felt to be victimized and bullied as a child, and that they were unwilling to tolerate the bullying behaviors of others, as adult workers, especially because the majority of these individuals noted that they had been hapless as bullied children.

#### Various Perpetrators Identified in Workplace Bullying

Previous research has indicated various perpetrators of workplace bullying and researchers have argued that these negative work-related behaviors may be

perpetrated by individuals who are either internal to or external, yet still related, to a victim's workplace (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008). Similarly, in the current study, there were various perpetrators indicated in workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers, and, as expected, these perpetrators were indeed found to exist both internally (e.g., temporary-labor agencies' employees) and externally (e.g., jobsite supervisors) to the temporary-labor agencies that employed the bullied victims.

As previously stated, researchers have largely argued that a bullied victim's organization of employment (e.g., a temporary-labor agency) is typically the environment in which a worker experiences work-related bullying, and that the supervisors in these organizations are commonly the perpetrators of these negative behaviors (Glendinning, 2001; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). However, the current study indicated that temporary-labor agencies are not the setting in which workplace bullying is most likely to occur, and that the supervisors within these agencies are rarely the perpetrators of bullying, among temporary-laborers. In fact, the interviews suggested that there are actually few workplace bullying incidents among temporary laborers that are perpetrated by the employees of temporary-labor agencies, and that instead the majority of bullying experiences among this group of workers occurs on temporary-labor jobsites, rather than in the agencies that employ them, and that, by and large, the perpetrators of these incidents are the supervisors and permanent-workers on the temporary laborers' assigned jobsites.

Interestingly, the interviews did indicate that even though the employees of temporary-labor agencies are not the usual perpetrators of workplace bullying, within the temporary-labor industry; that, unfortunately, these employees often treat temporary-laborers in rude, disrespectful, and abusive ways. Moreover, the interviews revealed that the employees of temporary-labor agencies typically do little to prevent temporary-laborers from being bullied or to assist those workers, who report being bullied, on a temporary-labor jobsite.

The current study indicated that when bullying does occur, within a temporary-labor agency, such as in an agency's labor hall, that temporary-laborers are commonly both the perpetrators and victims of this negative behavior. Moreover, when workplace bullying arises, between two or more temporary-laborers, it is more likely to occur in a temporary-labor agency's labor hall than on a temporary-labor jobsite. The interviews indicated that this is due to the fact that temporary-laborers tend to bond as a group of *outsiders* on an assigned jobsite, but that these same workers will tend to compete for temporary-labor jobs, as individuals, in a labor hall. Also, the interviews revealed, regardless of whether workplace bullying occurs in a temporary-labor agency or on a jobsite, that most of the bullying that occurs between temporary-laborers involves a perpetrator(s) and victim of differing races. In fact, the current study indicated that work-related bullying behaviors, which arise from racial tensions, are widespread and prevalent; not only in the temporary-labor industry, but also in numerous other sectors of the permanent-workforce.

The current study revealed that the supervisors and permanent-workers on temporary-labor jobsites are the usual perpetrators of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers. In fact, the interviews indicated that the majority of temporary-laborers have either witnessed or experienced bullying on an assigned, temporary-labor jobsite, and that almost of these bullying experiences were perpetrated by a supervisor or permanent-worker, on the jobsite. Also, the interviews indicated that nearly all of the supervisors and permanent-workers in the above bullying experiences had more perceived or actual workplace power (or authority) than their victim. Additionally, the interviews revealed that the majority of the above bullying experiences were ongoing, and that many of them were racially motivated.

Unfortunately, the current study indicated that when workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers, is perpetrated by individuals who hold more power than their victim (e.g., jobsite supervisors), the bullying often produces a situation in which a temporary-laborer feels even more vulnerable and helpless than if he or she had been bullied by an individual with similar work-related power (e.g., another temporary-laborer). The interviews revealed that the above is largely due to the fact that most temporary-laborers, in addition to feeling powerless on their assigned jobsites, are also unaware of how to report a jobsite-related bullying incident. Moreover, the interviews indicated that when temporary-laborers did report these jobsite-related incidents of bullying to the appropriate individuals, such as the employees of the temporary-labor agency that employed them or the officials within the organization where the incident occurred, these individuals,



reportedly, rarely documented the reported bullying incident or took action against the perpetrator, and instead often retaliated against the victim or witness(s) for reporting the incident.

In sum, the overall findings in the current study are largely consistent with previous workplace bullying research. In particular, the interviews confirmed that as previously indicated there are indeed various organizational factors and worker vulnerabilities that are capable of stimulating (or conducive to) the emergence of workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers. The current research also revealed one previously unidentified type of worker vulnerability that is, in fact, indicated in the bullying experiences of adult workers. Specifically, as previously mentioned, the interviews indicated that individuals who experienced previous childhood bullying in their home were more likely than those who had not, to later experience or witness workplace bullying, while working in the temporary-labor industry.

