Psychosocial Evolution Following Workplace Bullying. Beyond the Victim: Social Contagion, Narrative Control, and Organizational Climate

(ORCID: 0009-0005-4079-7418)

Andrés Calvo Espinosa

Email:
ace@optimeflow.com

Note:
This essay is part of the Universal Coherence (UC) Project and serves as a prior psychosocial conceptual framework for later developments on communicative coherence (including the prosodic dimension). It does not constitute psychological, medical, or legal advice.

Abstract:
Workplace bullying (mobbing) is typically conceptualized as a set of hostile and repeated behaviors directed toward one person, with significant effects on their health and performance. However, understanding the psychosocial risk associated with bullying has predominantly focused on direct individual harm, leaving the systemic effects on the team and the organization in the background. This essay proposes that, after a bullying episode—and especially when institutional management is ambiguous or defensive—an extended psychosocial risk may emerge: a climate of hypervigilance, self-censorship, moral fear, and narrative control that favors revictimization and collective denial. This shift is argued to be understandable by articulating frameworks of emotional contagion, social identity, cognitive dissonance, and organizational culture (organizational silence and psychological safety). Finally, implications for prevention, leadership, and psychosocial risk management are outlined, and an exploratory empirical design (mixed and sequential) is proposed, with testable hypotheses and a preliminary instrument.

Keywords:
workplace bullying; psychosocial risks; organizational culture; revictimization; cognitive dissonance; organizational silence; psychological safety.

Safe Creative ID:
2603014733599

DOI (Zenodo):
10.5281/zenodo.18805173

Psychosocial Evolution Following Workplace Bullying. Beyond the Victim: Social Contagion, Narrative Control, and Organizational Climate

Table of contents

Table of contents

1. Introduction

Workplace bullying—also called mobbing[(1)] —is one of those phenomena that, when it appears, does not just make someone ill: it tests an organization's backbone. Research has shown for decades that its effects on the person targeted can be severe[(2)] (sustained stress, anxiety, sleep disturbances, impaired performance and, in extreme scenarios, leaving the job).

Terminological note (to avoid misunderstandings). In this essay, when I say "report" I mean an internal report: the use of the organization's formal channel (ethics line, compliance, reporting system, internal whistleblowing channel). And when I say "bullying/harassment," I do not reduce it to the sexual kind: I also include workplace/psychological bullying, harassment/hostility, abuse of authority, isolation, humiliation, indirect retaliation, and institutional silence. This precision matters because the point at which harm expands (or is contained) is usually located in how that channel is handled.

But there is a fairly common blind spot: looking at bullying as if it were only a scene between two characters (aggressor and victim) and forgetting that it almost always happens with an audience, with hallway dynamics, within hierarchies, and under unwritten rules. In other words: it happens in a social ecosystem[(3)] where people quickly learn what is advisable to do to survive—and what is advisable not to say in order to keep belonging.

This essay starts from an uncomfortable suspicion: the psychosocial risk derived from bullying does not end with direct individual harm. After the episode—and especially when the institutional response is confusing, slow, or defensive—the problem can mutate at the group level: a climate takes hold in which truth begins to feel dangerous, speaking is perceived as exposing oneself, and psychological safety[(4)] is obtained not through justice but through silence[(5)], alignment, or scapegoating/finger-pointing[(6)].

To name that mutation, I propose the notion of extended psychosocial risk: a set of psychosocial and communicative dynamics that, once activated, also affect third parties (witnesses/bystanders, middle managers, new members[(7)]) and reorder the team's moral life. Without melodrama: the everyday morality of the place changes[(8)]. What matters less is what happened, and more who can say it without paying a price.

Conceptual clarification (risk vs. evolution). In this text I use psychosocial risk to name a set of

(1) Leymann (1990) introduces the term mobbing as a form of systematic psychological terror at work and outlines key traits (repetition, asymmetry, and progressive degradation). Leymann, H. (1990). *Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. Violence and Victims, 5*(2), 119–126.
(2) Nielsen & Einarsen (2012) synthesize, via meta-analysis, the effects of exposure to workplace bullying on mental health and functioning, including associations with anxiety, stress, sleep disturbances, and impaired performance. Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2012). *Outcomes of exposure to workplace bullying: A meta-analytic review. Work & Stress, 26*(4), 309–332.
(3) Salin (2003) reviews how workplace bullying becomes more likely in environments with enabling, motivating, and precipitating structures (power, hierarchies, normative ambiguity, and tacit tolerance). Salin, D. (2003). *Ways of explaining workplace bullying: A review of enabling, motivating and precipitating structures and processes in the work environment.* Human Relations, 56(10), 1213–1232.
(4) Edmondson (1999) develops the concept of psychological safety in teams and analyzes its relationship with learning behavior (speaking up, asking questions, pointing out errors) and coordination dynamics. Edmondson, A. (1999). *Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 44(2), 350–383.
(5) Morrison & Milliken (2000) formulate the framework of organizational silence as a collective phenomenon sustained by shared beliefs, structures, and practices that inhibit voicing problems. Morrison, E. W., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). *Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world.* Academy of Management Review, 25(4), 706–725.
(6) Detert & Burris (2007) study the relationship between leadership behaviors and "employee voice," analyzing conditions under which employees express or withhold concerns. Detert, J. R., & Burris, E. R. (2007). *Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open?* Academy of Management Journal, 50(4), 869–884.
(7) Darley & Latané (1968) describe the bystander effect and diffusion of responsibility in emergencies, showing how the presence of others reduces intervention. Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). *Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 8(4, Pt. 1), 377–383.
(8) Schein (2010) develops organizational culture theory as a set of shared assumptions learned and transmitted, guiding perception, thought, and behavior. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

conditions that increase the probability of harm (e.g., fear of retaliation, opacity, low procedural justice, organizational silence). By contrast, I use psychosocial evolution to describe the temporal trajectory through which those conditions reconfigure the ecosystem: they change trust, everyday morality, communication, the willingness to speak, and, ultimately, staying or leaving (turnover/exit). Risk describes the possibility; evolution describes the process and its outcome.

The aim of the text is twofold. First, to describe a conceptual framework explaining how this shift occurs—from individual harm toward a systemic evolution of the climate (cultural contagion, narrative control, and normalization of silence). Second, to translate the framework into testable hypotheses and an exploratory design (survey + interviews)(9) that allows the phenomenon to be studied without forcing anyone to expose themselves through identifiable details.

A practical thesis runs through the entire text: many organizations treat fairness as a declarative value (something you "have"), but real fairness functions as a system (something you "design"(10)). And a system is not proven with speeches: it is proven with procedures, stable rules, traceability, and periodic review. When the procedure is weak, the internal channel ceases to be a safety channel and becomes an absorption device(11): it receives, cools, dilutes, and returns the person to the same power environment they were reporting. That is the point at which bullying stops being just an episode and becomes a social lesson(12): "here, telling the truth is costly."

Reading note (UC / S(i)). The Universal Coherence (UC) Project(13) proposes a framework for describing complex systems through their coherence: the degree of alignment between what happens, what is said, and what is done—including moral, communicative, and institutional layers. In parallel, the model of 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions S(i)(14) offers a functional grid for reading dynamics of stabilization, propagation, blockage, or reconfiguration. In this essay, CU/S(i) are used as an interpretive lens (not as a closed diagnosis): they serve to translate psychosocial patterns into observable indicators(15) that can then be studied empirically. Within the UC framework, coherence is understood as a relational and dynamic condition: the degree to which a system sustains internal alignment between what happens, what is said, and what is done (including its moral, communicative, and institutional levels). From that lens, "extended psychosocial risk" can be read as a drop in coherence in the system's communicative layer: experience can no longer circulate faithfully because speaking becomes costly.

This decline is often accompanied by a complementary movement: to reduce dissonance and preserve stability, the organization may replace structural coherence (truth + process + repair) with apparent coherence (closed narratives, aesthetics of normality, and tacit rules of silence).

(9) Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) systematize mixed-methods research designs and criteria for integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence in exploratory and explanatory studies. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

(10) Deming (1986) formulates principles of systems improvement and quality, emphasizing that results depend on process design and control, measurement, and review. Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

(11) Near & Miceli (1985) conceptualize whistleblowing as organizational dissent and analyze conditions and organizational responses associated with its emergence. Near, J. P., & Miceli, M. P. (1985). *Organizational dissidence: The case of whistle-blowing*. Journal of Business Ethics, 4(1), 1–16.

(12) Bandura (1977) develops social learning theory, explaining how behaviors and expectations are acquired through observation of models, consequences, and reinforcement. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

(13) Calvo Espinosa (2026) presents ontological and epistemological foundations of the Universal Coherence (UC) framework and defines coherence as dynamic alignment across relational layers of the system. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Universal Coherence (UC) (Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18702121.

(14) Calvo Espinosa (2026) introduces the model of 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions S(i) and proposes a functional grid to describe structural dynamics within the UC Project. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *The 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions (S(i)): A Dynamic Model for Universal Structural Dynamics in the Universal Coherence Project (Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18751249.

(15) Calvo Espinosa (2026) proposes the Universal Coherence Limited-Precision Scale as a structural metric to compare heterogeneous phenomena through coherence indicators. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *The Limited-Precision Universal Coherence Scale: A Universal Structural Metric for Heterogeneous Phenomena (Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18714577.

In terms of the model of 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions S(i), this can be read—preliminarily—as inhibition of resonance and network (S11–S12), blocking of divergences/thresholds (S3, S8), and overactivation of organization/projection functions (S13–S16).

Revictimization[16] then appears as a stabilizing mechanism: the system preserves its balance by sacrificing a node that carries dissonance (the person who reports or persists). Appendix A includes a mini UC/S(i) matrix with indicators.

(16) Cortina & Magley (2003) analyze events following speaking up after interpersonal mistreatment at work, including retaliation dynamics and associated consequences. Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2003). *Raising voice, risking retaliation: Events following interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.* Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 8(4), 247–265.

2. From individual harm to systemic evolution

When we talk about psychosocial risks at work, the most common trap is to treat them as if they were internal states of people—stress, discomfort, exhaustion—as though they arise spontaneously inside each person. But in reality, those risks are usually the fairly coherent product of an architecture(17): how work is organized, how power is distributed, how much room people have to decide(18), how conflicts are resolved, and what kind of leadership sets the tone.

A critical moment—where it is decided whether harm will be contained or will expand—is the handling of an internal complaint. There, the system enters a bifurcation(19): it can function as a channel of safety (protecting evidence, neutralizing influence, communicating timelines, preserving confidentiality, and upholding due process(20)), or as a channel of control (interrupting the account, "hot" filtering, imposing a version, dragging out time, tolerating leaks, enabling indirect retaliation, and turning evidence into an endurance race). When the latter happens, the organization does not merely manage a case: it manufactures climate(21). People learn that what matters is not "what happened," but "what it costs to name it." Once installed, that learning becomes the engine of extended psychosocial risk: it turns a one-off aggression into an environmental rule.

In that sense, workplace harassment/bullying is not only an extreme stressor that impacts the person who suffers it; it is also a symptom that the organization has cracks in its system of moral(22) and relational containment. If a team allows someone to be degraded, isolated, or pursued over time, what is failing is not only an interpersonal bond: what is failing is the institution's capacity to distinguish the tolerable from the intolerable—and to hold that distinction when doing so becomes uncomfortable.

Organizational culture and climate work like a silent grammar(23): they do not need to be proclaimed in order to operate. People quickly learn which behaviors receive backing and which are paid for dearly. You can see it in details that seem small but educate enormously: who can raise their voice in a meeting without being labeled "problematic"(24); what kinds of jokes are allowed to pass; how someone who "complicates things" with questions is treated; what happens when someone documents in writing what occurred; whether judgment is valued or obedience.

Here a critical point appears: when harassment breaks in, the institution can respond in two very different ways, and that response determines whether the harm is contained or expands. If it is

(17) International Organization for Standardization (2021) offers specific guidelines for managing psychosocial risks in OHS management systems, including organizational factors (work design, leadership, workload, control, relationships) and prevention, assessment, and improvement approaches. International Organization for Standardization. (2021). *ISO 45003:2021. Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks*. Geneva: ISO.

(18) Karasek (1979) formulates the demand–control model and analyzes how high demands combined with low decision latitude (control) are associated with greater strain and distress, with implications for job redesign. Karasek, R. A. (1979). *Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 24(2), 285–308

(19) Vandekerckhove (2006) analyzes whistleblowing from a social responsibility perspective and discusses conditions, frameworks, and organizational mechanisms to channel reports and manage dissent. Vandekerckhove, W. (2006). *Whistleblowing and Organizational Social Responsibility: A Global Assessment*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

(20) Leventhal (1980) synthesizes normative criteria of procedural justice (consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, representativeness, and ethics) and discusses implications for evaluating process fairness. Leventhal, G. S. (1980). *What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships.* In K. J. Gergen, M. S. Greenberg, & R. H. Willis (Eds.), Social Exchange: Advances in Theory and Research (pp. 27–55). New York, NY: Plenum.

(21) Schneider (1975) discusses organizational climate as a collective psychological construct and reviews implications for behavior and attitudes at work. Schneider, B. (1975). *Organizational climates: An essay.* Personnel Psychology, 28(4), 447–479.

(22) Victor & Cullen (1988) develop the concept of "ethical climate" and propose a typology describing organizational bases of ethical climates and their relation to decisions and behavior. Victor, B., & Cullen, J. B. (1988). *The organizational bases of ethical work climates.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 33(1), 101–125.

(23) Feldman (1984) analyzes the development and enforcement of group norms, describing how norms emerge, are reinforced, and are enforced in organizational contexts. Feldman, D. C. (1984). *The development and enforcement of group norms.* Academy of Management Review, 9(1), 47–53.

(24) Noelle-Neumann (1974) proposes the "spiral of silence" theory and explains how fear of isolation reduces public expression of opinions perceived as minority or costly. Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). *The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion.* Journal of Communication, 24(2), 43–51.

handled with rigor, due process, and repair[25], the implicit message is that power also has limits—and that telling the truth does not make you a target.

But if it is handled as something "manageable" (downgrading it to a misunderstanding, relativizing it, asking the victim to "do their part," pushing procedurally improper solutions, or trying to turn the page), the focus shifts: the goal is no longer to clarify what happened, but to control the social impact of the fact that it happened.

Empirical evidence (operational summary). The literature on workplace harassment/bullying and organizational climate converges on several points:

(A) Sustained exposure to hostile conduct is associated with significant deterioration of health and functioning[26].

(B) Institutional response and perceived procedural justice influence whether the conflict is contained or "socialized" as a learned pattern of silence[27].

(C) When the system is perceived as defensive, self-censorship, turnover intention, and narrative-closure dynamics increase[28].

(D) The risk of retaliation (direct or indirect) after "speaking up" is a key predictor of organizational silence[29].

When the objective is to control impact, the system tends to produce a defensive climate: a climate where fear guides collective behavior, where reputation weighs more than justice, and where safety is obtained by avoiding conflict rather than resolving it. In that scenario, psychosocial risk stops being private suffering and becomes an environmental condition of the team. Form is cared for more than substance; words are chosen as if walking on glass; people avoid being associated with someone "marked"; they learn not to ask too much.

2.1. Profiles, Vulnerability, and Target Selection

Talking about "profiles" is tempting because it offers an illusion of control: if I know what a victim is like, I can recognize them; if I know what an aggressor is like, I can detect them. The problem is that this promise can become an alibi. Sometimes the "victim profile" is invoked to suggest "they must have done something" or "that's just how they are"; and the "aggressor profile" is invoked to turn an institutional problem into a psychological anecdote.

A more useful reading is this: yes, there are patterns—but they often speak as much about positions of power and vulnerability within the system as they do about individual traits.

(25) Tyler (1990) analyzes the relationship among legitimacy, procedural justice, and acceptance of decisions/authority, integrating evidence on obedience and cooperation with norms. Tyler, T. R. (1990). *Why People Obey the Law*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

(26) Verkuil, Atasayi, & Molendijk (2015) present a meta-analysis on workplace bullying and mental health using cross-sectional and longitudinal data, estimating associations and effect sizes. Verkuil, B., Atasayi, S., & Molendijk, M. L. (2015). *Workplace bullying and mental health: A meta-analysis on cross-sectional and longitudinal data.* PLOS ONE, 10(8), e0135225.

(27) Colquitt et al. (2001) conduct a meta-analysis of organizational justice research (distributive, procedural, interpersonal, informational) and synthesize relationships with workplace attitudes and behaviors. Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E., Wesson, M. J., Porter, C. O. L. H., & Ng, K. Y. (2001). *Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research.* Journal of Applied Psychology, 86(3), 425–445.

(28) Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner (2000) update a meta-analysis on antecedents and correlates of turnover, including intention to quit, satisfaction, commitment, and other organizational variables. Griffeth, R. W., Hom, P. W., & Gaertner, S. (2000). *A meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: Update, moderator tests, and research implications.* Journal of Management, 26(3), 463–488.

(29) Pinder & Harlos (2001) conceptualize employee silence as a response to perceived injustice and distinguish motivational forms such as quiescence (fear) and acquiescence (resignation). Pinder, C. C., & Harlos, K. P. (2001). *Employee silence: Quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice.* Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, 20, 331–369.

Regarding the victim, the first thing worth saying plainly is that there is no single, closed, deterministic profile(30) that "predestines" someone. Anyone can become a target when the environment allows it. However, the absence of a rigid profile does not mean there are no risk asymmetries: structural vulnerability—precariousness(31), a weak support network, job dependency, discrimination—increases the cost of setting boundaries and therefore increases exposure.

In some narratives, harassment does not only punish vulnerability; it can punish symbolic threat. When someone stands out, questions, documents, or holds an ethical standard that makes those who play dirty look bad, they can become a "problem" for the logic of power. In such cases, harassment functions as a tool of cultural correction(32): it not only harms one person; it educates the rest about which qualities are wise to hide if you do not want to become a target.