Finally, it is important to note that, as expected, the current study indicated that organizational factors vary widely, among temporary-labor agencies and jobsites, and that worker-vulnerabilities vary greatly among temporary-laborers. Therefore, it is not surprising that the interviews revealed that work-related bullying experiences, among this group of workers, will also vary considerably. With this said, however, the current study indicated that even though the particular details of each temporary-laborer's workplace bullying experience may differ, the bullying experiences among this group of workers, nonetheless, will still likely share numerous similarities as previously discussed in this paper.

### Implications

The current study shows that the phenomenon of workplace bullying is prevalent and widespread among temporary-laborers, and like numerous other studies (e.g., Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009) it indicates that there are indeed various perpetrators of workplace bullying. Moreover, the current study, similar to other recent research (e.g., Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008), reveals that the perpetrators of workplace bullying may exist both internal to and external to one's organization of employment (i.e., a temporary-labor agency).

Not surprisingly, due to the nature of the temporary-labor industry, the current study reveals that temporary-laborers, as a group, almost always have prolonged interactions with individuals who are external to (e.g., permanent-employees on temporary-labor jobsites) the temporary-labor agencies that employ them. Therefore, temporary-laborers are vulnerable to bullying, that is perpetrated not only by individuals within temporary-labor agencies, but also by individuals on temporary-labor jobsites. Indeed, the current study indicated that temporary-laborers are actually more likely to be bullied by permanent-workers and supervisors, on their assigned temporary-labor jobsites, than they are by individuals (fellow temporary-laborers, temporary-labor agencies' employees, and so on), within the temporary-labor agencies that employ them.

With the above considered, the current study's results provide important information to the management of temporary-labor agencies about the fact that the workers, who are employed through their agencies to perform work on

temporary-labor jobsites, are indeed at an increased risk for workplace bullying that is perpetrated by the permanent-workers and supervisors on these jobsites. Therefore, in order to address the issue of workplace bullying among temporary-laborers, the management of temporary-labor agencies should implement effective and preventive anti-bullying measures, both in temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-labor jobsites, in order to better protect this group of vulnerable workers from these negative behaviors. Additionally, by bringing the above issues to the attention of the management of temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-labor jobsites, I believe that the current study may help these organizational leaders recognize the fact that bullying behaviors are not only perpetrated by individuals within one's organization of employment, but also by individuals, who are employed by an organization's clients (or service users). Furthermore, the current study and similar studies that were previously conducted (e.g., Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2008; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009), may help the leaders in the temporary-labor industry to realize that in some ways, an organization itself may be the perpetrator of workplace bullying, especially, through the implementation of bully promoting organizational practice and policies, or by a lack of preventive anti-bullying measures

The current study reveals what several recent studies (e.g., Roscigno, Lopez, Hodson, 2009; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009) have shown, that similar to other unskilled-workers, temporary-laborers are indeed at an increased risk for being bullied at work (i.e., on temporary-labor jobsites). This increased risk of workplace bullying is likely due to various individual and organizational

factors, which have been shown to be common among this and other groups of unskilled workers (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies, 2009; Roscigno, Lopez, Hodson, 2009; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009). These factors include individual worker vulnerabilities, such as a worker's relatively low level of pay, low job status, low-education and low power-levels (both in social and work-related settings), and organizational factors, such as a lack of effective and preventive anti-bullying measures within organizations, and the implementation of policies or practices by organizational leaders, which stimulate negative behaviors among its workers. Indeed, in the current study, the above organizational and worker factors were shown to contribute to an increase in bullying incidents among temporary-laborers, both in temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-labor jobsites.

The current study indicates that many of the bullying incidents, among temporary-laborers that are perpetrated by permanent-workers and supervisors, on temporary-labor jobsites, often arise in the following two key ways. First, many bullying incidents that are perpetrated by permanent-workers and supervisors onto temporary-laborers arise from work-related racial tensions that are already present on a particular jobsite or neighborhood or sector of the workforce. Second, many of the other bullying incidents that arise between the above perpetrators and victims often arise due to a commonly held belief among the permanent-workers and supervisors, on temporary-labor jobsites, that temporary-laborers are as a group, "jobsite-outsiders" and/or threats to the permanent-workers' job-security.

With this said, by bringing the above identified worker and organizational factors, along with the tensions and beliefs, which promote, stimulate, or maintain bullying among temporary-labor, to the attention of management within the temporary-labor industry, I am confident that positive organizational change, in regards to these negative behaviors, is possible. Specifically, I believe that once organizational leaders, within the temporary-labor industry, are familiar with the various vulnerabilities that temporary-laborers face at work, both in temporary-labor agencies and in the organizations they service, then management will be more likely to implement organizational practices, policies, and measures that inhibit, prevent, and effectively address the issue of workplace bullying among the group of workers at hand.

The current study shows that when a bullying incident does occur, among temporary-laborers in a temporary-labor agency (e.g., an agency's labor-hall), it is much more common for the perpetrator of these negative behaviors to be another temporary-laborer, rather than an employee of an agency. However, the current study also indicates that even though the employees of temporary-labor agencies are rarely the perpetrators of bullying that is directed towards temporary-laborers, these employees often stimulate, encourage, allow, or fail to address these negative behaviors, among this group of workers.

The current study revealed that temporary-laborers, who do bully other temporary-laborers, while in temporary-labor agencies, are often motivated to target their victims because of negative feelings that arise, during the extended periods of time that they commonly spend idly waiting for work, in a temporary-

labor agency's labor hall. Specifically, the current research indicates that these negative feelings and the behaviors that follow commonly arise, within the labor-halls of temporary-labor agencies, in two primary ways. First, many of these bullying incidents arise from the widely accepted belief, among temporary-laborers, that there are limited jobs available in each agency. This belief usually leads to an immense competition for the available work among temporary-laborers, a group of workers who are often required to wait in an agency's labor-hall for prolonged periods of time before being assigned a temporary-labor job. Second, bullying incidents also arise from the racial tensions that exist (and are intensified in the labor-hall setting) among particular groups of workers in the temporary-labor industry.

Unfortunately, the current study reveals that the supervisors and employees, of most temporary-labor agencies, commonly ignore or fail to address the bullying incidents that do occur (in labor-halls and on jobsites) and are reported by temporary-laborers. The current research also indicates that a majority of the bullying incidents that occur, among temporary-laborers, in temporary-labor agencies (and labor-halls) are likely a direct result of particular organizational practices (e.g., a misunderstood work-assignment process) and policies (e.g., a required daily check-in policy), which are common in the temporary-labor industry. Therefore, I believe that the above practices and policies, which were identified in the current study, will alert the management, in temporary-labor agencies and on jobsites, of the particular organizational factors that are conducive to workplace bullying, and hence assist these

organizational leaders in implementing anti-bullying measures that better protect temporary-laborers (and all workers), who perform work in these organizations, from bullying behaviors.

Finally, the current study, unlike several others (e.g., Smith, Singer, Hoel, Cooper, 2003; Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009) failed to show that a particular worker vulnerability, that of a having a previous school-related bullying experience, in childhood, later increases the likelihood that an individual (i.e., a temporary-laborer) will experience bullying as an adult worker. Moreover, the current research failed to reveal that the above worker vulnerability increased the likelihood that an individual will witness the bullying experiences of others or report the bullying behaviors of a perpetrator at work. However, unexpectedly, the current study revealed a novel finding, that had not been previously reported, that temporary-laborers who have experienced previous childhood bullying incidents, which occurred in their home (and that were perpetrated by family members), are at an increased risk for experiencing bullying as adult workers, in the temporary-labor industry. Additionally, in the current study, the above previously bullied individuals were also more likely than participants, who had not experienced childhood bullying in the home, to report that they had been bullied or witnessed the bullying of others, while at work. Furthermore, participants, who had either experienced previous childhood bullying in the home or at school were, as a group, more likely than other participants to indicate they had responded (in an action oriented way) to the bullying incidents of others, while working in the temporary-labor industry. The above individuals typically

responded to the bullying incidents that they witnessed at work by intervening or comforting the victim, or by reporting the negative behaviors to organizational management or officials.

In sum, the current study, and in particular the face-to-face, in-person interviews that were conducted with the participants in this examination, resulted in rich and detailed accounts of work-related bullying experiences, among temporary-laborers. The bullying experiences reported by participants in this study indicated that workplace bullying is common and widespread, within the temporary-labor industry, and these findings should be brought to the attention of the organizational leaders in temporary-labor agencies in order to inhibit workplace bullying in the temporary-labor industry. Moreover, these reported bullying experiences revealed that there are, as previously reported in the literature, various perpetrators of workplace bullying and that bullied victims are indeed targeted by perpetrators, who are both internal to and external to their organization of employment.

With the above said, the findings, in the current study, suggest that organizational leaders should take precautions to protect temporary-laborers from bullying behaviors that occur, not only within temporary-labor agencies, but also from the negative behaviors that occur on their workers' assigned temporary-labor jobsites. Further, it is important to note that temporary-laborers, as a group, may be even more likely than other groups of workers, to have long and extended periods of interaction with individuals from outside of a temporary-labor agency that employs them, and thus they may be even more vulnerable to workplace



bullying, due to the nature of how (i.e., on a temporary-basis) and where (i.e., on a temporary-jobsite) work is performed in the temporary-labor industry.