Regarding the aggressor, the terrain is delicate. Traits such as excessive control, jealousy, hunger for power, rigidity, or arbitrariness have been described; but it is better to avoid caricatures. From the perspective of this essay, the most important functional pattern is not a clinical trait but an operational condition: the aggressor often acts from a position of control over resources(33) that the victim needs (information, evaluation, task assignment, access to networks, reputation). That dependency prolongs the episode and raises the cost of resisting.

In short: profiles help only if they do not displace what is central. The core problem is not "what people are like," but what the system allows and what incentives it creates. When the structure rewards silence and penalizes truth, harassment stops being an accident and begins to become a method.

2.2. Harassment as Management: Procedural Capture and the Role of the Middle Manager

Workplace harassment is often imagined as conduct aimed at a person: an aggressor, a victim, and—at most—witnesses. However, in many environments the decisive driver is not only interpersonal but procedural: how sanctions, quality controls, internal complaints, committees, evidence, and communications are handled. When procedure degrades (or is captured), the system can produce harm without a frontal attack: it is enough to make access to information, control of the narrative, and the capacity for defense asymmetrical.

This vector becomes especially visible when the observer is a middle manager. The middle manager often operates as a node of coherence: coaching, follow-up, improvement reports, performance cross-checks, support for people, and translating facts into organizational language. In a healthy ecosystem, that node helps stabilize climate (it corrects, mediates, protects). In a degraded ecosystem, it can be instrumentalized as a screen of legitimacy ("the coaches agree," "Quality detected it," "it's an objective fact") even when there has been no real cross-check with those who know the day-to-day work.

(30) Zapf (1999) reviews causes of mobbing/bullying at organizational, work-group, and individual levels, discussing contextual factors and associated processes. Zapf, D. (1999). *Organizational, work group related, and personal causes of mobbing/bullying at work.* International Journal of Manpower, 20(1/2), 70–85.
(31) Kalleberg (2009) analyzes the expansion of precarious work and job insecurity, describing transformations in employment relations and structural effects on workers. Kalleberg, A. L. (2009). *Precarious work, insecure workers: Employment relations in transition.* American Sociological Review, 74(1), 1–22.
(32) Foucault (1977) examines disciplinary power and social normalization through institutions, describing technologies of surveillance, sanction, and control and their role in producing behavior. Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
(33) French & Raven (1959) propose a typology of bases of social power (reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, expert), with implications for influence and dependence in hierarchical relations. French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. (1959). *The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright* (Ed.), Studies in Social Power (pp. 150–167). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

In some environments, the middle manager observes sanctions applied to coached employees without prior corroboration; later they witness meetings where a non-existent consensus is asserted ("all the coaches…"), while partial evidence (snippets of reports) is reorganized to sustain a closed narrative. When the middle manager flags irregularities or reports harassment toward third parties, the system may respond not by repairing, but by **reconfiguring the risk**: leaking the complainant's identity, isolation, conversational pressure, and asymmetric documentary demands. The result is a shift of focus: from the fact to the narrative, and from the narrative to the person who keeps insisting.
(Editorial note: vignette drafted to describe a pattern; identifying details are omitted.)

In practical terms, procedural capture tends to take recognizable forms:

· Sanction without corroboration with the coaches or supervisors who know the case: it is decided "upstairs" and communicated "downstairs" as if it were a technical verification, not a decision.

· Selection of fragments (from reports, emails, or comments) to build a closed reading: what were observations for improvement are reframed as "inappropriate conduct," stripping context and gradation.

· False unanimity or simulated consensus: agreement is attributed to collectives ("the supervision team…") to shield the decision with "social proof."

· Evidentiary asymmetry: demanding deadlines for allegations/narrative with limited access to records, documentation, or tools needed to defend oneself—turning defense into a war of attrition.

· Compartmentalized (or porous) confidentiality: one area claims "it was confidential," but the system leaks through other channels; the effect is not legal but cultural: people learn that reporting leaves a trace and exposes you.

· Externalization of the conflict: when the internal process does not seek to resolve, but to "hold out" until the cost shifts outside (conciliation, inspection, lawsuit). The implicit message is: we won't fix the cause; we'll manage the cost.

· Investigative bias: when facts are degraded into "perceptions." A frequent variant of procedural capture appears when the organization demands a high standard of evidence from the reporter (logs, metrics, traces, emails, reports), but then reframes the case as "interpretation" and resolves it with opinions from the circle close to the reported party. This move produces a crucial asymmetry: proof becomes heavy for the accuser and light for the person with power.

An especially clear sign of process degradation is endogamic sampling of testimonies: people are asked "what is the person like" (state, character, perceived performance) within environments close to the managers involved, but primary sources of day-to-day interaction are not consulted (for example, members of the operational team directly affected or everyday witnesses). Systemically, the case stops being treated as an investigation of facts and starts functioning as a reputation judgment[34].

This bias is often armored with an apparently neutral phrase: “everyone experiences it differently”[35]. The problem is that, when used this way, relativization does not protect human complexity; it protects arbitrariness. And when aggregated climate data (internal surveys, recurring signals, historical patterns) are also ignored, the system is not “interpreting”; it is selecting which evidence counts. That pushes the conflict from the verifiable ground (facts and procedure) to the controllable ground (narrative and status).

Red flags of a captured investigation:

· Impressions about the person (“how are they,” “what are they like”) are gathered instead of reconstructing facts.

· Only networks close to the implicated manager are consulted, not primary sources from the team.

· “Lawyer-level” precision is demanded from the reporter, but rumors/labels are accepted without corroboration.

· Aggregated climate indicators are ignored when they contradict the dominant version.

Informal defamation or pathologizing is allowed to substitute for evidence.

What matters here is not arguing about any specific case, but the psychosocial mechanism: when procedure operates like this, harassment stops being an episode and becomes organizational pedagogy. The team observes that truth requires heroism, that the story is administered, that speaking can trigger indirect retaliation, and that the system rewards alignment. That learning generates precisely what this essay calls extended psychosocial risk: hypervigilance, self-censorship, moral cynicism, and discursive closure.

Within this framework, it becomes understandable that someone who tries to resolve the issue (for example, a middle manager who reports harassment toward third parties) can become a target—not because they “are a victim,” but because they introduce dissonance into a system that seeks stability through apparent coherence. That is why the measures proposed in 5.1 are not cosmetic: they are minimal pieces to prevent procedure from functioning as a technology of control.

2.3. From Risk to Evolution: Perverse Coherence and Closure of Exit Routes

I call psychosocial risk the potential for harm: the factors that, if present, increase the likelihood of deterioration (health, climate, cooperation, perceived justice). But I call evolution the moment when that potential stops being abstract and becomes a trajectory: a sequence of decisions, silences, filters, and micro-sanctions that reconfigure the system and stabilize it in a new equilibrium.

(34) Fricker (2007) develops the framework of epistemic injustice (testimonial and hermeneutical), analyzing how power can degrade credibility and access to interpretive resources. Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(35) Sweet (2019) analyzes gaslighting as a sociological phenomenon, describing relational/institutional mechanisms that erode credibility and the sense of reality in power contexts. Sweet, P. L. (2019). *The sociology of gaslighting*. American Sociological Review, 84(5), 851–875.

In that transition, a key phenomenon appears: perverse coherence[36]. Locally, the person may observe inconsistencies and contradictions (rules that change, opaque deadlines, porous confidentiality, selective "neutrality," relativizing facts as "perceptions"). Yet when chained together, those inconsistencies can reveal a functional higher-order coherence: a flow that—without declaring it—tends to protect hierarchy, reputation, and control of the narrative, shifting the cost onto whoever reports or keeps insisting. In UC terms, the system can maintain apparent coherence (aesthetic/narrative closure) while losing structural coherence (truth + process + repair).

A decisive psychosocial effect of this perverse coherence is the closure of exits. When someone perceives that the system internalizes conflict (absorbs, cools, dilutes) and that costs fall on the one who speaks, they may begin to interpret even external routes as risky or counterproductive[37].

This perception intensifies if the person has already experienced (in public administration or at work) procedures where "responsibility" functions as a trap: ineffective notifications, deadlines that close without human contact, digitalization without support, or high-impact decisions taken without coordination. In that context, leaving the system is not experienced as protection, but as another gray zone.

There is no need to assume a conspiracy for this perception to arise: the accumulation of signals of asymmetry, opacity, and "cost for speaking" is enough. The result is a form of defensive learning: voice decreases, self-censorship increases[38], and the option to "exit" (disconnection, transfer, or resignation) begins to compete with the option to "repair."

At that point, evolution is not only of climate; it is also of the subject. Some people respond with resignation; others with total confrontation; and others try a different path: to correct without destroying. That is, to sustain truth and procedure without becoming either a passive victim or an attacker—seeking frameworks, language, and designs that allow repair with less social violence.

This third path matters because it turns harm into a prosocial outlet: it converts experience into operational criteria, indicators, and design proposals (minimum procedures) aimed at preventing the system from stabilizing again by sacrificing a node.

Individual evolution (moral dilemma). In some cases, the affected person faces a dilemma: they do not want to assume the identity of a permanent victim, but they also do not want to become an attacker or "destroy" anyone. That dilemma pushes them to seek a path of correction with minimal collateral damage: procedures, traceability, public criteria, and frameworks that allow repair without unnecessary social violence.

Editorial note: In part, this need to correct without breaking can act as a driver for building frameworks of coherence.

(36) Merton (1936) theorizes unanticipated consequences of purposive social action, describing how goal-oriented actions can produce emergent, repeated effects that were not anticipated. Merton, R. K. (1936). *The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action.* American Sociological Review, 1(6), 894–904.

(37) Withey & Cooper (1989) model and predict responses to organizational deterioration (exit, voice, loyalty, neglect) and analyze conditions that influence each response choice. Withey, M. J., & Cooper, W. H. (1989). *Predicting exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 34(4), 521–539.

(38) Seligman (1975) develops the concept of learned helplessness, describing how repeated exposure to lack of control can generate passivity, withdrawal, and affective changes, with implications for behavior and adaptation. Seligman, M. E. P. (1975). *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death.* San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman.

3. Psychosocial dynamics of "*contagion*" after bullying

Once workplace bullying has occurred—or even when the suspicion settles in that "this happens here"—the team is no longer simply facing a conflict: it is facing a signal that reshapes the social life of work. Conversations shift, maps of trust are rewritten[(39)], it becomes more costly to say certain things and more profitable to say others.

When I use "contagion" here, I mean it in a cultural sense: not because the victim transmits anything, but because the case teaches an implicit lesson about what kind of truth is dangerous and what kind of silence is protective. That learning settles into everyday habits, interpretations, and micro-behaviors[(40)].

3.1. Hypervigilance and threat anticipation

After an episode of bullying, the group may enter a state of hypervigilance[(41)] that shows up more in gestures than in speeches. People begin to read the environment as if it were full of signals[(42)]: an email copied to someone "important," an improvised meeting, a neutral comment that now sounds double-edged.

In that climate, ordinary interactions take on the quality of risk: people avoid asking questions in public, postpone conversations, prefer spoken over written communication, and choose words with excessive caution. The psychosocial cost is clear: overall stress rises, spontaneity drops, and an anticipatory tension settles in that wears people down. Morally, this is intense because it turns contact with truth (or with the person who embodies it) into a threat cue; what people fear is not so much the fact itself as the consequences of naming it.

Complementary layer (threat and incentives). In climates of sustained threat[(43)], teams tend to narrow their room for exploration: vigilance increases, spontaneity falls, and disagreement becomes more expensive. At the same time, from an incentives perspective, silence can become a rational adaptation: if speaking up changes nothing or triggers costs (lost opportunities, stigma, retaliation), the system pushes toward self-censorship even among people with good judgment. This combination (threat + incentives) helps explain why extended psychosocial risk (RPE) can stabilize without the need for explicit violence.

3.2. Social identity and alignment with power

(39) Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) propose an integrative model of organizational trust based on ability, benevolence, and integrity, and describe antecedents and consequences of trust. Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). *An integrative model of organizational trust.* Academy of Management Review, 20(3), 709–734.

(40) Argyris and Schön (1978) develop a theory of organizational learning centered on theories-in-use, routines, and defensive mechanisms that influence how organizations learn and change. Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1978). *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

(41) McEwen (1998) explains the protective and harmful effects of stress mediators and develops the concept of allostatic load under sustained stress. McEwen, B. S. (1998). *Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators.* The New England Journal of Medicine, 338(3), 171–179.

(42) Weick (1995) conceptualizes sensemaking as the process by which people build meaning under organizational ambiguity from environmental cues. Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

(43) Hobfoll (1989) formulates Conservation of Resources theory, describing how people seek to obtain, conserve, and protect resources in the face of threat or loss. Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). *Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress.* American Psychologist, 44(3), 513–524.

When the environment becomes uncertain, belonging[(44)] becomes refuge[(45)]. And in hierarchical organizations, belonging often implies alignment, even if subtly. In moments of risk, people look for where the "ceiling" of protection is—and that ceiling is usually the dominant group, the manager, or the figure who can decide schedules, evaluations, projects, or reputations[(46)].

Alignment is not always expressed through open aggression; sometimes it is a simple redistribution of presence and affection: who sits with whom, who gets quick replies, whose information "gets lost," who is granted the benefit of the doubt. The internal message works almost like workplace life insurance: "if I'm on the right side, less happens to me." When this calculation spreads, the main value is no longer justice, but proximity to power.

3.3. Cognitive dissonance and rewriting the narrative

If someone participates in another person's isolation—or allows it by looking the other way—something often grates inside. No one describes themselves as an accomplice to injustice; so the mind looks for an exit that preserves a moral self-image.

That is where cognitive dissonance[(47)] enters as a human mechanism: if my actions don't fit with "I am a good person," I adjust my interpretation of the victim and of the facts until they do fit. Narratives emerge that function like ethical anesthesia: "it wasn't that bad," "it's complicated," "they're always complaining," "they must have done something"[(48)]. What matters is that these narratives do not only justify; they also reorganize collective memory[(49)].

Episodes are selected, mistakes are exaggerated, intentions are attributed, and the person is labeled with a fixed trait ("conflictive," "unstable"[(50)])—and that label makes it unnecessary to keep listening. Sometimes the label escalates: informal pathologization appears[(51)] (insinuations about substance use, "instability," "issues," etc.) as a way to close the narrative without discussing facts. This move is effective because it turns a procedural and moral conflict into an alleged individual problem: if the person "is unwell," then what they say no longer needs to be taken seriously. From a design standpoint, this should be treated as a serious procedural irregularity: a healthy investigation separates facts from judgments about the person and does not allow rumors to replace evidence.

At this point, the harm is no longer only psychological: it is epistemic[(52)]. A version of the world is created in which the victim loses credibility by default and injustice becomes "reasonable." And once the narrative is rewritten, the system can keep functioning without guilt—which is precisely what makes it so resistant.

(44) Tajfel and Turner (1979) develop Social Identity Theory and its implications for intergroup behavior, belonging, categorization, and conflict. Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). *An integrative theory of intergroup conflict.* In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

(45) Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that the need to belong is a fundamental human motive and review evidence of its effects on affect, cognition, and behavior. Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). *The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. Psychological Bulletin, 117*(3), 497–529.

(46) Keltner, Gruenfeld and Anderson (2003) propose an approach-inhibition model of power, describing how power alters emotion, cognition, and behavior. Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). *Power, approach, and inhibition. Psychological Review, 110*(2), 265–284.

(47) Festinger (1957) introduces Cognitive Dissonance Theory and describes mechanisms by which inconsistencies among cognitions, behavior, and self-image are reduced. Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

(48) Lerner (1980) examines belief in a just world and its psychological and social consequences, including responsibility attributions in response to others' harm. Lerner, M. J. (1980). *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

(49) Halbwachs (1992) develops the concept of collective memory and analyzes how social frameworks shape the reconstruction of the past. Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory* (L. A. Coser, Ed. & Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

(50) Goffman (1963) analyzes stigma and the social management of "spoiled" identities, describing processes of labeling and differential treatment. Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

(51) Link and Phelan (2001) conceptualize stigma as a process (labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination) and discuss the structural conditions that sustain it. Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). *Conceptualizing stigma. Annual Review of Sociology, 27*, 363–385.

(52) Dotson (2011) develops the concept of epistemic violence through silencing practices and proposes a framework to identify mechanisms that block epistemic agency. Dotson, K. (2011). *Tracking epistemic violence, tracking practices of silencing. Hypatia, 26*(2), 236–257.

3.4. Organizational silence and normalization

Organizational silence[53] appears when speaking has a cost—and what is perverse is that the cost can be entirely informal: looks, exclusions, lost opportunities, the label of "problematic," or the simple message that "it's not advisable." Over time, silence stops being an individual decision and becomes a cultural norm: the group learns which topics are off limits, which questions are punished, which truths are negotiated.

This collective learning is often accompanied by cynicism[54]. If people observe that the institution protects closing the case more than it protects justice in the case, they conclude that the system is not designed to care, but to control. And once that conclusion takes hold, behaviors change: people report less, document less, avoid conflict even when necessary, and reward the appearance of harmony over real repair.

Sometimes this logic is verbalized bluntly: it is implicitly acknowledged that there is a correct route (fair, traceable, reparative), but the "easier" route is chosen[55] because doing the right thing would mean touching hierarchy, reputation, or operations. That acknowledgement is not neutral: it teaches the team that convenience rules over justice—and it consolidates the learning of silence.

The normalization of silence turns coexistence into a tacit pact in which safety is bought with passive complicity. From that point on, bullying does not need to be happening all the time for its effects to keep governing; it is enough that the team remembers (even in a low voice) what happened to the person who dared to say it.

3.5. Prosody, pragmatics, and micro-signals: harassment that leaves no signature

Although we often imagine bullying as insults or clearly identifiable attacks, a decisive part of harassment operates in a register that is harder to prove: how something is said, not only what is said. Prosody[56] refers to features such as intonation, rhythm, stress, volume, speed, pauses, and emphasis; in everyday workplace life, its power shows up when it combines with pragmatics[57] (the social intent of an utterance) and with lexical choices that look neutral but function like blows: "calm down," "don't take it that way," "here you go again," "no need to dramatize"[58].