Overall, the current study also indicated that various individual factors, including numerous worker vulnerabilities and various organizational factors, are capable of stimulating workplace bullying and/or increasing the risk that an individual will experience these negative behaviors at work. Additionally, the current research revealed a novel, previously unreported, worker vulnerability, that of having had a previous childhood bullying experience, which occurred in one's home (rather than at school), a factor that was indicated in the increased workplace bullying experiences of temporary-laborers. With this said, the findings in the current study suggest that it is imperative for organizational leaders to be informed of the numerous contributing factors (both worker-related and organizational) to workplace bullying. Further, management in temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-labor jobsites should identify and remedy the organizational policies and practices that promote or allow these negative behaviors, and implement anti-bullying measures that better protect this vulnerable group of workers.

### Limitations of Research

Several limitations of this current research exist. First, the interviews in the current study were conducted with participants who were either currently performing or had previously performed work as a temporary-laborer. Therefore, some of the research participants were required to retrospectively remember and discuss their previous experiences in the temporary-labor industry, while other participants spoke about their current experiences as temporary-laborers. With this said, it is quite possible for the participants, who were asked to remember their past experiences in the temporary-labor industry, responded in ways that may have been impacted by the amount of time that had passed since they had last completed work as a temporary-laborer. Indeed, the literature has shown that there are two primary kinds of memory problems that participants may experience in research interviews. First, participants may be unable to recall the information that the researcher is asking for, and second, due to memory distortion, participants do not usually recall events objectively (Singleton & Straits, 2005). In order to minimize these memory-related problems, in the current study, I only included participants that either self-identified as current temporary-laborers, or those who claimed to have performed work as a temporary-laborer, within the last year.

With the above said, in the current study, I also employed a brief pre-interview screening component, in which potential participants were asked 4 screening questions about their experience in the temporary-labor industry, in order to determine whether or not they qualified to participate in the research at

hand. Specifically, these screening questions were used to help screen-out individuals who were not currently performing, or had not previously performed work as a temporary-laborer within the last year, as well as those who had not completed at least 3 days worth of work-assignments in the temporary-labor industry and/or had not performed temporary-jobs that were general-labor in nature (e.g., light industrial, construction, warehousing, manufacturing, and so on versus other types of temporary-jobs, such as clerical, skilled-labor, technical, and so on). The participant-screening questions that were utilized, in the current research, are as follows: (1) When did you last work in temporary-labor?; (2) How long have you or did you work in temporary-labor?; (3) Did you work through a temporary-labor agency? If so, what was the name of the agency?; (4) What type of temporary-jobs did you perform?

A second limitation, in the current study, is the relatively small size of the sample. Even though it is common for qualitative studies to have relatively small sample sizes, many of which only average between 10 to 22 participants, the current research was likely impacted by the fact that it had only 25 total participants (Finnis, Robbins, & Bender, 1993; Lewis & Orford, 2005; Lewis 2006). Nevertheless, I believe that the information gathered from the participants, in the current study, was powerful and insightful due to the rich and detailed responses that the interview questions stimulated. Moreover, the commonality that was found among the participants' reported experiences, suggested that the feelings and thoughts expressed, in the current study, are likely also experienced by numerous other workers in the temporary-labor industry.

A third limitation, in the current study, is the possibility that my social identities and physical characteristics (e.g., race, gender, age, appearance, educational level and so on) stimulated or elicited certain types of participant-responses, and subsequently shaped the interview process and outcome. Indeed, researchers have found that even subtle things about an interviewer's clothing and appearance, such as what he or she wears, or how he or she does his or her hair, can impact how a participant perceives the interviewer, impacting not only the interview-process, but also the way in which participants respond to the interviewer's questions, and ultimately the opinions and attitudes that participants decide to report (Esterberg, 2002; Singleton & Straits, 2005). For example, a participant may decide to answer questions in a way that he or she believes the interviewer would find acceptable or desirable, instead of answering them accurately.

With the above said, during the interviews, I attempted to minimize the impact that my personal characteristics would potentially have on the way the participants perceived me and subsequently responded to the questions I was asking. Therefore, before I entered the field, as a researcher, to interview the participants, I modified my appearance in ways that minimized my feminine characteristics and socio-economic status; these strategies included wearing casual, simple clothing, with no jewelry and shoes with no heels, pulling my hair back, and by using very little and neutral-colored make-up. In fact, my goal in altering my normal appearance was to ensure that I would not appear, to participants, as especially feminine or sophisticated. These alterations, to my

appearance were necessary, because, in my opinion, if my physical appearance made me unapproachable or made the participants uncomfortable, for any reason, they would be more likely to alter their responses in order to match their perceptions of me.

In the current study, I also attempted to create a somewhat casual, yet still semi-professional interview environment (and interview process), in order to ensure that the participants felt comfortable and open with me as an interviewer. This was important, because, as previously mentioned, the literature on unskilled workers, such as those in the temporary-labor industry suggested that, in general, temporary-laborers are not always treated with respect or shown appropriate levels of attention, especially by individuals in situations of power. Therefore, I made a special effort to be friendly and welcoming, while still remaining professional, especially upon first meeting the participants. This included doing things such as shaking hands with participants, thanking them for participating, and communicating how important their participation was to the study at hand. Also, before conducting each interview, I assured the participants that, as a psychological researcher, I was not going to be judgmental of their thoughts, feelings or beliefs, or any of the experiences that they shared with me, and that my job was simply to collect the information that they reported. Moreover, I ensured the participants that I would keep all of their responses confidential and that no one other than me would view or have access to the information gathered in their interview. Additionally, I made it a point to speak in a colloquial and casual-way, and I avoided the use of collegiate words or terminologies or

psychological jargon while conducting the interviews. The selective use of language was an important consideration, while interviewing participants from the population at hand, due to the fact that, as previously mentioned, most temporary-laborers have a relatively low level of education and, therefore, would likely feel uncomfortable and/or not understand what I was asking if I used words and terms that this group of workers was typically not familiar with.

A fourth limitation, in the current research, may be due to the fact that I chose to use the word *bullying*, while conducting the interviews, in the current study, however, this particular limitation is debatable among scholars. In fact, the literature shows that researchers, who have examined workplace bullying by utilizing in-person interviews, have either readily used or completely avoided using the term or word *bullying*, during the data-gathering process of their study (Lewis, Sheehan, & Davies 2008). Moreover, the researchers who chose either to use or avoid the use of the word bullying, while conducting research on workplace bullying, gave various reasons for their decision and most failed to justify or explain their decision at all. For example, some researchers who decided not to use the term bullying, while conducting interviews, suggested that by taking this approach to their research, it helped to inhibit participants' preconceptions about their study and decreased the possibility that the use of the word, bullying, would influence their participants' responses (Lewis, Sheehan & Davies, 2008; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). On the other hand, there were several recent studies, on workplace bullying, in which the researchers used the word bullying while interviewing participants, but failed to support their decision

or to provide an argument for doing so (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Lewis & Orford, 2005). With the above said, as previously mentioned, while conducting the interviews, in the current study, I initially explained to participants that I was examining negative behaviors in the workplace, and I intentionally chose not to use the word bullying until the second half of the interview.

In sum, even by taking all of the precautions that were just discussed in my approach to the current study, the findings and conclusion of the current research are only an interpretation of workplace bullying in the temporary-labor industry. This is especially due to the fact that the participants, in this study, likely varied in the amount of genuine disclosure they provided. Also, because the current study relied on participants' retrospective accounts of bullying their experiences, there is likely substantial variance in the accuracy of the information they were able to recall. Additionally, it is impossible to verify the exact ways in which (or to what degree) my interaction with the participants affected the interview process or the participants' responses. Finally, as previously mentioned, the nature of all qualitative research (the current study included) prevents a researcher, such as myself, from making cause and effect conclusions, because this method of scientific inquiry did not include formal and quantitative measures, of the behavior at hand, which were capable of or designed to be subjected to rigorous statistical analysis.

### Future Directions

Overall, workplace bullying is a relatively new area of inquiry in the field of psychology, and thus many questions about this organizational phenomenon still remain. Moreover, the current study showed that despite the fact that workplace bullying is prevalent and widespread, among some organizations, there are apparently few organizations that implement effective anti-bullying policies and practices or that institute awareness and/or prevention programs, in order to address these negative behaviors. Also, even though the current research examined workplace bullying, among temporary-laborers, the data collected in the current study indicated that work-related bullying is commonly experienced by some groups of other workers in various organizations and industries. With this said, researchers should continue to examine workplace bullying, both among temporary-laborers and numerous other groups of workers. Additionally, based on the limitations of the current study, researchers conducting future investigations, on the topic at hand, should further examine the ways in which these negative behaviors arise in various work-related environments and why workplace bullying thrives in particular organizations.

The results, of the current study, suggest that there are still several important areas of work to be done on the topic of workplace bullying. First, the current research indicated that the perpetrators of these negative behaviors exist both internal to and external to a victim's organization of employment. In fact, the current study showed that client bullying occurs more commonly, among temporary-laborers, than peer bullying (e.g., bullying that is perpetrated by other



temporary-laborers) or supervisory bullying (e.g., bullying that is perpetrated by employees of temporary-labor agencies). Therefore, researchers should further examine bullying that arises from outside of a worker's organization of employment, such as bullying that is perpetrated by customers or clients. Additionally, future studies should investigate the ways in which client or customer bullying is similar to and different from other types of work-related bullying.