In climates where conflict becomes dangerous to name, prosody can act as a detector—and sometimes as a vehicle—of asymmetries: who is allowed to speak at length, who is interrupted[59], who receives heavy silences, who is corrected with condescension, who is ridiculed with a brief laugh or a calculated pause. The most efficient violence is often the kind that preserves plausible

(53) Van Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003) conceptualize voice and silence as multidimensional constructs and propose typologies to study motivations and forms of silence at work. Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Botero, I. C. (2003). *Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multidimensional constructs. Journal of Management Studies, 40*(6), 1359–1392.

(54) Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar (1998) define organizational cynicism and describe its structure (beliefs, affect, behaviors) and its relationships with organizational experiences. Dean, J. W., Brandes, P., & Dharwadkar, R. (1998). *Organizational cynicism. Academy of Management Review, 23*(2), 341–352.

(55) Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004) propose the concept of ethical fading and discuss how self-deception and framing processes reduce the salience of the ethical dimension in decisions. Tenbrunsel, A. E., & Messick, D. M. (2004). *Ethical fading: The role of self-deception in unethical behavior. Social Justice Research, 17*(2), 223–236.

(56) Gumperz (1982) analyzes discourse strategies and the role of contextualization cues (intonation, pauses, rhythm) in the social interpretation of speech. Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(57) Brown and Levinson (1987) develop Politeness Theory (face) and describe pragmatic strategies for managing threats to social image in interaction. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(58) Sue et al. (2007) introduce the framework of microaggressions (in the context of racial microaggressions) and discuss their psychological and clinical implications. Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). *Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice*. American Psychologist, 62(4), 271–286.

(59) Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) describe the turn-taking system in conversation and basic rules for allocation, interruption, and repair. Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). *A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. Language, 50*(4), 696–735

deniability: “I didn’t say anything bad.”

Patterns especially relevant in hierarchical contexts:

· Punitive pauses: silences after someone who “bothers” speaks, making their words feel out of place.

· Disauthorizing intonation: modulating tone to “put someone in their place,” especially when the dominant narrative is questioned.

· Rhythm and cuts: frequent interruptions, voice overlap, quickly closing the other person’s turn (not letting them finish their idea).

· Mocking prosody: mild irony, minimal laughter, calculated emphasis to turn what was said into an “overreaction.”

· Register control: excessively cold or bureaucratic responses when repair is requested; warmth for some, ice for others.

· Pragmatic labeling: phrases that turn a fact into a trait (“you’re conflictive”) and a complaint into a personal flaw (“you don’t know how to work as a team”).

This connects to narrative control because narratives are not controlled only with rules or procedures: they are controlled by teaching which voice is legitimate and which voice is “noise.” When the team learns that a certain tone, a certain insistence, or a certain kind of question carries a price, an economy of speech takes hold: speaking becomes a risk, and people adjust their behavior to survive.

Key implication: if bullying becomes systemic, so does its language. That is why studying extended psychosocial risk requires looking not only at events, but at communicative patterns: who gets to name things, who is discredited for “how” they say it, which pauses, jokes, and tones function as warnings. Many organizations do not need to censor; it is enough to make truth socially expensive(60).

Prosodic operationalization of discursive closure (CR) (draft). Beyond formal decisions, CR often expresses itself through micro-controls in conversation: turn management, interruptions, punitive silences, ridiculing or disauthorizing intonation, abrupt register shifts (selective warmth vs. bureaucratic coldness), and shifting the focus from content to “tone”(61) (“the problem is how you say it”). These cues can be coded as signs of discursive closure when they appear systematically and asymmetrically (always around the same topics or the same people) and when they coincide with pressure to avoid evidence or to impose a single version. In that continuity, this preprint functions as a conceptual map, and a later work could function as a prosodic sensor for communicative coherences and incoherences.

A fine-grained indicator of discursive closure is when the “filter” appears. In a healthy channel,

(60) Kuran (1995) explains preference falsification and its social consequences, analyzing conditions under which people hide real beliefs due to social costs. Kuran, T. (1995). *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

(61) Bies and Moag (1986) introduce interactional justice and propose communicative criteria of fairness (respect, dignity, appropriateness) in organizational interaction. Bies, R. J., & Moag, J. S. (1986). *Interactional justice: Communication criteria of fairness*. In R. J. Lewicki, B. H. Sheppard, & M. H. Bazerman (Eds.), *Research on Negotiation in Organizations* (Vol. 1, pp. 43–55). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

during the account the main function is to listen, transcribe, and document faithfully[62]; analysis comes afterward. In a degraded channel, the filter appears during the account: people rush the speaker, interrupt, correct, invalidate, or shift the focus to "the forms." That gesture changes the nature of the system: it is no longer a safety channel; it is a control channel. And this not only affects the reporting person; it affects the whole ecosystem, because it turns speaking into a risky experience observable by others (hypervigilance, self-censorship, and learning silence).

(62) Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) systematize principles and techniques of qualitative interviewing, including planning, conducting, transcription, and ethical considerations. Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

4. Revictimization as secondary psychosocial risk

There is a particularly harsh moment in the trajectory of workplace bullying: when the initial aggression has already caused harm and, even so, the person discovers that the worst part may not have been the aggressor, but what comes afterward. This is what we usually call revictimization(63). It is not a side detail: it is a second impact that can consolidate trauma(64), erode self-esteem(65), and trap the person in a cruel paradox. If they stay silent, they carry the injustice alone; if they speak, they are exposed to institutional and social mechanisms that—under the appearance of neutrality—end up harming them again.

Revictimization takes very recognizable forms and, precisely because of that, it sometimes passes disguised as "procedure": polite disbelief (reasonable questions that, accumulated, communicate suspicion), isolation(66) under pragmatic excuses, administrative wear(67) (telling the story again and again without progress), unnecessary exposure (porous confidentiality(68)), or indirect retaliation (loss of visibility, ambiguous evaluations, closed opportunities). None of these actions needs to be declared as punishment; it is enough that they operate as a warning.

The decisive organizational nuance is that the group may revictimize not only out of cruelty, but out of fear and self-protection. When a case threatens reputation(69), leadership, or stability, truth becomes a problem to be managed. And if truth is the problem, the person who names it begins to be treated as the source of the conflict. Instead of asking, "What allowed this to happen?", the system asks, "Why can't this person move on?" Instead of looking at the abuse of power, it looks at tone, insistence, "adaptability."

That is why the metaphor of the "infectious agent" only works if it is understood correctly: it is not the victim who "infects," but the organization that transmits the lesson. The implicit lesson is usually: here, truth is costly; here, it is better to stay quiet; here, conflict is paid for with reputation. At that point, revictimization stops being an added episode and becomes a disciplinary mechanism(70): a practical reminder that there are truths you do not say if you want to keep belonging.

4.1. Procedural revictimization: when the process becomes the mechanism

One especially corrosive form of revictimization is procedural: it is not a frontal attack, but the design (or tolerance) of a process that leaves the person exposed and forces them to pay the

(63) Orth (2002) analyzes secondary victimization in procedural contexts and its effects on the affected person's experience. Orth, U. (2002). *Secondary victimization of crime victims by criminal proceedings*. *Social Justice Research, 15*(4), 313–325.
(64) Herman (1992) describes clinical dynamics of trauma, including the effects of subsequent impacts and their relationship to recovery, safety, and the continuity of harm. Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
(65) Janoff-Bulman (1992) develops the "shattered assumptions" framework after traumatic events, including effects on self-esteem, trust, and sense of control. Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma*. New York, NY: Free Press.
(66) Williams (2007) reviews the literature on ostracism/social exclusion, describing psychological and behavioral effects in group contexts. Williams, K. D. (2007). *Ostracism*. *Annual Review of Psychology, 58*, 425–452.
(67) Herd and Moynihan (2018) develop the concept of administrative burden and describe how procedures and operational frictions generate psychological and behavioral costs for people. Herd, P., & Moynihan, D. P. (2018). *Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
(68) DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) synthesize research on rumor in social and organizational contexts, including propagation conditions, uncertainty, and effects on reputation and stigma. DiFonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (2007). *Rumor Psychology: Social and Organizational Approaches*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
(69) Jackall (1988) analyzes organizational dynamics where self-protection, reputation, and institutional risk management influence decisions and internal narratives. Jackall, R. (1988). *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
(70) Scott (1990) studies domination relations and mechanisms of social control over what can be said, distinguishing between "public transcripts" and "hidden transcripts." Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

operational cost of seeking justice. Here, the harm does not come only from what is decided, but from how it is decided[(71)]: opaque timelines, prolonged silence, interviews that interrupt the account, leaks, visible bias, and the absence of protective measures while the case is "being investigated." A recurring pattern is the appearance of "cards up one's sleeve"[(72)]: after a report is filed, reports, accusations, or materials against the reporting person suddenly emerge—things that were never previously notified. If this is accepted as "defense," the systemic message is devastating: reporting triggers a counterattack. And that message is a factory for silence.

Red flags (procedural revictimization) that often pass as "normality":

· Ex post accusations against the person who reports, with no previously documented record.

· Case handling without integrity: leaks, conflicts of interest, obvious bias, or manipulation of the process without removing those responsible.

· Institutional silence: no timelines, no updates, responses only when the person insists.

· Failure to neutralize the influence of the reported person (over schedules, economic variables, workload/visibility, work channels).

· Porous confidentiality and irresponsible communication (e.g., medical leaves treated ambiguously in ways that trigger rumor and stigma).

· Asymmetry of defense (deadlines without access). A particularly damaging pattern appears when allegations or explanations are demanded on short deadlines while access to logs, documentation, or tools needed for defense is restricted (for example, equipment withdrawal/blocking, or deferring information "until the appropriate procedural moment"). Beyond any formal debate, the psychosocial effect is clear: the person perceives that the process is not seeking clarification, but managing exhaustion. And that perception—observed by third parties—feeds silence, fear, and narrative closure.

When these signals appear, the process ceases to be an instrument of protection and becomes a mechanism of cultural discipline: there is no need to censor; it is enough to demonstrate that speaking is costly.

4.2. Medical leave and return to work: the high-risk phase (replacement, punishment signals, and relapse)

After a medical leave linked to a hostile work environment, the organization enters a critical phase that is often under-addressed: return to work[(73)]. In this phase, harm can be reactivated not through an explicit attack, but through organizational micro-decisions that redraw the playing field: quick replacements, changes in the chain of command, tacit status degradation, and "technical" adjustments to schedules, holidays, workload, visibility, or economic variables.

(71) Folger and Cropanzano (1998) develop a framework of organizational justice applied to people management, including procedural components and their implications for legitimacy, reactions, and behavior. Folger, R., & Cropanzano, R. (1998). *Organizational Justice and Human Resource Management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
(72) Alford (2001) analyzes whistleblowers' experiences and organizational responses, including retaliation dynamics, exhaustion, and isolation after reporting. Alford, C. F. (2001). *Whistleblowers: Broken Lives and Organizational Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
(73) World Health Organization (2022) publishes guidelines on mental health at work, including organizational measures, prevention and support, and recommendations for workplace contexts. World Health Organization. (2022). *WHO guidelines on mental health at work*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Formal clinical signal and transfer of burden (a paradox). In some cases, the healthcare system itself explicitly records that the origin of the deterioration is not "personal" but contextual: a professional may recommend in writing distancing from the work environment due to hostility or bullying. When such a clinical signal exists, the problem can no longer be treated as a simple "internal incident": it should trigger protective and coordination measures (Occupational Risk Prevention / OHS (PRL), internal channel, neutralization of influence, and a reintegration plan). If, despite that signal, the system leaves the entire management burden on the person while they are in acute anxiety, a cruel paradox appears: they are required to defend themselves and sustain procedure precisely when a professional certifies that this capacity is compromised. That is not only unjust; it is a direct factor in relapse.

Administrative closure without clinical hearing (psychosocial effect). A second layer of lack of protection appears when the leave[(74)] is closed administratively without sufficient interview, or due to failures in clinical traceability (e.g., incomplete reports). Beyond formal discussion, the psychosocial effect is strong: the person perceives invalidation ("not being heard") and institutional abandonment. And if closure also makes it harder to reactivate protection in the short term, the system turns health into a "fragile episode": the person returns to the hostile environment[(75)] with less margin, while the ecosystem observes that even outside the company the burden ends up falling on the one who is worst off.

From a psychosocial point of view, return to work becomes a "second wave" when three things happen at once:

· The influence of the reported person over sensitive variables is not neutralized (e.g., commissions, schedules, assignments).

· The company communicates—explicitly or implicitly—that reporting carries future cost.

· A new framing of the case becomes consolidated through replacement/management changes or the loss of internal support. The typical result is the perception of a "closed" channel: the system does not protect; it manages consequences.

A particularly corrosive pattern is logistical punishments with the appearance of normality: assigning holidays under unfavorable conditions, changing criteria that affect recognition or variable pay, and decisions not justified with transparent rules. Sometimes the system even introduces "after-the-fact" policy adjustments (for example, improving a general rule after the conflict) without repairing the concrete situation of the case: this produces apparent coherence ("we've improved") while maintaining structural incoherence ("in your case nothing was corrected").

That is why real protection does not end with a written "resolution": it requires protected reintegration and verification of measures. If return to work is managed without neutralizing influence, without follow-up, and with punishment signals, clinical relapse and an increase in extended psychosocial risk in the team are to be expected (because third parties observe that the system penalizes voice).

(74) OECD (2012) reviews evidence and policy on mental health and work, including absenteeism, return to work, and the design of support and protection systems. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012). *Sick on the Job? Myths and Realities about Mental Health and Work*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
(75) Kivimäki, Elovainio and Vahtera (2000) study the relationship between workplace bullying and sickness absence in hospital staff. Kivimäki, M., Elovainio, M., & Vahtera, J. (2000). *Workplace bullying and sickness absence in hospital staff. Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 57*(10), 656–660.

4.3. Talent drain and organizational "clean-up": selection by survival

When bullying is poorly handled and the climate deteriorates, a systemic consequence appears that many organizations interpret too late: talent drain. Not necessarily the loss of the "best technical performers," but the loss of those who hold the team together: the ones who bring judgment, care for climate, prevent conflict, and sustain performance without theatrics.

The drain rarely starts on the day of resignation(76). It starts earlier, when the person stops feeling that the system is fair (not perfect—fair(77)). At that point a slow exit begins: voice lowers, judgment is withheld, "automatic yes" increases, people avoid exposure, and the emotional bond with work goes dark.

In this essay, the drain can be read as an emergent effect of extended psychosocial risk: if speaking is useless or dangerous, the cost of staying(78) rises. And when staying costs too much, those who can protect themselves do so: they move to another team, another company, or disconnect until they disappear.

Typical cracks through which valuable people escape:

· Arbitrariness: decisions that seem random, invisible criteria, a future tied to position rather than work.

· Institutional silence: serious conflicts handled with delay, opacity, or closure without repair.

· Hierarchical impunity: leadership behaviors with no visible consequence, while "downward" there are consequences.

· Indirect retaliation: logistical punishments (schedules, workload, visibility, economic variables, traceable channels).

· Punished versatility: contributing more real value ends up costing money, recognition, or stability.

Indicators of drain (measurable and early): decline in real participation, increased avoidance, fewer spontaneous proposals, increases in short leaves due to stress/anxiety, repeated "personal" transfers, and a drop in internal recommendations ("don't bring anyone here").

In its late phase, the drain is often accompanied by a "clean-up": accelerated turnover, questionable terminations, improper exits, quick settlements, and externalization of conflict. What matters is not the legal label of each case, but the pattern: when the system does not learn, it turns cost into routine and selects by survival (those who align or resign stay; those who sustain judgment leave). That is a psychosocial evolution of the ecosystem.

(76) Mobley (1977) proposes a turnover process model describing intermediate stages between job satisfaction/experience and intent to leave/turnover. Mobley, W. H. (1977). *Intermediate linkages in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover. Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(2), 237–240.
(77) Rousseau (1995) develops the psychological contract framework (explicit and implicit agreements) and analyzes its formation, change, and consequences when breach is perceived. Rousseau, D. M. (1995). *Psychological Contracts in Organizations: Understanding Written and Unwritten Agreements.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
(78) Mitchell et al. (2001) introduce "job embeddedness" and relate it to retention and voluntary turnover, describing links, fit, and sacrifices associated with staying or leaving. Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., Lee, T. W., Sablynski, C. J., & Erez, M. (2001). *Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. Academy of Management Journal, 44*(6), 1102–1121.

5. Implications for prevention and leadership

If we accept that the psychosocial risk of workplace bullying is not only an individual harm, but an alteration of the team's moral and relational climate, then prevention cannot remain a nice protocol tucked away in a folder(79). Protocols matter, but what is decisive is what the organization does when the case makes it uncomfortable: what signals it sends, whom it protects, what kind of truth it tolerates, and what kind of silence it rewards.

Five practical implications follow from this perspective:

1.- Management with due process and repair(80): avoid minimization or cosmetic solutions that only aim to make the issue stop being heard.

2.- Real protection against retaliation(81): the phrase "there will be no retaliation" is not enough; you must monitor changes in role, workload, evaluation, and opportunities after a report.

3.- Training managers in early intervention(82): learn to read dynamics, document without persecuting, and intervene without making the harm worse.

4.- Safe and trustworthy channels(83): multiple reporting routes, clear timelines, responsible confidentiality, and real follow-up of the process.

5.- Climate measurement(84): monitor psychological safety, organizational silence, procedural justice, and signs of discursive closure; measuring without acting only confirms cynicism.

Real prevention is not announced; it is demonstrated by the fact that, when it comes time to choose between reputation and justice, the organization does not hesitate.