Second, the specific individual (e.g., worker vulnerabilities) and organizational factors, which are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying, should be further examined. This is an important area of psychological inquiry, because previous research (e.g., Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009; Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, & Olsen, 2009), as well as the current study, has shown that there are numerous individual and organizational factors that can contribute to workplace bullying. Moreover, the current study indicated that there might be various individual factors or worker vulnerabilities that stimulate these negative behaviors, and have yet to be identified. In fact, the current research identified a novel worker vulnerability, which the literature had not yet reported that of previously experiencing childhood bullying in one's home, as a factor that was indicated in the workplace bullying experiences of adult workers. The above factor made participants more likely to report bullying experiences, witnessing bullying, and responding to bullying, by intervening or reporting the incident.

Third, the current study suggested that various individual factors or personal identifying characteristics, such as race and gender, likely play an

important role in the emergence of workplace bullying. Specifically, the current research showed that workplace-bullying experiences often involve a male perpetrator and a male victim of differing races. Moreover, the current research showed that racial tensions, among workers, are often a stimulant for numerous negative work-related behaviors. Therefore, future studies should investigate the ways in which a worker's personal identifying characteristics contribute to workplace bullying experiences, and the ways in which racial tensions, within organizations, stimulate these negative behaviors among its workforce.

Fourth, the current study showed that workplace bullying results in numerous psychological, physical, and psychosomatic health complaints. Moreover, the current research indicated that bullied-victims often resort to missing work (e.g., calling into work sick) or leaving a position at work (e.g., quitting one's job), in order to avoid work-related bullying and the health issues that usually accompany these experiences. Therefore, future studies should further examine the ways in which workplace bullying results in various health complaints, as well as consider the differences, among the health complaints of victims, who experience bullying and those workers who only report witnessing these negative behaviors while at work.

Finally, the literature showed that nearly all studies, on workplace bullying (e.g., Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009), including the current research, have failed to implement a longitudinal design, when examining the organizational phenomenon at hand. However, it appears to be especially important for future studies to

examine workplace bullying over a substantially longer duration of time, due to the fact that previous research (e.g., Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003), as well as the current study, has indicated that childhood bullying experiences are indeed indicated in the workplace bullying experiences of adult workers. With this said, researchers should continue to investigate the ways in which an individual's previous life-experiences and personal vulnerabilities contribute to workplace bullying, at a later time in one's life.

In sum, based on the interviews, in the current study, workplace bullying is commonly experienced by some temporary-laborers both in temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-labor jobsites. The perpetrators of these negative behaviors exist both internal to and external to the temporary-labor agencies, which employ these workers. There are numerous organizational and individual factors, including various worker vulnerabilities that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying. However, the organizational policies, practices, and programs that a particular workplace implements may either inhibit or stimulate these negative behaviors among its workforce.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY

The current study examines the phenomenon of workplace bullying among temporary-laborers. Even though workplace bullying had been previously identified as a significant problem in various organizations there has been virtually no research that examines this negative work-related behavior in the temporary-labor industry. Therefore, in order to initially examine the topic at hand, I conducted face-to-face, in-depth interviews with 25 adult temporary-laborers, from various temporary-labor agencies in a racially diverse suburb in the greater Chicago area. The interviews were utilized to better understand the worker vulnerabilities and organizational factors that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying and to identify the perpetrators of this negative behavior. I found that the majority of the participants in this study commonly witness and experience workplace bullying, in temporary-labor agencies and especially on temporary-labor jobsites, while working in the temporary-labor industry. Also, I identified various previously reported worker vulnerabilities, such as minority membership and low occupational position and organizational factors, such as certain policies and practices in the temporary-labor industry that are indicated in the emergence of workplace bullying among temporary-laborers. Additionally, I identified, one previously unreported worker vulnerability, that of previous childhood bullying experiences in one's home, which was shown in the current study to be a factor that is indicated in the workplace bullying experiences among temporary-laborers. Furthermore, the findings show that the bullying

experiences among temporary-laborers in the current study are perpetrated both by individuals internal to and external to the temporary-labor agencies. In fact, the most common perpetrators of workplace bullying were the permanent-employees and supervisors on the temporary-labor jobsites. In sum, I collected rich and detailed information on workplace bullying and showed an overall commonality among the participants' reported experiences, still yet before results of this study may be generalized; further research is needed on the topic at hand. Finally, despite a relatively small sample size, this initial study has provided insights into a previously under-researched group; temporary-laborers.

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## Appendix A

### Interviewing Guide

## An Exploration of Negative Behaviors in the Workplace:

Purpose: You are being asked to participate in an interview designed to examine working conditions within the temporary labor industry. This project is being conducted to identify issues related to negative behaviors in temporary-labor agencies and on temporary-job sites and to recommend strategies for addressing these concerns. Also, this project is being conducted by me, I am a researcher at DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

The information gathered, in this study, will form the basis of a research project identifying key issues regarding negative behaviors in the workplace. This project will be shared with members of the researcher's academic department and will be accessible by the entire campus community and others.

Procedure: If you take part in this project, you will be asked a series of questions in an interview format that:

- Asks your opinions and attitudes about the temporary labor agency, the labor hall and job site conditions, your overall impressions about the temporary labor agency's policies and practices, and your experience with different work-related behaviors;
- Collects basic demographic information about your gender, race/ethnicity, job experience, and the types of jobs in the temporary labor industry; and

- Takes approximately 30-60 minutes to complete.

Benefits: The possible benefits to you for taking part in this project are that the information and examples you provide, in combination with that gathered from other temporary workers, will help identify current issues of concern in the temporary labor industry. This information will be utilized in recommendations for actions and policies to enhance the quality of the work experience for all temporary workers.

Compensation: You will be paid \$10, today, for participating in this interview.

Confidentiality:

- All information collected about you during the course of this project will be kept without any personal identifiers.
- Your responses will be combined with those of other temporary workers into summary reports. These reports will be use to identify issues and areas for improvement in the temporary labor industry; further, no one will have access to your individual responses.
- This interview will be completely confidential and no personal identifying information is collected during the interview process.
- To further ensure your confidentiality. Please do not provide any information that could identify you or others as individuals in your responses to the open-ended questions during this interview.

- *Do you have any questions before we begin this interview?*

Again, all of your answers to questions in this interview will be *strictly confidential*. When answering the questions, in this interview, please listen to each question carefully and answer as honestly as possible. If you do not understand a question or need a question repeated please inform me as soon as possible.



## Interview Guide/Questions:

*An exploration of Negative Behaviors in the Workplace*

## Part I—ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES:

In this part of the interview, I will ask you questions about the conditions in temporary-labor agencies, labor halls, and the temporary job sites where you have worked, as well as your attitudes, opinions, and personal experiences in the temporary-labor industry.

1. Do the employees of temporary-labor agencies treat the temporary-workers with respect?
2. Do the temporary-workers treat each other with respect while in the labor hall?
3. Do the temporary-labor agency employees care about the health and safety of the temporary-workers?
4. Are conflicts between temporary-workers in the labor hall resolved fairly?
5. Have you seen harassment or discrimination in the labor hall?
6. Do supervisors on the job sites respect temporary-workers?
7. Do the permanent employees on the job sites respect temporary-workers?
8. Have you ever felt fearful or anxious on a job site?
9. In general, are the jobs you are (or have been) sent to work stressful?

10. Do (or did) you feel safe while on the job sites?
11. In general, do (or did) you know what is (or was) expected of you on the job sites?
12. Have some of the jobs or job sites affected your physical or emotional health?
13. What are some difficult or negative things about being a temporary-worker?
14. What type of job related issues do (or did) you worry about when you are on a job site?
15. In your opinion, do temporary-labor agencies pay enough?
16. Are there hidden fees in temporary jobs (e.g., equipment fees, transportation fees, ect.)?
17. How many hours do (or did) you usually wait in the labor hall before being assigned a job?

Part II—INSTANCES OF NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS IN THE WORKPLACE:

Next, I am interested in learning whether or not you have experienced certain kinds of behaviors in the labor hall or on a temporary-job site. For each question, please let me know whether you have experienced that behavior, and if you have, please tell me how often it happened (e.g., daily, weekly, once or twice) and who was most responsible for doing this to you (a co-worker, an employee of the temporary agency, a job site supervisor, ect.). Have you:

1. Been glared at in a mean way?
2. Been ignored or given the “silent treatment?”
3. Been treated in a rude or disrespectful manner?
4. Had obscene language or hostile gestures directed at you?
5. Been yelled or shouted at in a mean way?
6. Heard negative comments about your intelligence or ability?
7. Been treated poorly for being a temporary-worker?
8. Had someone interfere with your ability to complete a job?
9. Experienced name-calling?
10. Been blamed for other people’s mistakes?
11. Been “put down” or harshly corrected in front of others?
12. Experienced any form of racial or ethnic prejudice?
13. Heard racist remarks about yourself or others?
14. Heard ethnic or racial jokes or slurs?

15. Experienced physical violence or threats of physical harm?
16. Been pushed, shoved, thrown, tripped, or bumped into with unnecessary force?
17. Are there other situations that may have not been asked or covered above that you would like to add?

Next, I would like to learn about your personal bullying experiences in the labor hall and on temporary-job sites. First, I will give you a definition of what is meant by the term bullying:

“Bullying takes place when a person is repeatedly treated in a mean or degrading way (e.g., a way that makes one feel worthless) and finds it difficult to defend him or herself against the behavior.”

Using this definition of bullying, please answer the questions that I will ask you, but *please do not identify any of the bullies by name.*

1. Have you ever seen anyone (other than yourself) being bullied in the labor hall or on a job site?

*Note: If the interviewee reports witnessing bullying:*

2. How many incidents of bullying have you seen (e.g., one, a few, several, many, and so on)?
  - 1) In thinking about the bullying that you have seen, what was the gender of the victim?
  - 2) What was the race/ethnicity of the victim?
  - 3) In this situation, who was the bully (e.g., supervisor, co-worker, and so on)?
  - 4) To the best of your knowledge, how long had the bullying been going on?