5.1. Minimum standards of procedural fairness in an internal report

If fairness is meant to be real (not cosmetic), it must exist as a procedure(85): clear rules, concrete steps, traceability, review, and sanctions for malpractice. The thesis is simple: an internal channel can protect people and can also protect the organization, but only if it does not function as an absorption mailbox, but as an integrity system. Below are proposed minimum standards that, when they fail, directly feed the extended psychosocial risk (RPE: silence, discursive closure, and

(79) Meyer and Rowan (1977) analyze how formal structures and policies can function as "myth and ceremony," and describe decoupling between what is declared and what is implemented. Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). *Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. American Journal of Sociology, 83*(2), 340–363.

(80) Greenberg (1990) reviews the development of organizational justice and synthesizes dimensions and findings on fairness perceptions (including procedural justice). Greenberg, J. (1990). *Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Journal of Management, 16*(2), 399–432.

(81) Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) present a meta-analysis on whistleblowing, including correlates of reporting and evidence on retaliation. Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., & Viswesvaran, C. (2005). *Whistleblowing in organizations: An examination of correlates of whistleblowing intentions, actions, and retaliation. Journal of Business Ethics, 62*, 277–297.

(82) The ILO (2019) establishes international standards on violence and harassment in the world of work, including prevention approaches, measures, training, and complaint/protection mechanisms. International Labour Organization. (2019). *Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (*No. 190). Geneva: ILO. International Labour Organization. (2019). *Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019* (No. 206). Geneva: ILO.

(83) ISO (2021) publishes guidelines for whistleblowing management systems, including principles of confidentiality, impartiality, follow-up, case management, and protection. International Organization for Standardization. (2021). ISO 37002:2021. *Whistleblowing management systems — Guidelines*. Geneva: ISO.

(84) NIOSH (1999) provides a reference guide on job stress and prevention, describing organizational risk factors and intervention/follow-up lines. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (1999). *Stress at Work*. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 99–101. Cincinnati, OH: NIOSH.

(85) Lind and Tyler (1988) develop the psychosocial framework of procedural justice and its relationship with legitimacy, acceptance of decisions, and cooperation with norms. Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

revictimization).

Reading through the lens of extended psychosocial risk (RPE). These standards are not decorative "good practices": each one cuts off a mechanism in the model.

· Points (1–3) sustain procedural justice (JP) and reduce perceived institutional tolerance (TIP).

· Points (4–5) attack discursive closure (CR) and silence (SO); points (6–7) neutralize indirect retaliation and prevent revictimization.

· Point (8) turns the case into learning (if there is no learning, the system stabilizes by paying the cost again and again).

· Table 1 summarizes typical failures, observable signals, and expected effects on the climate.

1) Symmetry and basic transparency in sanctions (without sensationalism, with privacy)

If inappropriate conduct is addressed, it should be recorded (date, conduct, expectation of correction), and there should be a way to communicate to the ecosystem—in general terms—that the norm applies at all levels. This builds trust: "the rules are real."

2) Operational prohibition of "cards up the sleeve" (ex post accusations[86])

After a report, new accusatory material against the reporting person should not be accepted as a "defense" if there were no prior documented warnings. If it is allowed, covert retaliation becomes institutionalized and silence is consecrated.

3) Case integrity: total neutrality or stepping aside

If the person managing the case commits irregularities (leaks, bias, manipulation, conflict of interest[87]), they must be removed from the case immediately, and the reporting person must be informed that the process has been protected—without compromising the investigation.

Investigation clause (facts vs. character[88]). A minimum standard is that the process investigates behaviors and traces, not personalities. If defamatory or pathologizing rumors[89] appear during case handling (about health, substance use, or "stability"), they must be recorded as an attempt to contaminate the case and trigger corrective measures (remove, warn, sanction if appropriate). If it is not stopped, the system learns that reputation is a weapon—and that the procedure allows it.

4) Timelines, communication, and minimum feedback: silence also causes harm.

In sensitive processes, silence is not neutral. There must be phase-based timelines and periodic

(86) Directive (EU) 2019/1937 sets minimum standards to protect people who report breaches, including internal/external channels, confidentiality, and anti-retaliation measures. Unión Europea. (2019). *Directiva (UE) 2019/1937 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2019, relativa a la protección de las personas que informen sobre infracciones del Derecho de la Unión. Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea.*

(87) ACAS (2015) sets practical criteria for disciplinary and grievance procedures, including investigation, impartiality, communication, and procedural reasonableness. Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. (2015). *Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (Code of Practice 1)*. London: ACAS.

(88) Ross (1977) describes attributional biases (including over-attributing personal traits) and their effects on interpreting behavior in social contexts. Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 173–220). New York, NY: Academic Press.

(89) Allport and Postman (1947) analyze the psychology of rumor and conditions for propagation under uncertainty, perceived importance, and anxiety. Allport, G. W., & Postman, L. (1947). *The Psychology of Rumor*. New York, NY: Henry Holt

updates ("we are still in phase X"), without relying on the person having to insist. Sustained communication reduces hypervigilance and prevents rumor from filling the void.

In addition, closing the case file should include a minimum informational feedback compatible with confidentiality:

(a) Steps taken (types and volume, without identities).

(b) Facts/allegations assessed.

(c) Criteria applied.

(d) Conclusion per fact (substantiated / unsubstantiated / not assessable) with general reasoning.

(e) Verifiable measures and follow-up.

Confidentiality should not equal opacity: it protects people, but it does not remove the obligation to explain the process and enable correctability (a review path or reopening if new evidence appears).

5) The golden rule of the narrative: document first, filter later

During the presentation of facts, the function is to listen and document faithfully[(90)]. Interrupting, correcting, or invalidating in the moment turns the channel into a control channel (institutional discursive closure).

Operational note (channel design). If the organization demands clarity and completeness, the channel must enable it: a free text box is not enough. A minimally serious system guides the narrative with simple and auditable fields (facts, dates, people involved, attached evidence, impact, requested measures), generates an acknowledgment of receipt, and allows traceability of the case without forcing the person to "write like a lawyer." When the channel is opaque or difficult, administrative friction[(91)] functions as soft censorship.

6) Real protection: temporary neutralization of the accused person's influence[(92)]

In reports against superiors, the key analysis is not rhetorical ("what does the other side say"), it is logistical: what concrete variables can they influence (shifts, incentives, workload, visibility, assignments, communication channels)? If that influence is not neutralized, the investigation is born contaminated by indirect retaliation—easy to execute and hard to prove.

7) Responsible confidentiality (including medical leave) and control of the "hallway radio"

The organization must communicate the minimum necessary and avoid ambiguous messages

(90) Fisher and Geiselman (1992) systematize the cognitive interview as a technique to maximize recall and narrative quality, emphasizing open questions and minimizing interruptions/suggestion. Fisher, R. P., & Geiselman, R. E. (1992). *Memory-Enhancing Techniques for Investigative Interviewing: The Cognitive Interview*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.

(91) Sunstein (2021) develops the concept of "sludge" as administrative friction that hinders access to rights/services and generates behavioral and psychological costs. Sunstein, C. R. (2021). *Sludge: What Stops Us from Getting Things Done and What to Do about It*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

(92) Tepper (2000) studies consequences of abusive supervision, including effects on stress, satisfaction, commitment, and withdrawal/turnover behaviors. Tepper, B. J. (2000). *Consequences of abusive supervision. Academy of Management Journal, 43*(2), 178–190.

that trigger rumor and stigmatize ("they're on sick leave due to X"). Privacy[93] is not a detail: it is protection and an obligation.

7.1) Personal financial data (payroll, advances, wage garnishments, deductions): enhanced confidentiality

Operational definition: "Personal financial data" includes all payroll elements and any data derived from them (including payroll incidents/adjustments, salary advances, wage garnishments, deductions, regularizations, etc.). These are highly sensitive internal data because they allow quick inferences and stigmatization.

Minimum principles:

A) Operational necessity (need-to-know) and segregation of duties:

· Only those who need the detail to manage payroll or meet administrative obligations may access it.

· Managers without a payroll role must not access the detail or use it as "performance management" information.

B) Real traceability (not symbolic):

· Log who accesses the data, when, for what purpose, and from which unit/role.

· Keep a minimum auditable (internal) trail and review it if there are signs of misuse.

C) Ban on reputational use:

· It is forbidden to "interpret" or imply personal problems (health, substance use, stability, etc.) from financial data.

· If someone tries to introduce that kind of reading, it is treated as case/process contamination and is recorded.

D) Minimal and corrective communication (anti-rumor):

· The organization does not "explain" payroll within the ecosystem. It cuts rumors: reiterates rules, reduces dissemination, and acts.

· If there is a leak or loss of confidentiality, corrective measures are documented (it is not enough to simply "assure" confidentiality).

8) Pattern audit: when the problem is not one case, it is a system

A serious system periodically reviews historical signals: repeated external escalations, dismissals that do not withstand scrutiny, discrepancies between what comes through the internal channel and what ends up escalating outside, patterns by department/type of conflict, and—above

(93) Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) governs personal-data processing, including sensitive categories (health) and confidentiality/minimization/security principles applicable to internal communications. Unión Europea. (2016). *Reglamento (UE) 2016/679 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 27 de abril de 2016 (Reglamento General de Protección de Datos). Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea.*

all—what real learning[(94)] is implemented (updated procedures, adjusted timelines, corrected practices). If there is no learning, the implicit message is: "we prefer to pay the cost rather than change the cause."

Prevention/PRL as a "sensor" without action (ignored historical signal). A particularly worrying indicator appears when the Occupational Risk Prevention / health surveillance circuit itself accumulates signals over years (repeated consultations, recurring comments by area/team, chronic distress) and, even so, the organization limits itself to phrases such as "I don't know what's happening." In systemic terms, this means there is sensing[(95)] (the system "detects"), but there is no action (the system does not correct).

When Prevention "knows" but does not trigger verifiable intervention, the cultural message that takes hold is twofold:

· The problem is known and normalized.

· Speaking up changes nothing. That combination fuels perceived institutional tolerance, organizational silence, and moral cynicism.

Table 1. Minimum standards of procedural fairness: typical failure, observable signal, and effect on RPE

Minimum standard (5.1)	Typical failure (gray zone)	Observable signal (day-to-day)	Expected effect in the ecosystem	Model variables most affected
1) Symmetry and basic transparency in sanctions (without sensationalism, with privacy)	"Behind-closed-doors" interventions for managers; the team never sees that the rule applies upward.	"We've talked" with no record or consistency; double standard; perception of impunity.	Cynicism and learning: "the rules aren't real."	↑TIP, ↓SP, ↑SO
2) Operational prohibition of ex post accusations	After reporting, "reports" or "complaints" appear that had never been communicated before.	First time performance/attitude is questioned *after* reporting.	Voice becomes dangerous: "if you report, they attack you."	↓JP, ↑CR, ↑SO, ↑Revictimization
3) Case integrity: total neutrality or stepping aside	Case manager is not neutral (conflict of interest, leaks, bias).	Leading questions; leaks; the accused "knows too much"; opaque decisions.	The channel is perceived as not protective: "it's control."	↓JP, ↑TIP, ↑SO, ↑CR
4) Deadlines and mandatory communication	Prolonged silence; contact only if the person insists.	"We'll let you know"; months without updates; non-existent phases.	Hypervigilance and rumor increase; trust drops.	↓JP, ↑SO, ↓SP
5) "Document first, filter later"	Filtering occurs during the narrative (interrupting, invalidating, correcting "in real time").	"Tone" is debated more than facts; "that's not relevant"; frequent cuts.	Institutional discursive closure (control channel).	↑CR, ↑SO, ↓SP
6) Temporary neutralization of the accused person's influence	The accused keeps control over shifts, workload, incentives, visibility, or channels.	"Technical" changes (shifts, clients, tasks); isolation; non-traceable circuits.	Indirect retaliation easy / proof difficult → wear-down.	↓JP, ↑Revictimization, ↑RPE, ↑SO
7) Responsible confidentiality (including sick leave)	Ambiguous communication that triggers rumor/stigma ("they're on leave because...").	Active gossip mill; person is marked; speculation and labels.	Stigma + moral displacement toward the victim.	↑CV, ↑SO, ↓SP
8) Pattern audit and learning	Case is archived; no changes; hot spots repeat.	Recurrence by area/manager; repeated external escalations; "turn the page."	System stabilizes by paying costs (turnover, reputation, productivity).	↑TIP, ↓JP, ↑RPE

Cross-cutting principle: verifiable measures (anti "paper justice"). A recurring failure in degraded

(94) Reason (1997) analyzes how latent failures and organizational conditions cause harm and proposes learning, pattern review, and systemic improvement approaches. Reason, J. (1997). *Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
(95) Hollnagel (2014) proposes the Safety-II approach and discusses the importance of system response/capacity to act in addition to signal detection. Hollnagel, E. (2014). *Safety-I and Safety-II: The Past and Future of Safety Management*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.

systems is the phantom measure[96]: a resolution or document is issued that "declares" actions, but in practice nothing relevant changes (same hierarchical dependency, same person with influence, same sensitive variables under control, no follow-up). This gap between paper and reality directly generates cynicism and silence: it confirms that the system prioritizes closing the file over protecting the process. A minimum standard, therefore, is that every measure comes with an owner, a deadline, an observable compliance criterion, and a review (if it is not met, the system must correct it).

These standards do not guarantee perfection, but they do change the climate: they make truth less costly, reduce the gray zone, and lower the probability that the system stabilizes by sacrificing the person who reports.

This chapter focuses on the institutional response once the episode has already occurred: minimum procedural safeguards, real protection against retaliation, and containment mechanisms to prevent harm from spreading to the climate (silence, narrative closure, and revictimization). For the previous layer—primary prevention in high-pressure operations (job design, channel hygiene and traceability, operational rest and minimum support)—see Appendix C.

5.2. Legal appendix (Spain): Article 50 of the Workers' Statute and the "gray-zone" trap

Scope note. This appendix is not legal advice; it only provides context for why, when internal procedural safeguards fail, the cost can shift toward external exits and toward an "evidentiary battle"[97] that the system usually wins by design.

In Spain, Article 50[98] of the Workers' Statute regulates termination of the contract at the employee's initiative when there are serious breaches by the employer; it includes typified situations (for example, certain harmful substantial modifications or continued non-payment/delays in salary) and an open clause of "any other serious breach," also recognizing the right to compensation equivalent to unfair dismissal when the claim succeeds.

The psychosocial-procedural point is this: that kind of protection "exists," but its effectiveness depends on something far from romantic: traceability. If the environment operates through non-auditable channels (hallways, calls, meetings without minutes, decisions with no trace), or if the internal process allows the person being investigated to keep controlling sensitive variables, the conflict stops being "facts + procedure" and becomes "perception versus power." The result is often a perverse incentive: the system can push the person into a war of attrition (time, money, energy, health) that fuels exactly what this essay calls extended psychosocial risk: fear of speaking, learning silence, and narrative closure.

That is why the standards in 5.1 are not bureaucracy: they are the mechanism that prevents fairness from depending on individual heroism. When they are missing, the system "protects" in theory and "wears down" in practice.

(96) Brunsson (1989) analyzes discrepancies between talk, decisions, and actions in organizations and how practices can stabilize through "organizational hypocrisy." Brunsson, N. (1989). *The Organization of Hypocrisy: Talk, Decisions and Actions in Organizations*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
(97) Galanter (1974) develops the "repeat players vs. one-shotters" framework and analyzes how resources, experience, and continuity create structural advantages in disputes and long processes. Galanter, M. (1974). *Why the "Haves" Come Out Ahead: Speculations on the Limits of Legal Change. Law & Society Review, 9*(1), 95–160.
(98) Spain's Workers' Statute regulates in Article 50 contract termination at the employee's initiative due to serious employer breaches, with associated compensatory effects when applicable. España. (2015). *Real Decreto Legislativo 2/2015, de 23 de octubre, por el que se aprueba el texto refundido de la Ley del Estatuto de los Trabajadores. Boletín Oficial del Estado.*

5.3. Talent flight as a late signal of extended psychosocial risk

In environments where bullying is handled defensively, the departure of valuable people tends to be a late and cumulative effect: it does not begin on the day of resignation(99), but on the day the system stops being perceived as fair. In that dynamic, talent rarely leaves with a slam; first it reduces voice, then it reduces engagement, and finally it relocates or disappears. That is why, in addition to measuring climate (SO, SP, CR), it is worth measuring "structural" flight(100): turnover by manager and by department, patterns of stress-related leave, internal transfers, repeated unfair-dismissal findings, and discrepancies between what enters through the internal channel and what ends up escalating outside.

5.4. Beyond the company: cost asymmetry, the rule of law, and public response

Scope note. This section is a reflection on institutional design, not legal advice. Its aim is to highlight a perverse incentive: when effective protection depends on sustaining conciliation or a long process, the system favors whoever controls time, records, and resources.

Additional frame: "unreviewed incoherence." There are procedures that, in theory, are coherent and "neutral," but in practice produce repeated, disproportionate, or unfair consequences for the average citizen or worker. The dangerous part is that they do not fail in a scandalous way: they function like normal gears until it is your turn. And because the harm is distributed (to many people, at different times), something key is often missing: a formal obligation to correct, a visible accountable party, and post-impact review. In psychosocial terms, that absence manufactures resignation and silence: if the procedure always falls on the same side, people learn that "complying" does not guarantee protection.

A case of workplace bullying or coercion (including attempts to buy silence) is not only an "internal disciplinary incident": it affects rights(101), dignity, and basic safeguards. If the only realistic way for there to be consequences is for the affected person to withstand a long, expensive, evidentially difficult route, the system creates an incentive: to wear down the person who reports until they go quiet or leave.

From this perspective, a society that wants to reduce extended psychosocial risk should strengthen devices that allow early intervention without demanding heroism. Some design ideas (conceptually) would be:

1.- Fast, protected external route(102) for serious indications (coercion, retaliation, evidence tampering), with the ability to activate precautionary measures.

2.- Mandatory preservation of evidence and minimum traceability, so that the conflict does not become "perception versus power."

(99) Steel (2002) reviews turnover theory and discusses fit issues between theoretical models and empirical evidence in predicting exit/withdrawal. Steel, R. P. (2002). *Turnover theory at the empirical interface: Problems of fit and function. Academy of Management Review, 27*(3), 346–360.

(100) Lee and Mitchell (1994) propose the unfolding model of voluntary turnover, describing decision paths and the role of triggering events ("shocks"). Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (1994). *An alternative approach: The unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover. Academy of Management Review, 19*(1), 51–89.

(101) Rhode (2004) reviews barriers to access to justice and inequalities in the practical capacity to exercise rights, including costs, information, time, and representation. Rhode, D. L. (2004). *Access to Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(102) OECD (2016) synthesizes whistleblower protection practices and principles, including channel design, investigation, follow-up, and safeguards against retaliation. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *Committing to Effective Whistleblower Protection*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

3.- Verifiable anti-retaliation protection from the outset (temporary neutralization of influence over sensitive variables).

4.- Personal and traceable accountability in critical management roles (HR, labor relations, prevention/PRL, compliance): recorded decisions, independent review when there is a conflict of interest, and consequences for bad faith or procedural negligence.

5.- Inter-institutional activation upon explicit clinical signal. When a health professional documents that distress is linked to a hostile work environment or bullying, there should be an activation circuit (with safeguards and confidentiality) that does not depend on the patient's heroism: coordination with prevention/PRL, minimum preservation of evidence, and precautionary protection measures while the case is clarified.

6.- Minimum safeguards for "administrative clearances" in sensitive leaves due to conflict/anxiety. In sensitive processes, the system should avoid closures without sufficient clinical hearing and provide rapid review mechanisms when the treating doctor considers that returning to the same environment entails relapse risk. Without this, institutional architecture produces a perverse incentive: the cost falls again on those least able to sustain it.

7.- Effective (not fictitious) notification when there are deadlines and sanctions. A procedure that requires the person to "guess" whether they were notified is not a procedure: it is a maze with penalties. Minimum standard: multi-channel, traceable, reasonable notification (with evidence of receipt or effective repetition) before the system closes deadlines or imposes surcharges.

8.- Digitization(103) with real human support (not as a social filter). Digitizing without accessible alternatives and without operational support turns efficiency into exclusion: it especially affects people with anxiety, low administrative literacy, poor coverage, or little time margin. Minimum standard: alternative channels, sufficient human assistance, and a design that does not punish those with less access.

9.- Universal and understandable prevention in mechanisms that generate a "deferred bill." If a rule or benefits scheme can produce later economic effects (regularizations, repayments, changes due to double payer, etc.), the system should incorporate simple mandatory warnings ("this may affect you like this; these are your options to avoid surprises"), not delegate it to "consult your advisor." What is mathematically neutral may not be psychologically neutral when the impact arrives late and suddenly.

10.- Post-impact review and mandatory correction of repeated harms. After crises or systemic changes, there should be an institutional "postmortem": measure repeated harm, see whom it hits hardest, identify design failures, and correct them. If it is not reviewed, the real message is that each person will pay for their learning alone—and that accumulation erodes trust, increases resignation, and feeds silence.

Table 2. Unreviewed public incoherences: typical failure → effect → minimum standard

(103) Eubanks (2018) analyzes how digital and automated systems can produce exclusion and unequal adverse effects on populations with fewer resources and less margin. Eubanks, V. (2018). *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Typical failure	Effect	Minimum standard
A) Notification is recorded but never arrives	Surcharge / loss of ability to defend oneself	Effective multi-channel notification + reasonable traceability
B) Digitization without support	Exclusion due to lack of margin / anxiety / coverage	Alternative channel + sufficient human assistance
C) Deferred impact (regularizations/repayments)	Late shock / financial stress	Simple preventive warning + adjustment options
D) Administrative clearances in sensitive leave without coordination	Return to risk + relapse	Mandatory clinical coordination + rapid review

5.4.1. External procedural safeguard figure for internal reports (proposal)

A structural weakness of many internal channels is that, even with well-intentioned people, there is a systemic conflict of interest: the organization investigates an event whose resolution may affect its reputation, hierarchy, costs, and narrative. In sensitive scenarios (bullying, retaliation, coercion, buying silence, or evidentiary manipulation), this can degrade the process without any "bad actors": incentives are enough. That is why, in addition to requiring internal minimum standards (Ch. 5.1), it makes sense to introduce an external figure that does not replace the substance of the investigation but guarantees the procedure.

Important: the proposal is not to "judicialize" everything, but to add a third element that ensures the internal channel operates as a protection channel and not as an absorption channel. The external figure does not decide "who is right" by default; it ensures the process fulfills its function: traceability, timelines, neutrality, evidence preservation, and anti-retaliation protection.

Three possible models (from less to more intervention):

A) External audit of the procedure (guarantee trigger)

· The investigation may remain internal, but an external procedural audit is triggered when the case meets sensitivity criteria (for example: report against a manager, indications of retaliation, leaks, leave linked to hostile environment, attempt at coercion).

· The audit does not go into the "substance" (whether the event occurred), but into integrity: timelines, communications, evidence preservation, prohibition of ex post accusations, sampling of testimonies (avoid endogamy), neutralization of influence, precautionary measures, and traceability of decisions.

B) Accredited independent instructor/investigator (external designation)

· The investigation is conducted by an independent third party (accredited pool), designated by an external mechanism (e.g., rotation/randomness), with costs borne by the organization but with functional independence.

· Procedural capture is reduced because the narrative is not filtered "hot" from within, and ecosystem trust is strengthened: the organization does not control the evidentiary frame or the pace for convenience.

C) Procedural defender (ombudsperson) with precautionary power

· External or autonomous figure with a clear mandate: protect the procedure and the people involved.

· Can impose/activate minimum precautionary measures (e.g., temporarily neutralize influence over shifts, economic variable, workload, visibility and channels; ensure access to information necessary for defense; stop leaks; require phase-based communication).

· Does not replace the substance of the investigation, but prevents the reporting person from being "left out in the cold" while it lasts.

When it is activated (practical criteria)

· Report against a hierarchical superior or against those managing the case (HR/labor relations/PRL/compliance).

· Signs of retaliation (direct or logistical) or leaks.

· Formal clinical signal of deterioration linked to the environment (sick leave due to anxiety linked to hostility/bullying).

· Clear conflict of interest, insular sampling of testimonies, or use of rumors/defamation as a substitute for evidence.

· Any attempt at coercion or purchase of silence.

What changes systemically

· It reduces the closure of exits: the external route stops being perceived as "another trap" because the system offers an early procedural safeguard.

· It reduces organizational silence and increases psychological safety: the team observes that speaking does not automatically trigger punishment.

· It corrects incentives: when the cost of mishandling a process stops being only reputational and becomes procedurally visible, the system learns to protect—not just to close files.

This proposal is compatible with existing frameworks of internal/external reporting channels[104], but here it is presented as an explicit extension to contexts of workplace bullying and

(104) Spain's Law 2/2023 regulates the protection of reporting persons and sets requirements for internal systems and external channels, as well as anti-retaliation measures. España. (2023). *Ley 2/2023, de 20 de febrero, reguladora de la protección de las personas que informen sobre infracciones normativas y de lucha contra la corrupción. Boletín Oficial del Estado.*

retaliation: not as moral theory, but as institutional design to prevent the burden from falling on the most vulnerable person in the circuit.

The idea is not to punish for punishment's sake; it is to correct incentives. If those who manage can do it badly with no personal cost, the system learns functional impunity. If, instead, there is traceability and accountability, the procedure stops being a shield and becomes protection again.

6. Proposed hypotheses and research pathways

For this perspective not to remain an elegant intuition, it needs to be translated into testable hypotheses[(105)] and into questions that force the organization to "show its cards." If workplace bullying reorganizes the team's moral ecosystem, it should leave measurable traces in the climate, in the narratives, and in the communicative behavior of those around it.

The following core hypotheses are proposed:

· H1. Perceived institutional tolerance (TIP) is associated with greater organizational silence (SO)[(106)].

· H2. Moral dissonance/self-justification (DAJ)[(107)] mediates[(108)] the relationship between passive bystander participation (PP)[(109)] and victim blaming (CV)[(110)].

· H3. Teams with low psychological safety (SP↓)[(111)] show greater narrative control/discursive closure (CR)[(112)], especially after episodes of serious conflict or suspicion of abuse.

· H4. Higher perceived procedural justice (JP)[(113)] in complaint handling is associated with lower organizational silence (SO)[(114)] and less discursive closure (CR).

· H5. JP moderates[(115)] the link between perceived institutional tolerance (TIP) and organizational silence (SO): when JP is high, the TIP→SO relationship weakens.

· H6. The perception that the reported party's influence is neutralized during the investigation[(116)] is associated with lower perceived revictimization and lower extended psychosocial risk (RPE).

(105) Popper (1959) formalizes the criterion of falsifiability and the logic of testing: a scientific proposition must be formulated so that it can be tested and potentially refuted. Popper, K. (1959). *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London: Hutchinson.

(106) Morrison (2014) reviews the literature on voice and silence in organizations, synthesizing antecedents, perceived costs, and contextual conditions that encourage or inhibit the communication of problems. Morrison, E. W. (2014). *Employee voice and silence. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*(1), 173–197. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328

(107) Bandura (1999) develops the moral disengagement framework: cognitive mechanisms (e.g., diffusion of responsibility, minimization of harm, attribution to the victim) that allow people to justify omissions or harmful conduct without triggering moral self-sanctions. Bandura, A. (1999). *Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3*(3), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3

(108) MacKinnon (2008) systematizes mediation analysis (direct and indirect effects), assumptions, estimation methods, and interpretation for testing hypothesized causal paths. MacKinnon, D. P. (2008). *Introduction to Statistical Mediation Analysis*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

(109) Latané and Darley (1970) study the bystander effect and diffusion of responsibility: in the presence of others, the probability of intervening decreases, with situational and cognitive mechanisms associated with passivity. Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1970). *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help?* New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

(110) Shaver (1985) analyzes the attribution of blame (causality, responsibility, and "deservingness"), clarifying how judgments of blameworthiness are constructed and why blaming patterns appear in ambiguous or threatening contexts. Shaver, K. G. (1985). *The Attribution of Blame: Causality, Responsibility, and Blameworthiness*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

(111) Frazier et al. (2017) conduct a meta-analytic review of psychological safety and its organizational correlates (including willingness to speak up, learning, and performance), consolidating empirical evidence of its effects. Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). *Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. Personnel Psychology, 70*(1), 113–165. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12183

(112) Boje (1991) studies the organization as a storytelling system: stories are "performed," circulate, and shape shared meaning and legitimacy, showing how narrative organizes what is considered true/reasonable within the group. Boje, D. M. (1991). *The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. Administrative Science Quarterly, 36*(1), 106–126. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393432

(113) Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) provide a classic meta-analysis on organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional), its correlates and consequences, consolidating evidence of its role in workplace attitudes and behaviors. Cohen-Charash, Y., & Spector, P. E. (2001). *The role of justice in organizations: A meta-analysis. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 86*(2), 278–321. https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.2001.2958

(114) Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) examine the multilevel effect of procedural justice climate on silence: they show how procedural justice (at the group level) relates to the intentional withholding of critical information. Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2008). *Employee silence on critical work issues: The cross level effects of procedural justice climate. Personnel Psychology, 61*(1), 37–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2008.00105.x

(115) Aiken and West (1991) standardize the treatment of interactions in regression (moderation): centering, estimation, and interpretation of conditional effects and interaction tests. Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

(116) Rehg et al. (2008) study retaliation against whistleblowers and the role of power relationships, identifying conditions associated with retaliation and outcomes for the reporter in organizational contexts. Rehg, M. T., Miceli, M. P., Near, J. P., & Van Scotter, J. R. (2008). *Antecedents and outcomes of retaliation against whistleblowers: Gender differences and power relationships. Organization Science, 19*(2), 221–240. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0310

These hypotheses suggest a mixed-methods approach(117): surveys to estimate patterns and magnitudes, and interviews/discourse analysis(118) to reconstruct mechanisms (how silence is manufactured, how passivity is justified, how an "acceptable" version of what happened is imposed).

Author's note: ***These hypotheses are NOT a theoretical exercise.*** *They are the map I myself needed when I was inside the labyrinth and no one gave me the coordinates. Now, with them on the table, it becomes possible to turn lived experience into systematic knowledge. That is why the next section does not describe "just another academic study": it describes the minimum protocol I wish had existed when I needed it.*

(117) Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) position mixed methods as an integrative paradigm and describe design rationales for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches with methodological coherence. Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). *Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. Educational Researcher, 33*(7), 14–26. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014

(118) Gee (2014) develops an accessible framework for discourse analysis as a method: tools for analyzing language-in-use, identities, social practices, and meaning-making in interaction. Gee, J. P. (2014). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315819679

7. Proposed empirical design: an exploratory study on "*extended risk*" after bullying

If the above is correct, workplace bullying should not leave only a harmed victim, but a wider trail: changes in the team climate, in the way people talk (or decide not to talk), and in the everyday morality through which the unjustifiable is justified.

This chapter proposes an executable protocol to test—exploratorily and with the utmost care—the idea of extended psychosocial risk. This is not about declaring people guilty through a questionnaire; it is about observing whether, when an organization is perceived as tolerant or defensive in the face of bullying, consistent patterns of silence, narrative control, and moral displacement toward the victim emerge.

The proposal that follows is an honest attempt to translate an experience into questions that can be tested; into instruments that other people can use without having to expose themselves the way I exposed myself; and into a path so that what many of us are living stops being only personal pain and becomes a measurable systemic signal—and, someday, preventable.

The proposed design is mixed and sequential[(119)]:

1.- A quantitative phase with an anonymous questionnaire[(120)].

2.- A qualitative phase with brief semi-structured interviews[(121)] aimed at describing mechanisms and language, avoiding the reconstruction of identifiable cases.

7.1. Method (proposed)

Participants. Adults with current or recent work experience in organizations with hierarchical structures would be included, seeking variety[(122)] in roles and contexts. Recruitment within a single organization would be avoided to reduce the risk of identification[(123)] and to avoid confusing one specific site's climate with the general dynamic the study aims to understand.

Instrument. The questionnaire would be structured into brief blocks to measure perceptions and behaviors without requiring respondents to label their experience as "bullying" if they do not want to. Instead of big labels, it would ask about signals: perceived institutional response, the cost of speaking up, safety in disagreeing, bystander passivity, moral self-justification, narratives of victim blaming, and signs of narrative control.

(119) Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) edit a reference handbook on mixed methods and describe designs, integration rationales, and quality criteria for research that combines quantitative and qualitative evidence. Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2010). *The SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

(120) Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) present the "Tailored Design Method" for surveys (including web mode), with recommendations on design, administration, response rates, and bias control. Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

(121) Rubin and Rubin (2011) systematize the semi-structured qualitative interviewing approach, including guide construction, questioning, conducting, recording, and analysis. Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

(122) Patton (2002) develops qualitative sampling strategies (including maximum variation) and criteria for designing exploratory studies with diverse profiles and contexts. Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

(123) Wiles, Crow, Heath, and Charles (2008) analyze how anonymity and confidentiality are managed in social research, including practical limits, identification risks, and design decisions to mitigate them. Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S., & Charles, V. (2008). The management of confidentiality and anonymity in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11*(5), 417–428.

Procedure and safeguards. The survey would be administered online with clear informed consent[124], the option to drop out at any time, and without collecting identifiable data (company, specific positions, names, detailed accounts). To preserve anonymity, the invitation to interviews would be offered through a separate channel. Interviews would follow a semi-structured guide focused on climate and language; any attempt to go into identifying details would be interrupted. If audio is recorded, minimization, early anonymization, and the removal of sensitive references would be applied. Participants would be warned about possible discomfort while responding and offered general support resources.

Operationalization of main variables (summary).

Recommended format: Likert 1–5[125] (Strongly disagree → Strongly agree) or frequency 1–5 (Never → Very often).

Suggested time frame: current or most recent work setting (last 6–12 months[126]).

· TIP: Perceived institutional tolerance: impression of minimization/dilution or selective enforcement of rules.

· SO: Organizational silence: self-censorship due to fear of consequences or perceived futility.

· SP: Psychological safety: belief that the team allows speaking up/disagreeing without punishment or ridicule.

· PP: Passive bystander participation: not intervening in exclusion/abuse dynamics for self-protection.

· DAJ: Moral dissonance/self-justification: typical rationalizations to reduce moral discomfort.

· CV: Victim blaming: attributing responsibility to the person who reports or suffers harm.

· CR: Narrative control/discursive closure: pressure to impose one version, avoid evidence, or discredit voices.

· JP: Perceived procedural justice: clarity of rules, timelines, communication, case integrity, prohibition of ex post accusations, traceability, and temporary neutralization of the reported party's influence.

7.2. Hypothesis-testing plan and analysis strategy (proposed)

The analysis would seek to verify whether the model leaves consistent traces when translated into

(124) National Commission (1979) sets ethical principles and guidelines for research with human subjects (respect for persons, beneficence, and justice), including notions of informed consent and the right to withdraw. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

(125) Likert (1932) introduces a technique for measuring attitudes based on graded items and aggregated scores, the historical basis of Likert-type scales. Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology, 140*, 1–55.

(126) Tourangeau, Rips, and Rasinski (2000) describe the psychology of survey response, including processes of recall, judgment, and reporting, and how the time frame affects recall quality. Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J., & Rasinski, K. (2000). *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

data. First, the material's quality would be reviewed (data cleaning[(127)] of incomplete responses, anomalous patterns, internal consistency[(128)] of scales) and scores would be constructed for each dimension.

· H1: The link between TIP and SO would be estimated, and it would be checked whether it remains when introducing reasonable controls (role, tenure, contractual stability, economic dependence, exposure to conflict).

· H2: A mediation model (PP → DAJ → CV) would be explored using resampling-based confidence intervals (bootstrap[(129)]), interpreted cautiously due to the cross-sectional[(130)] nature of the design. The qualitative phase would be part of the test: it would look for language and dilemmas that make the mechanism morally legible.