- 5) Did seeing this bullying bother you?
  - 6) Did you do anything in response to seeing this bullying and did it help?
3. Have you been bullied in the labor hall or on a job site?

*Note: If the interviewee reports being bullied:*

- 1) How many bullies were involved?
  - 2) What was the position of the person (or persons) who has bullied you?
  - 3) What is the gender of this person?
  - 4) What is this person's race/ethnicity?
  - 5) How long did the bullying go on?
  - 6) Have you ever missed work because of bullying?
  - 7) How have you felt and what have you thought about the bullying that you have experienced?
  - 8) What did you do about the bullying that you have experienced and did it help?
4. Have you bullied others?
5. Do you think of yourself as someone who could bully others?

*Note: If the interviewee reports bullying others:*

- 1) Who have you bullied?
- 2) Why do you believe you bullied this individual?

6. In your childhood/teen years did you ever experience bullying at school? At home by a parent, sibling or other family member?
7. Do you believe that any of the following factors may have been the reason for any or all of the experiences of bullying that you reported earlier:

A. Gender	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
B. Race or ethnicity	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
C. Age	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
D. Religion	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
E. Health, illness, or disability	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
F. Temporary worker status	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
G. Physical appearance	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
H. Job site or labor hall policies	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown
I. Other (please describe)	Yes	No	Maybe	Unknown

Part III—ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES:

The following questions ask your opinion about various temporary-labor agency policies and practices:

1. Are there negative consequences (e.g., discipline) for someone who behaves in a physically aggressive or threatening manner in a labor hall or on a job site?
2. Do you know what these consequences are?
3. Are there negative consequences (e.g., discipline) for someone who behaves in a mean or verbally aggressive manner in a labor hall or on a job site?
4. In your opinion, are the temporary agency's policies and practices effective at preventing physical aggression?
5. In your opinion, are the temporary agency's policies and practices effective at preventing nonphysical (verbal or psychological) aggression from occurring?
6. Do you believe that people can get away with being aggressive or mean towards others in the labor hall? On job sites? To co-workers after work hours?

This is the end of our interview. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about negative behaviors in the temporary labor industry?

Do you have any questions about this interview or project?

Thank you for your time and participation in this interview.



## Appendix B

### Screening Questions

## SCREENING QUESTIONS:

*I have a few questions about your experience(s) in the temporary-labor industry.*

*These questions will determine whether or not you qualify to participate in this study:*

When did you last work in temporary-labor?

How long did you work in temporary-labor?

Did you work through a temporary labor agency? What was the name of the agency?

What types of temporary jobs did you perform?

## Appendix C

### Demographic Data Questions

## Demographic Data

*Please answer the following questions about yourself:*

(This information will be kept confidential)

Birth Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (please check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_\_\_ Female

\_\_\_\_\_ Do not want to respond

Country of origin (birthplace) \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity (please check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Black- African American

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American (Indian, Alaskan, Hawaiian)

\_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian or White

\_\_\_\_\_ Mexican/ Mexican American

\_\_\_\_\_ Other Hispanic or Latino

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander

\_\_\_\_\_ Mixed Race

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Do not want to respond

Level of Education (please check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Did not finish or attend High School

- \_\_\_\_\_ High School Graduate or equivalent
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vocational/technical certificate or diploma
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some college
- \_\_\_\_\_ College degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D

Questionnaire: A Typical Temporary Job

### Questionnaire: A Typical Temporary Job

Next, we would like to know how well the statements below describe the temporary jobs you *usually* work.

*Please rate each statement on the scale given. Please circle the number to indicate how well the statement describes the temporary jobs you work. The scale ranges from 1 (never applies to the temporary jobs) to 5 (always applies to the temporary jobs). Use the numbers in the middle of the scale if the temporary jobs you work fall between the extremes.*

Does this statement describe the temporary jobs you usually work?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always		
	1	2	3	4	5		
<u>Statement</u>	<hr/>						
Highly demanding			1	2	3	4	5
Risky/dangerous			1	2	3	4	5
Physically strenuous			1	2	3	4	5
Under constant/close supervision			1	2	3	4	5
Minimum wage job			1	2	3	4	5
Respectful supervisors			1	2	3	4	5
Fair work practices on job site			1	2	3	4	5
Free of harassment/discrimination			1	2	3	4	5
Required to work overtime/long hours			1	2	3	4	5
Short and infrequent breaks			1	2	3	4	5
There is constant time pressure			1	2	3	4	5
A job I would want permanently			1	2	3	4	5
Praised/thanked for doing a good job			1	2	3	4	5
Unfairly criticized or reprimanded			1	2	3	4	5