· H3: It would be assessed whether SP↓ is associated with CR and whether the relationship intensifies with greater exposure to serious conflict. Again, interviews and discourse analysis[(131)] would allow the identification of phrases, gestures, and unwritten rules that constitute discursive closure.

· H4: The protective role of JP would be tested by estimating its association with SO and with CR (two separate models or a multivariate model[(132)]). Specifically: (a) SO ~ JP + controls (role, tenure, contract, economic dependence, exposure to conflict) and (b) CR ~ JP + controls. Complementarily, it would be checked whether the effect of JP holds when introducing TIP and/or SP as covariates (because JP can covary with perceived institutional tolerance and with psychological safety). The qualitative phase would help interpret which components of JP (timelines, traceability, case integrity, ex post prohibition, neutralization of influence) most "protect" in lived language.

· H5: A moderation (buffer) effect of JP on the TIP→SO link would be evaluated via an interaction term[(133)]: SO ~ TIP + JP + (TIP×JP) + controls. If the coefficient of TIP×JP is negative (or reduces the TIP→SO slope), it would suggest that, at the same level of perceived tolerance, when JP is higher, silence increases less. To make it interpretable, "simple slopes"[(134)] (TIP→SO) would be reported at low/medium/high levels of JP (e.g., terciles or ±1 standard deviation).

· H6: "Neutralization of influence" would be operationalized as a specific indicator within JP (e.g., the item on temporary neutralization of influence/sensitive variables) or as a sub-index[(135)] if multiple items of real protection are included. Its association would be tested with:

(127) Meade and Craig (2012) describe methods for detecting careless/inattentive responses in surveys and screening procedures to improve data quality. Meade, A. W., & Craig, S. B. (2012). Identifying careless responses in survey data. *Psychological Methods, 17*(3), 437–455.

(128) Cronbach (1951) introduces the alpha coefficient as an estimator of internal consistency and discusses its relationship with the internal structure of tests and scales. Cronbach, L. J. (1951). *Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. Psychometrika, 16*(3), 297–334.

(129) Preacher and Hayes (2008) describe asymptotic and resampling strategies (including bootstrap) to evaluate indirect effects in mediation models. Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*(3), 879–891.

(130) Maxwell and Cole (2007) analyze biases and limitations of mediation estimated with cross-sectional data when the real process is longitudinal, discussing conditions under which estimates may be distorted. Maxwell, S. E., & Cole, D. A. (2007). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation. *Psychological Methods, 12*(1), 23–44.

(131) Potter and Wetherell (1987) develop a discursive psychology approach and propose tools to analyze language-in-use, construction of versions, attributions, and rhetorical strategies in interaction. Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London: SAGE.

(132) Gelman and Hill (2007) develop a practical approach to regression models with covariates and statistical control, including interpretation and modeling in the social sciences. Gelman, A., & Hill, J. (2007). *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(133) Hayes (2018) systematizes mediation, moderation, and interaction models within a regression framework, including estimation, interpretation, and inference procedures. Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

(134) Dawson (2014) reviews moderation analysis in applied research and describes recommended practices for interpreting interactions and reporting simple slopes. Dawson, J. F. (2014). Moderation in management research: What, why, when, and how. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 29*(1), 1–19.

(135) DeVellis (2017) presents criteria and steps for scale development, including index construction, item refinement, and evaluation of reliability/validity. DeVellis, R. F. (2017). *Scale Development: Theory and Applications* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

(a) Perceived revictimization (a measurable proxy: items on labeling/blaming and narrative pressure: CV and/or CR).

(b) An RPE index built as a standardized combination of core dimensions (e.g., SO + CR + CV, and optionally SP in reverse).

The analysis would be mainly correlational/regression-based, and would be reinforced qualitatively by looking in interviews for concrete mechanisms: if neutralization existed, how it changed (or did not change) the cost of speaking up and exposure to logistical retaliation.

Integration would be done through triangulation(136): quantitative patterns (H1–H6) as the map, and interviews as the mechanism. Cases that contradict(137) the intuition (teams with high conflict but high psychological safety) would be treated as clues to identify protective factors.

7.3. Expected results and interpretation criteria

Since the study is not executed in this work, the methodologically honest move is to state what findings would count as evidence in favor of extended risk, and what findings would require revising it.

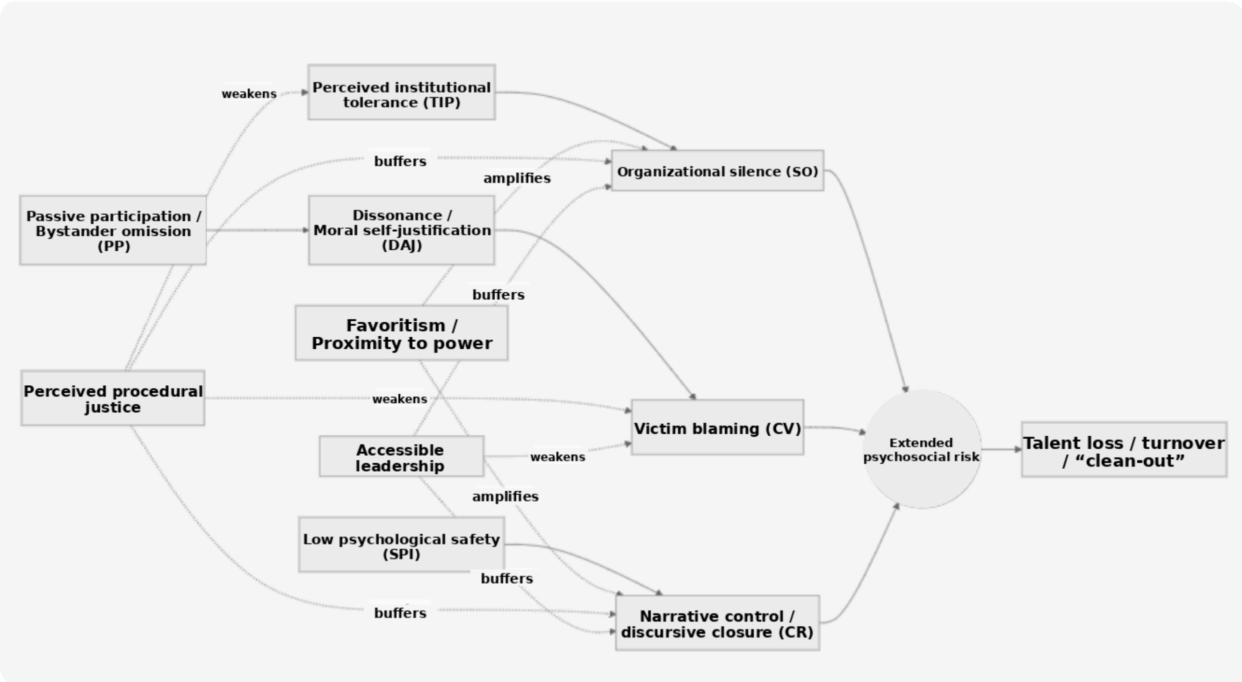
In general terms, what is expected is a coherent pattern: where TIP is high, SO is also high; where SP is low, signals of CR increase; and where there is PP, it is more likely to observe CV, especially if DAJ functions as an explanatory bridge. If variables such as SO and CR were rare or almost nonexistent, one would have to ask whether the instrument failed to capture the real contrast—or whether the phenomenon operates precisely through invisibility.

The most important criterion would not be to “confirm hypotheses” as trophies, but to evaluate whether a picture coherent with the thesis appears: that poorly managed workplace bullying reorganizes the team’s moral climate and shifts the cost onto the truth. If results were mixed or negative, their value would still be high, because they would force the genuinely scientific question: not whether it happens, but when it happens, for whom it happens, and under what conditions it is stopped.

(136) Denzin (1978) systematizes the concept of triangulation (data, methods, investigators, and theories) and discusses its use to strengthen inferences in social research. Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
(137) Miles and Huberman (1994) describe qualitative analysis strategies, including the systematic search for discrepant/negative cases and their use to refine interpretations. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

8. Appendix A: Diagram of the proposed conceptual model

Model of "extended psychosocial evolution" after poorly managed workplace harassment/bullying (proposed variables and relationships).



Quick reading of the model:

· Core 1 (adaptation under institutional insecurity): TIP → SO. If minimization or differential protection is perceived, silence becomes a rational adaptation[138].

· Core 2 (the bystander's moral mechanism)[139][140]: PP → DAJ → CV. Passivity creates pressure to preserve moral coherence; a frequent way out is to reframe and shift responsibility onto the person who names the problem[141].

· Core 3 (discursive closure): SP↓ → CR[142]. If speaking up has a cost, unwritten rules of silence, "acceptable" versions, and the delegitimization of persistent voices increase[143].

(138) Morrison (2014) reviews the literature on employee voice and silence in organizations, including antecedents, perceived costs, and contextual dynamics that foster or inhibit raising problems. Morrison, E. W. (2014). *Employee voice and silence. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*(1), 173–197. doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328

(139) Fischer, Greitemeyer, Pollozek, and Frey (2011) present a meta-analysis of the bystander effect, comparing intervention in dangerous vs. non-dangerous emergencies and synthesizing effect sizes. Fischer, P., Greitemeyer, T., Pollozek, F., & Frey, D. (2011). *The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. Psychological Bulletin, 137*(4), 517–537.

(140) Festinger (1957) introduces cognitive dissonance theory and describes mechanisms through which inconsistencies between cognitions, behavior, and self-image are reduced. Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

(141) Ryan (1971) analyzes victim blaming as a social pattern and describes how responsibility is shifted toward those who suffer harm to preserve explanations of order or normality. Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the Victim*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

(142) Newman, Donohue, and Eva (2017) conduct a systematic review of psychological safety, identifying antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes in workplace contexts. Newman, A., Donohue, R., & Eva, N. (2017). *Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. Human Resource Management Review, 27*(3), 521–535.

(143) Fairclough (1989) develops a critical discourse analysis framework and examines relationships between language, power, legitimation, and control in institutional contexts. Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

· Convergence: SO + CV + CR feed an Extended Psychosocial Risk (RPE): deterioration of the organizational climate, learning fear/silence, and the moral normalization of what is unjust(144).

· Moderators: Favoritism / proximity to power(145) amplifies the dynamics; procedural justice(146) and accessible leadership(147) buffer them.

In this essay, procedural justice (JP) is not treated as an abstraction, but as a bundle of minimum observable safeguards: basic symmetry in sanctions (without violating privacy), prohibition of ex post accusations, integrity of the case handler, timelines and communication, the rule "document first, filter later," temporary neutralization of the reported party's influence, responsible confidentiality, and periodic auditing of patterns/exits(148)/ learning(149).

Concept	Observable indicators (examples)	CU reading (coherence)	S(i) reading (hypothesized functions involved)
Organizational silence (SO)	Self-censorship; preference for oral channels; avoidance of written records (emails/minutes); "it's not advisable."	Loss of communicative coherence: low circulation of reliable information and safe dissent; speaking up becomes costly.	Inhibition of resonance/network (S11–S12) and weakening of elemental coordination (S1–S2); the message "dissipates" (S7).
Narrative control / discursive closure (CR)	Pressure for a single version; delegitimization via "tone"; avoiding evidence; control of turns, silences, and tone.	Substitution of structural coherence (truth + process + repair) with apparent coherence (stable narrative). Local vs. global coherence.	Overactivation of organization/projection (S13–S16) with blockage of divergence/thresholds (S3, S8) and constrained adaptation (S10).
Revictimization	Administrative grind; accumulated disbelief; leaky confidentiality; indirect retaliation; moral inversion ("you are the problem").	Stabilization by sacrificing a node: dissonance is externalized onto the person who reports/insists, to protect system stability.	Managing disturbance via redistribution/threshold mechanisms (S7–S8) with memory/accumulation (S9); failure or selectivity of support (S15).
Extended psychosocial risk (RPE)	Hypervigilance; moral fear; cynicism; collective learning of silence; normalization of discursive closure.	Sustained decline in the ecosystem's moral and communicative coherence: truth becomes costly and belonging is bought	Emergent pattern through couplings: drop in S11–S12, closure of S3/S8, projection S13–S16; feedback loops that stabilize over time (S9).

Note: this translation is heuristic and seeks only conceptual continuity within the Universal Coherence (UC) Project(150); it does not establish definitive correspondences between psychosocial constructs and S(i) functions(151).

Mermaid code (to recreate the diagram in compatible environments)

(144) Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (Eds.) (2011) compile theoretical and empirical developments on workplace bullying/harassment, including organizational dynamics, consequences, and research approaches. Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C. L. (Eds.). (2011). *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace: Developments in Theory, Research, and Practice* (2nd ed.). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

(145) Pfeffer (1992) analyzes organizational power and politics as structural dimensions shaping decisions, access to resources, reputation, and career trajectories. Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

(146) Lind and Tyler (1988) develop the psychosocial framework of procedural justice and its links to legitimacy, acceptance of decisions, and cooperation with norms. Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

(147) Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) study leadership inclusiveness and its relationship with psychological safety and improvement efforts in teams, considering differences in professional status. Nembhard, I. M., & Edmondson, A. C. (2006). *Making it safe: The effects of leader inclusiveness and professional status on psychological safety and improvement efforts in health care teams*. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 27*(7), 941–966.

(148) Hirschman (1970) develops the "exit/voice/loyalty" framework to describe responses to organizational/system decline, including exit and voice as alternatives. Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

(149) The International Organization for Standardization (2021) publishes guidelines for whistleblowing management systems, including channel design, confidentiality, follow-up, investigation, protection against retaliation, and continuous improvement. International Organization for Standardization. (2021). *ISO 37002:2021. Whistleblowing management systems — Guidelines*. Geneva: ISO.

(150) Calvo Espinosa (2026) presents ontological and epistemological foundations of Universal Coherence (CU) and defines coherence as dynamic alignment across relational layers of a system. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Universal Coherence (UC) (Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18702121

(151) Calvo Espinosa (2026) introduces the model of 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions S(i) and proposes a functional grid for describing structural dynamics within the CU Project. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *The 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions (S(i)): A Dynamic Model for Universal Structural Dynamics in the Universal Coherence Project(Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18751249

9. Appendix B: Preliminary questionnaire and interview guide (proposed)

Purpose: To explore—anonymously and in a non-identifiable way—perceptions and climate patterns related to silence, perceived institutional tolerance, narrative control, and moral mechanisms in the work environment.

Time frame: current or most recent work environment (past 6–12 months).

Important: No names, companies, specific job titles, or detailed case narratives are requested.

The blocks are inspired by literature on psychological safety, silence/voice, procedural justice, and scale design.

9.1. Instructions and brief consent (suggested text)

Your participation is voluntary and you may leave the questionnaire at any time. We do not request data that could identify people, companies, or specific incidents. Some questions may feel sensitive; if any make you uncomfortable, you may skip them. Please respond thinking about your current work environment or your most recent one (past 6–12 months).

Recommended scale (for most items):

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

(Optional: “Prefer not to answer”)

9.2. Context variables (controls)

1.- Level of responsibility: Operational / Technical / Middle management / Executive leadership / Other / Prefer not to answer.

2.- Approximate tenure: <1 year / 1–3 / 3–7 / 7+ / Prefer not to answer.

3.- Contract type: Permanent / Temporary / Self-employed / Other / Prefer not to answer.

4.- Economic dependence on the job (Likert 1–5): “Losing this job would affect me severely.”

5.- Exposure to serious conflict (frequency 1–5): “In my environment there have been serious interpersonal treatment conflicts in the past year.” (1 Never – 5 Very often)

9.3. TIP block — Perceived institutional tolerance

6.- “When a serious interpersonal treatment problem arises, the usual response is to minimize it or downplay it.”

7.- “In my organization, when severe conflicts occur, there is a tendency to close the issue without clarification or repair.”

8.- “Avoiding ‘noise’ or protecting the organization’s image is prioritized over understanding what happened.”

9.- “Rules are not applied equally depending on who the person involved is.”

10.- “When someone with influence is involved, there is a tendency to protect them or handle the issue with ‘kid gloves’.”

11.- (Reverse-scored) “In my organization, when a serious problem arises, there is an effort to address it clearly and consistently.”

9.4. JP block — Perceived procedural justice / safeguards of the internal channel

12.- “If someone uses the internal channel, phases and timelines are communicated from the start.”

13.- “The reporting person receives periodic updates even if they do not insist.”

14.- “If a conflict of interest or irregularity is detected in the person managing the case, they are removed from the case.”

15.- “During the investigation, the process is protected by temporarily neutralizing the influence of the reported person over sensitive variables (shifts, incentives, workload, visibility).”

16.- “New accusations against the reporter that arise after the report are not accepted if there were no prior documented warnings.”

17.- “The organization handles confidentiality with minimal communication and avoids fueling rumors or stigma.”

17a) “The internal channel is designed with clear fields (facts, dates, people, evidence) and allows documentation to be attached without forcing us to write as if we were lawyers.”

17b) “During the investigation/response phase, access is facilitated to the information necessary for defense (records, relevant documentation, or an auditable alternative if there are limitations).”

17c) “If leaks or loss of confidentiality are detected, the organization acts and records corrective measures (it does not limit itself to ‘assuring’ that a specific area was confidential).”

17d) “When a person returns after a leave linked to a conflict/report, there is a protected reintegration plan and no punitive or opaque changes are applied to shifts, holidays, workload, visibility, or variable pay.”

17e) “If the internal channel issues a resolution with measures, those measures are implemented in a verifiable way (real changes and follow-up), and do not remain as a document without effect.”

17f) (Optional) “If the reported person has the ability to influence variable pay/commissions or other sensitive variables, that influence is temporarily neutralized while the process is ongoing.”

17g. “The reporting person receives a minimum written feedback at closure: steps taken (without identities), facts assessed, criteria applied, and a conclusion per fact (substantiated/unsubstantiated/not assessable), as well as measures and follow-up.”

17h. “A review/correction mechanism exists: additional evidence can be submitted and reconsideration or reopening can be requested with clear criteria and timelines.”

18.- (Reverse-scored) “In my organization the internal channel works more like a mailbox than like a resolution system.”

9.5. SO block — Organizational silence

19.- “I avoid pointing out problems because it could bring consequences for me.”

20.- “Even if I see something unfair, I usually don’t report it out of prudence.”

21.- “In general, it is safer to stay quiet than to speak up when a topic is uncomfortable.”

22.- “I have avoided asking questions or requesting clarification for fear of being marked/flagged.”

23.- “I feel that speaking up doesn’t accomplish much, because things don’t change.”

24.- (Reverse-scored) “In my environment, people can speak about problems without that harming them.”

9.6. SP block — Psychological safety

25.- “In my team I can disagree without fear of retaliation.”

26.- “If I make a mistake, I can acknowledge it without it being used against me.”

27.- “In my team it is possible to raise concerns without being ridiculed.”

28.- "I can ask for help or clarification without it being interpreted as weakness."

29.- "When someone points out a problem, they are listened to before being judged."

30.- (Reverse-scored) "In my team, asking questions can be used against you."

9.7. PP block — Passive participation / bystander omission

31.- "When I observe unfair treatment, I tend not to intervene to avoid trouble."

32.- "I prefer to stay on the sidelines even if I believe someone is being harmed."

33.- "I have avoided supporting someone out of fear of being associated with the conflict."

34.- "In my environment, what's usual is 'not to get involved' in delicate topics."

35.- "Sometimes I have thought that intervening could cost me relationships or opportunities."

36.- (Reverse-scored) "If I see an unfair situation, I tend to support or accompany the person who is suffering it."

9.8. DAJ block — Dissonance / moral self-justification

37.- "Sometimes I tell myself 'it's not that bad' so I can feel at ease."

38.- "When I don't act, I tend to think 'better not to stir things up'."

39.- "I have caught myself justifying my silence as 'prudence' or 'realism'."

40.- "I have thought 'it wasn't my responsibility,' even though something made me uncomfortable."

41.- "It is easier for me to believe 'it's complicated' than to accept that unfairness is being tolerated."

42.- (Reverse-scored) "If I don't intervene in something unfair, I usually recognize it as such without making excuses."

9.9. CV block — Victim blaming

43.- "In my environment it is common to think that the person who reports 'also has some share of the blame'."

44.- "Someone who insists on a delicate topic gets labeled as 'problematic'."

45.- "There is a tendency to interpret that whoever points out a problem 'exaggerates' or 'dramatizes'."

46.- "Fitting in and not making things uncomfortable is valued more than seeking clarification or repair."

47.- "I have heard explanations that turn the harm into 'something personal' about the person who suffers it."

48.- (Reverse-scored) "In my environment, when someone points out abuse, people tend to protect them and listen to them."

9.10. CR block — Narrative control / discursive closure

49.- "I have perceived pressure not to leave a record of certain facts."

50.- "When a topic is uncomfortable, there is pressure toward a single version and the person who insists is delegitimized."

51.- "I have seen attempts to turn facts into 'misunderstandings' in order to close the issue."

52.- "In my environment it is perceived that 'there are things you shouldn't say'."

53.- "People have suggested avoiding evidence, messages, or records so as 'not to complicate things'."

54.- (Reverse-scored) "In my organization, transparency is valued even when it is uncomfortable."

9.11. Closing

55.- "If you wish, you may share in one sentence what makes an environment safer for speaking up (without including names, companies, or identifying details)."

9.12. Brief interview guide (proposed, 20–30 min)

Objective: To understand climate mechanisms and language (silence, narrative control, bystander dilemmas), avoiding reconstruction of identifiable cases.

Opening and safeguard (read at the start, 30–45 s):

This interview does not seek to identify people, companies, or specific incidents. I will ask you to speak in general terms (e.g., "in my environment," "in teams where I have worked"). If an identifying detail comes up, we will stop and rephrase it. You may choose not to answer any question, and you may end the interview at any time.

Conditions of voice and the cost of speaking up

· How would you describe the cost of speaking up in your work environment (high/low, depending on topics)?

· What signals make you think that speaking up "is costly" or "is safe/free"?

· What usually happens when someone raises a problem or an uncomfortable concern?

· What factors make a team more safe—or more unsafe—for dissent?

Narrative control and the manufacture of "acceptable" versions

· Without getting into specific cases, have you seen dynamics where people push toward an official or "acceptable" version of what happened?

· What phrases or formulas appear when someone wants to close a topic?

· What role does "leaving a record" (emails, logs, minutes) play in those contexts?

The bystander: passivity, moral dilemma, and belonging

· In teams where unfair things happen, what makes people tend not to intervene?

· What usually happens internally when someone doesn't intervene (morally/psychologically)?

· What narratives circulate about the person who insists on an issue (without getting into identities)?

Favoritism / proximity to power and protective factors

· How can you tell when there are people who are protected or "untouchable"?

· What factors have you seen that stop the spread of silence or the closing of the narrative?

Closing

· If you had to summarize it in one sentence: what turns an environment into one where the truth can be said without losing belonging?

· What concrete measures would change the climate?

10. Appendix C. Operational prevention in high-pressure environments: rest, support, and traceability

Scope and operational thesis

This appendix complements the essay's framework with a simple idea: many harassment dynamics thrive less because of "bad people" than because of "fog." When work is managed with ambiguity, perpetual urgency, and informal channels, the system creates optimal conditions for off-the-record pressure, arbitrariness, fear of speaking up, and discursive closure.

Prevention, therefore, is not a "wellbeing" poster. It is operational design: introducing structure where abuse needs informality, and rest where pressure needs continuity.

Objective of this appendix: to propose (1) a prevention package before the episode, and (2) an early detection package before normalization.

Note: this appendix does not constitute legal, medical, or psychological advice. Measures related to communication records and data must be adjusted to applicable legislation, collective agreements, internal policies, and privacy criteria.

10.1. Operational rest: when the system learns to breathe

In many "metrics-driven operations" environments (e.g., sales, customer service), exhaustion is interpreted as an individual failure ("you don't manage stress"). In reality, the problem is often structural: a system that does not rest pushes the debt downward (sleep, patience, dignity).

That is why rest is not framed here as "self-care," but as an operational tool: just as a server needs cooling to avoid crashing, an operation needs pauses, closures, and limits to avoid drifting into chronic hypervigilance.

10.1.1. What this prevents

· Hypervigilance through fog: moving targets, shifting priorities, "hot" corrections, meetings without closure, the constant feeling of "you're always falling short."

· 24/7 availability as an unwritten norm (which turns the shift into fiction).

· Climate degradation: when people do not truly rest, judgment drops, tolerance for the intolerable rises, and vulnerability to pressure increases.

10.1.2. Design measures (realistic minimums)

1.- Verifiable shift closure

· Rule: the end of the shift must leave a clear "state" (what remains, what comes next, who decides).

· Minimum practice: a closure checklist (pending items, blockers, decisions made, decisions pending, owner of the next step).

2.- Non-availability windows (anti-pressure)

· Define time bands when responses cannot be demanded (especially off-shift).

· If there are on-calls, make them rotating, paid, and explicit—not "invisible on-calls."

3.- Breaks as risk control (not as permission)

· Mandatory micro-breaks after high-load interactions (aggressive customers, critical incidents, escalations).

· Breaks must not be "negotiable away" due to permanent peaks (if the peak is permanent, it's not a peak: it's a design failure).

4.- Minimum stability rule for criteria

· If a target changes, it must change with a trace: date, reason, and priority.

· The opposite—changing without notice—feeds hypervigilance and arbitrary punishment.

10.1.3. Early indicators (simple sensors)

· Operational messages outside shifts (frequency and recurring "urgencies").

· Priority changes without trace (tasks rewritten; "today's" targets denied tomorrow).

· Meetings that end without clear decisions or without an owner/deadline.

10.2. Channel hygiene and traceability: "operational matters go through the operational channel"

A decisive part of harassment does not happen in explicit content, but in the informal space: hallway, private chat, "quick call," tone, insinuation. That is where abuse wins because it leaves no trace and becomes "a personal feeling." The most powerful prevention here is not moralizing; it is architectural.

10.2.1. Core principle

Every operational request must go through an operational channel.

If it affects targets, tasks, metrics, shifts, leave, evaluation, variable pay, or priority changes, it is not a "personal conversation": it is work and must be recorded.

10.2.2. Minimum design for the operational channel

1.- Minutes/tickets with an ID for operational decisions

· Operational meeting → summary with an ID: attendees, agreements, criteria, owners, deadlines.

· If the record does not trigger obligation, it is decoration. There must be an owner for the loop and deadlines.

2.- Explicit rule for messaging (groups and one-to-one)

· If groups are used to coordinate, they must be traceable and auditable with clear rules of use.

· If there are manager–worker one-to-one chats: define function and limits.

A) If they are operational: traceable as well.

B) If they are for support/feedback: clear boundaries; never a hallway substitute to pressure, threaten, or humiliate.

3.- Meetings that close (anti-fog)

· A meeting that does not produce recorded decisions produces rumination, tone-reading, and "guesswork."

4.- Post-meeting recap (a clean tool)

· Minimum personal practice (when there is no system): a brief email/summary without drama: decisions, criteria, actions, owners, deadlines.

· If there was a degrading comment: set a standard without moral judgment ("to avoid misunderstandings, let's focus on facts and criteria; let's avoid personal evaluations").

5.- Meeting recording: coherence criterion (when viable and legal)

· If a conversation can assign tasks, change targets, correct performance, or generate pressure, then it is operational.

· Recording/logging (if appropriate) is not for indiscriminate surveillance, but to protect against fog and denial.

· Controlled access, preventive purpose, limited retention, and transparency.

10.2.3. What this prevents

· Pressure outside the channel (abuse shifts to where there is no trace).

· Ambiguity used as a weapon (moving criteria that allow punishment at any time).

· Conversational impunity: “I didn’t say that,” “you misunderstood,” “it was a joke.”

10.2.4. Minimum protocol for misuse of payroll data (or its dissemination) as pressure/rumor Why it exists: A decisive part of harassment shifts into informal spaces (hallway talk, private chats, insinuations). When personal financial data is used as an implied “piece of evidence,” the harm is double: privacy + reputation.

Triggers (signals):

· Comments/insinuations about salary advances, wage garnishments, or “what shows up on payroll.”

· Using financial data as an argument about someone’s character, health, substance use, or “stability.”

· Circulation of the data outside HR/payroll.

· “Informal” requests for the person to explain their payroll to third parties.

Immediate action (first 24–48 hours, minimum viable):

1.- Stop the informality:

· “This is a payroll/data matter. We will handle it through the appropriate formal channel.”

· Do not discuss details with the team or in private chats.

2.- Turn what’s in the air into a record:

· Document: date, the exact phrase/insinuation, context, who was present, and the impact (what changed afterwards).

3.- Open a case with an owner:

· Activate an internal ticket/case file (HR/DPO/compliance, depending on the setup).

· Acknowledge receipt and provide response timelines (“we’re currently in phase X”).

System action (minimum safeguards):

4) Verification and traceability:

· Review access logs to payroll data for the relevant period (who/when/purpose).

· Identify unnecessary communications and stop them.

5) Corrective measures (anti-rumor, without sensationalism):

· Explicit reminder of the rule: no discussing or speculating about personal/financial data.

· If there was a leak, record the measures taken (access restrictions, warning, disciplinary action if applicable).

6) Protection against indirect retaliation:

· Temporarily neutralize the presumed responsible person's influence over sensitive variables (shifts, workload, evaluation, incentives, visibility) while the investigation is ongoing.

Closure and learning:

7) Design post-mortem:

· What enabled access/dissemination? (roles, permissions, informal channels, culture of insinuation)

· What gets changed (access rules, auditing, training, channels, sanctions).

10.3. Climate sensing: detect before it becomes customary

If harassment feeds on informality and ambiguity, prevention needs the opposite: structure that closes, and sensors that see the pattern before it normalizes.

10.3.1. Prosody and interaction as signals (not as punishment)

In environments where the content "sounds professional," violence appears in the music: punitive silences, raised voices, systematic interruptions, sarcasm, rhythm shifts when a "forbidden" topic enters, and an asymmetric distribution of speaking time.

Idea of a preventive system (minimum viable):

Recorded operational meetings + simple interaction metrics per team (not to "catch" anyone with an algorithm):

· How much does each role speak?

· How many interruptions occur, and toward whom?

· What silences appear after a humiliation or disauthorization?

· Does volume rise with certain profiles or topics?

· Are there repeated patterns of "veiled threat"?

Ethical rule: these metrics are to detect invisible power patterns, not to automatically sanction. Intervention must always be human, contextual, and safeguarded.

10.3.2. Operational signs of deterioration (cheap to measure)

· Turnover and repeated "personal transfers" by team.

· Drop in real participation (fewer questions, fewer proposals).

· Increase in short leaves due to anxiety/stress.

· Increase in "urgent meetings" that leave no trace.

· Growing use of private channels for operational orders.

10.4. Operational support: minimal network, maximum dignity

Abuse feeds on isolation. When someone is left alone inside the problem, their mind becomes more negotiable: they doubt themselves more, tolerate more, adapt more. That is why support is not an "emotional hug": it is infrastructure.

10.4.1. A micro-network (1–2 people) as a preventive mechanism

· It is not gossip: it is a reality-check point ("I saw it too," "this isn't normal").

· Main function: cut structural gaslighting and restore reality.

10.4.2. Asking for help without overexposing yourself (operational format)

Instead of "I have a huge problem," ask for concrete things:

· "Can you be present in tomorrow's meeting?"

· "Can you confirm if you saw this too?"

· "Do you mind if I put this in writing and you tell me if it's well phrased?"

This reduces theatrics, reduces risk, and forces the situation into order.

10.4.3. Upward support: an institutional circuit with an owner

HR/OSH/Compliance are useless if they are roles without a circuit. Real operational support needs:

· Owner (who responds).

· Deadlines (when).

· Audit (who verifies it happened).

If it doesn't exist, build the equivalent: internal tickets, minutes with an ID, written summaries, etc.

10.4.4. Language support (guardrails)

Under private pressure the body goes into alert and the output becomes either submission or explosion. Neutral, rehearsed phrases help sustain judgment:

· "I'll review it and confirm through the operational channel."

· "I need the criterion in writing to make sure I comply."

· "Let's talk about the fact; we'll address it in the team meeting."

· "To avoid interpretations, can you tell me the priority and the exact criterion?"

10.5. Operational resistance: changing the shape of the game without a "moral war"

Resistance is not enduring more; it is introducing structure where others want fog. You don't need to win a moral battle: you need to move the conflict onto verifiable ground.

10.5.1. Three signals you don't ignore when they repeat

· Ambiguity as a weapon: it is never clear what is enough, but it is always clear when "you don't reach it."

· Pressure outside the channel: hallway, quick calls, private chat, phrases that are impossible to record.

· Public exposure: rankings used to humiliate, corrections in front of others, degrading comparisons.

10.5.2. Three moves of preventive resistance

1.- Turn air into paper

· "To make sure I comply, what is the exact criterion and today's priority? Can you confirm it in writing?"

2.- Move the scene to a context with witnesses

· "Okay, we'll review it in the meeting." / "Send it to me by email." / "Let's keep it on the formal channel."

3.- Strong traceability (not just a notebook)

· Ideal: ticket-style minutes with agreements, criteria, owners, and deadlines.

· Alternative: post-meeting recap.

· Last resort: a detailed log with dates, attendees, as literal as possible phrasing, and consequences.

10.6. How to implement it without it becoming "myth and ceremony"

For this appendix not to be a nice list, it needs owners, verification, and review.

Minimum cycle:

· Detect signals (channel, climate, meeting sensors).

· Record (minutes/ticket/indicator).

· Review (who sees it, how often).

· Act (a concrete measure, not "a conversation").

· Learn (update rules and repeat measurement).

Cross-cutting principle: if there is measurement without action, you only confirm cynicism.

10.7. Ethical and data safeguards

Especially when discussing meeting records, interaction analysis, or channel traceability, the ethical key must be explicit:

· Transparency (what is recorded, why, and how).

· Preventive and protective purpose (not disciplinary control).

· Restricted access (true need-to-know).

· Minimization (the minimum necessary to protect).

· Limited retention (no "infinite archive").

· Consent and safeguards where applicable.

· Prohibition of punitive automated decisions based on "how your voice sounds."

The tool must serve dignity—not the other way around.

10.8. Quick map: which intervention cuts which dynamic in the model

(Operational translation of the TIP / JP / SO / SP / PP / DAJ / CV / CR framework)

· Operational rest → reduces hypervigilance and "background alert"; supports SP↑ and reduces SO (silence due to exhaustion).

· Channel hygiene + traceability → weakens CR (discursive closure) and TIP (perceived tolerance), and raises JP (real procedure).

· Climate sensing (including interaction/prosody) → detects CR early, before it normalizes.

· Micro-support network → reduces PP (bystander omission), cuts DAJ ("it's not that bad"), and lowers CV (victim blaming).

· Guardrail language + resistance moves → turns "perception versus power" into facts and criteria, reducing the fog where abuse hides.

11. Procedural templates and minimum requests

(Traceability, cessation of improper disclosures/communications, "minimum procedural feedback" from the process, preservation of evidence, and an external route when the internal channel is falsely closed).

Intent note: These templates are not meant to "escalate just to escalate," but to make the process verifiable when the system tends to dilute it, close it on paper, or hide behind "confidentiality" without providing even the minimum procedural return. Confidentiality may be necessary; total opacity is something else.

Scope warning: This annex does not constitute legal advice. These are communication formats to demand traceability, minimum safeguards, and protection against leaks/retaliation. Adjust wording, dates, and recipients to your case, collective agreement, and applicable regulations.

How to use this annex (quick guide)

1.- Don't ask for "everything": ask for the minimum that is verifiable.

2.- Separate "data" from "narrative":

· For personal data (payroll/advances): request logs, access records, cessation of disclosures, and measures.

· For processes (complaint/investigation): request timeline, method, criteria, measures, and verification.

3.- Don't let "confidentiality" nullify the process: make clear you're not asking for third parties' identities, but for structure and procedural evidence.

4.- If the internal channel doesn't return even the minimum, unfortunately the remaining exit is often an external route. *In Spain, for labor/OSH (PRL), a typical administrative route is the Labor and Social Security Inspectorate (ITSS). (For data protection, the authority is usually a different one — but **<u>the point here is</u>**: when internally it is closed without safeguards, the external route exists so the system cannot self-validate.)*

11.1. Template — Request for traceability and cessation of payroll-data communications

Objective: *request who accessed what, what was communicated, to whom, and for what purpose, and require cessation of non-necessary disclosures + measures to prevent leaks.*

[YOUR FULL NAME]

ID (DNI/NIE): [___]

Position / area: [___]

Worksite: [___]

Email / phone: [___]

To the attention of:

· HR / Payroll

· Data Protection Officer (DPO) / Data Protection Delegate (DPD) (if applicable)

· [Compliance / Internal channel] (optional, if applicable)

***Subject:** Request for traceability of access and cessation of communications of my payroll data (incl. salary advances / wage garnishments)*

Date: [___]

Dear Sir/Madam,

By means of this letter, I request information and measures regarding access, use, and internal communication of my payroll-related data, including —if applicable— salary advances, wage garnishments, adjustments/reconciliations, or other equivalent items.

1) Request for access traceability (verifiable detail)

I request, for the period [from dd/mm/yyyy to dd/mm/yyyy], the details of:

· What data have been consulted or processed (e.g., payroll, salary advances, wage garnishments, pay components, payment incidents, etc.).

· Who accessed said information (unit/role/position or area; it is not necessary to identify names if that is not appropriate).

· When each access occurred (date and time, if available).

· For what purpose and under which internal procedure (payroll management, audit, incident handling, etc.).

· What communications/disclosures have been made to internal third parties (other persons/departments) and for what purpose.

It is expressly clarified that no personal data of third parties are being requested, but rather the minimum traceability of access and communications regarding the data of the concerned person.

2) Cessation of non-necessary communications/disclosures

Likewise, I require:

· That any communication/disclosure of my payroll/advance/garnishment data that is not strictly necessary for the corresponding labor and/or administrative management cease.

· That access to these data be restricted under a need-to-know criterion, leaving an auditable trail.

3) Corrective measures and leak prevention

I request that I be informed (in general terms, without compromising internal investigations) of:

· Measures adopted to prevent improper disclosure or access.

· Control and monitoring measures (e.g., review of permissions, log review, reminder of confidentiality obligations).

· Whether an internal investigation has been opened regarding possible disclosure or improper use, indicating at least: whether it exists, who manages it (area), and what phase it is in.

4) Written response timeframe and channel

I request acknowledgement of receipt and a written response within the applicable legal deadline, indicating a point of contact for follow-up.

Without further ado, I remain available to clarify any point.

Sincerely,

[Signature if applicable]

[Full name]

[Date]

11.2. Template — Request for "minimum procedural feedback" after an internal resolution/investigation

Objective: *when you are given a "resolution" but are told nothing, request a minimum return without breaking confidentiality: method, phases, criteria, measures, and verification.*

[YOUR FULL NAME]

ID (DNI/NIE): [___]

Position / area: [___]

Email / phone: [___]

To the attention of:

· Internal channel manager / Compliance / Investigative committee

· HR

· DPO/DPD (if sensitive personal data were processed or if there were leaks)

***Subject:** Request for minimum procedural feedback and verification of safeguards*

(Case/File reference: [___])

Date: [___]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Regarding case/file [reference], and having received a resolution without sufficient information about the process, I request minimum procedural feedback that allows me to verify that the internal channel operated with safeguards.

I understand and respect confidentiality regarding third parties' personal data. My request is not intended to access identities or personal contents, but to obtain the minimum verifiable procedural information that any resolution should provide so that it does not become an opaque closure.

1) Timeline and phases (minimum auditable)

I request that you communicate, in timeline format:

· Date of receipt of the initial communication/complaint.

· Phases followed (e.g., admission, investigation, interviews, documentary cross-check, conclusions, resolution).

· Approximate dates of each phase (without needing to disclose sensitive details).

2) Investigation methodology (without personal data)

I request that you specify:

· What types of evidence were considered (e.g., written documentation, records, communications, reports, etc.).

· How many interviews were conducted and with which roles/areas (without identifying persons).

· Whether there was cross-checking with primary sources in the operational environment (when applicable) or whether the sampling was only internal/insular.

· Whether measures were adopted to avoid bias: independence, conflict of interest, separation of duties.

3) Assessment and decision criteria

I request to know:

· What criteria were used to consider facts as substantiated/not substantiated (e.g., consistency, corroboration, records).

· What the final conclusion is based on in terms of facts and procedure, not impressions about the person.

· If the resolution includes measures, what objectives they pursue (protection, correction of practices, prevention).

4) Implemented measures and verification ("not just closure on paper")

If the resolution states that "actions have been taken" or "interviews have been conducted":

· Indicate what specific measures have been implemented (in general terms).

· Who is responsible for each measure (area/role), and what the deadline is.

· What indicator will verify that the measure is not merely decorative (follow-up, review, audit).

5) Access and confidentiality (if there was leakage / rumor / exposure)

If during the process there were indications of leakage, rumor, or exposure of data/insinuations:

· Indicate whether it was internally recorded as an incident.

· What measures were adopted to contain "hallway chatter" (the grapevine) and avoid stigmatization.

· What protocol was activated to preserve confidentiality without turning it into opacity.

6) Right to review / internal appeal

I request that you inform me of:

· Internal avenues for review, if any (second review, procedural audit, ombudsperson, etc.).

· The channel and format to submit procedural objections.

I request acknowledgement of receipt and a written response within the applicable deadline.

Sincerely,

[Signature if applicable]

[Full name]

[Date]

11.3. Template — Requirement to preserve evidence and neutralize influence

Objective: *prevent "cards up the sleeve," deletions, and logistical retaliation while "the investigation is ongoing."*

[YOUR FULL NAME]

ID (DNI/NIE): [___]

Position / area: [___]

To the attention of:

· HR / Compliance / Internal channel

· IT / Information Security (if applicable)

· DPO/DPD (if personal data are involved)

Subject: *Preservation of evidence and protective interim measures for the integrity of the process*

(Case/File: [___])

Date: [___]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Regarding case/file [___], and in order to protect the integrity of the procedure and avoid loss of information, I formally request:

1) Preservation of evidence (no destruction / no alteration)

That, for the period [___], all relevant evidence be preserved, including —but not limited to—:

· Corporate emails related to the facts.

· Corporate messaging and work channels (if applicable).

· Minutes, tickets, reports, or operational records linked to the matter.

· Access logs to sensitive data (payroll, advances, etc.), if applicable.

· History of changes to targets, assignments, shifts, incentives, or variable compensation, if applicable.

I request confirmation that an internal preservation instruction has been issued and that logs/files will be maintained according to policy and regulations.

2) Temporary neutralization of influence and anti-retaliation measures (minimums)

While the process is ongoing, I request verifiable protective measures, for example:

· That the reported persons (if applicable) cannot influence sensitive variables related to me: shifts, holidays, targets, incentives/variable pay, assignments, visibility, evaluations, or disciplinary actions.

· That any change to those variables be reasoned, documented, and traceable, with an identified responsible party.

· A point of contact to report incidents of leakage, rumor, pressure, or indirect retaliation.

I understand these measures do not prejudge the substance of the case: they protect the procedure and prevent contamination.

Sincerely,

[Signature if applicable]

[Full name]

[Date]

11.4. Personal template — Logbook of events (so you don't lose traceability)

Objective: *turn "a feeling" into a minimum record (no dramatization, no adjectives; facts, context, evidence).*

Format (table):

· Date and time:

· Place / channel: (meeting, call, chat, hallway, email)

· People present: (roles if you don't want names)

· Observed fact (1–3 sentences):

· Key words verbatim (if applicable):

· Associated evidence: (email, screenshot, ticket, witness, document, etc.)

· Concrete impact: (task blocked, shift change, rumor, exposure, etc.)

· Action taken: (summary email, notice, request, none)

· Outcome / follow-up:

(This logbook is not "to win a war": it's so the account doesn't depend on memory under stress.)

11.5. When the internal channel does not return minimums: external route (Spain) — Labor Inspectorate

Objective: *not to "threaten," but to acknowledge an operational reality: if the internal process closes without verifiable safeguards, an administrative route exists.*

If, despite the previous requests, the system does not return even the minimum procedural information, or the closure is sustained solely on "confidentiality" without traceability, then — unfortunately — the route that typically remains to activate external verification in labor/OSH matters is the Labor and Social Security Inspectorate (Inspección de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, ITSS).

Pre-checklist (so you don't go in "raw")

· ***Employer and site identification:*** *legal name, tax ID, address, worksite.*

· ***Your contract/conditions:*** *job category, working hours, shifts, variable pay if any.*

· ***Brief timeline*** *(1–2 pages): facts, dates, milestones (internal complaint, interviews, "resolution," periods of silence).*

· ***Evidence:*** *written communications, post-meeting summaries, screenshots, tickets, logs if you have them, post-complaint changes to shifts/variable pay, etc.*

· ***Your internal requests (D.1–D.3) + responses (or lack of response).***

· ***What you ask ITSS for in verifiable terms:***

- That they assess compliance in psychosocial risk prevention, response to conflict/harassment, and minimum safeguards of the procedure (not "gossip," but system/process).

Mini draft of your narrative for ITSS (structure, not a "novel")

1) Identification: *who you are, role, seniority.*

2) Facts: *5–10 chronological bullet points.*

3) Internal handling: *which channel you used, what was done (if known), what was returned to you (or not).*

4) Verifiable effects: *changes, exposure, rumor, logistical retaliation, deterioration, etc.*

5) Request: *inspection action to verify conditions and preventive/procedural measures.*

(The strength here isn't volume: it's traceability.)

These templates are guardrails: they don't replace justice, but they keep the process from turning into fog. Responsible confidentiality can coexist with minimum procedural feedback. Total opacity cannot.

12. Discussion and Conclusions

The path traced by this essay suggests that workplace bullying, when it is poorly managed, does not merely harm one person: it reorders the team's moral economy. The extended psychosocial risk thesis holds that, after the episode, the group learns new rules—or confirms the worst ones—about what happens when a problem is named, who pays the cost of truth, and what kind of silence is rewarded.

In that drift, hypervigilance, alignment with power, narrative rewriting, and organizational silence are not conceptual ornaments: they are predictable social responses when conflict becomes dangerous to say and profitable to hide. The underlying moral point is simple: an organization does not only manage tasks; it manages credibility, belonging, and fear. And that defines what kind of humanity can fit inside work.

Regardless of whether the proposed study is carried out or not, there is a practical conclusion that does not depend on having numbers: the most dangerous point is not only that bullying exists, but that the system teaches that reporting, naming, or supporting turns you into a risk. In that context, revictimization functions as cultural discipline: it communicates to everyone else that there are truths that expel. And once that lesson takes hold, the harm multiplies, because it no longer takes bullying happening daily for the team to live with its effects; it is enough for the social memory of what it costs to speak to keep operating as a threat.

It is also worth being honest about limitations. A survey-and-interview study on bullying and moral climate can be shaped by self-selection, fear of responding, memory biases, and the inevitable fact that correlation is not causation. In addition, the more effective a culture of silence is, the less data it produces. This does not invalidate the research, but it does require careful design and humble interpretation.

In sum: workplace bullying is not only an interpersonal aggression; it is an event that can contaminate the moral climate of work when the institution prioritizes closing the case over repairing it. In that drift, psychosocial risk becomes extended: fear takes root, truth is negotiated, discourse is disciplined, and blame is shifted onto the person who names it. And that is why the clearest indicator is not always visible suffering, but that silent question that hovers over everyone—even those who were not direct victims:

"If something serious happens here… who dares to say it without losing their place?"

13. Final note and invitation to collaborate

If you are a researcher, a risk prevention professional, a people leader, a union representative, a victim, a witness, or simply someone who recognizes in these pages part of what you have lived or are living, I would very much like to hear your voice.

I am open to:

· Comments, critiques, and suggestions for future versions.

· Collaborations on the proposed empirical study (survey + interviews).

· Use and adaptation of the preliminary questionnaire (Appendix B) in other contexts.

· Translations or cultural adaptations.

· Any honest dialogue that helps make extended psychosocial risk visible and preventable.

You can write to me directly at ace@optimeflow.com or leave a public comment on the Zenodo page (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18805173).

This work belongs to the shared commons of knowledge and care. The more we use it together, the more coherent and more humane our organizations will be.

Thank you for reading and for accompanying me.

Andrés Calvo Espinosa

February 2026

Universal Coherence Project

Bibliography

(1) Leymann (1990) introduces the term mobbing as a form of systematic psychological terror at work and outlines key traits (repetition, asymmetry, and progressive degradation). Leymann, H. (1990). *Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. Violence and Victims, 5*(2), 119–126. — p. 1

(2) Nielsen & Einarsen (2012) synthesize, via meta-analysis, the effects of exposure to workplace bullying on mental health and functioning, including associations with anxiety, stress, sleep disturbances, and impaired performance. Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2012). *Outcomes of exposure to workplace bullying: A meta-analytic review. Work & Stress, 26*(4), 309–332. — p. 1

(3) Salin (2003) reviews how workplace bullying becomes more likely in environments with enabling, motivating, and precipitating structures (power, hierarchies, normative ambiguity, and tacit tolerance). Salin, D. (2003). *Ways of explaining workplace bullying: A review of enabling, motivating and precipitating structures and processes in the work environment.* Human Relations, 56(10), 1213–1232. — p. 1

(4) Edmondson (1999) develops the concept of psychological safety in teams and analyzes its relationship with learning behavior (speaking up, asking questions, pointing out errors) and coordination dynamics. Edmondson, A. (1999). *Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 44(2), 350–383. — p. 1

(5) Morrison & Milliken (2000) formulate the framework of organizational silence as a collective phenomenon sustained by shared beliefs, structures, and practices that inhibit voicing problems. Morrison, E. W., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). *Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world.* Academy of Management Review, 25(4), 706–725. — p. 1

(6) Detert & Burris (2007) study the relationship between leadership behaviors and "employee voice," analyzing conditions under which employees express or withhold concerns. Detert, J. R., & Burris, E. R. (2007). *Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open?* Academy of Management Journal, 50(4), 869–884. — p. 1

(7) Darley & Latané (1968) describe the bystander effect and diffusion of responsibility in emergencies, showing how the presence of others reduces intervention. Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). *Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 8(4, Pt. 1), 377–383. — p. 1

(8) Schein (2010) develops organizational culture theory as a set of shared assumptions learned and transmitted, guiding perception, thought, and behavior. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. — p. 1

(9) Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) systematize mixed-methods research designs and criteria for integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence in exploratory and explanatory studies. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 2

(10) Deming (1986) formulates principles of systems improvement and quality, emphasizing that results depend on process design and control, measurement, and review. Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the Crisis.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. — p. 2

(11) Near & Miceli (1985) conceptualize whistleblowing as organizational dissent and analyze conditions and organizational responses associated with its emergence. Near, J. P., & Miceli, M. P. (1985). *Organizational dissidence: The case of whistle-blowing.* Journal of Business Ethics, 4(1), 1–16. — p. 2

(12) Bandura (1977) develops social learning theory, explaining how behaviors and expectations are acquired through observation of models, consequences, and reinforcement. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. — p. 2

(13) Calvo Espinosa (2026) presents ontological and epistemological foundations of the Universal Coherence (UC) framework and defines coherence as dynamic alignment across relational layers of the system. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Universal Coherence (UC) (Preprint v1.0).* Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18702121. — p. 2

(14) Calvo Espinosa (2026) introduces the model of 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions S(i) and proposes a functional grid to describe structural dynamics within the UC Project. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *The 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions (S(i)): A Dynamic Model for Universal Structural Dynamics in the Universal Coherence Project (Preprint v1.0).* Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18751249. — p. 2

(15) Calvo Espinosa (2026) proposes the Universal Coherence Limited-Precision Scale as a structural metric to compare heterogeneous phenomena through coherence indicators. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *The Limited-Precision Universal Coherence Scale: A Universal Structural Metric for Heterogeneous Phenomena (Preprint v1.0).* Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18714577. — p. 2

(16) Cortina & Magley (2003) analyze events following speaking up after interpersonal mistreatment at work, including

retaliation dynamics and associated consequences. Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2003). *Raising voice, risking retaliation: Events following interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.* Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 8(4), 247–265. — p. 3

(17) International Organization for Standardization (2021) offers specific guidelines for managing psychosocial risks in OHS management systems, including organizational factors (work design, leadership, workload, control, relationships) and prevention, assessment, and improvement approaches. International Organization for Standardization. (2021). *ISO 45003:2021. Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks*. Geneva: ISO. — p. 4

(18) Karasek (1979) formulates the demand–control model and analyzes how high demands combined with low decision latitude (control) are associated with greater strain and distress, with implications for job redesign. Karasek, R. A. (1979). *Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 24(2), 285–308 — p. 4

(19) Vandekerckhove (2006) analyzes whistleblowing from a social responsibility perspective and discusses conditions, frameworks, and organizational mechanisms to channel reports and manage dissent. Vandekerckhove, W. (2006). *Whistleblowing and Organizational Social Responsibility: A Global Assessment*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate. — p. 4

(20) Leventhal (1980) synthesizes normative criteria of procedural justice (consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, representativeness, and ethics) and discusses implications for evaluating process fairness. Leventhal, G. S. (1980). *What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships.* In K. J. Gergen, M. S. Greenberg, & R. H. Willis (Eds.), Social Exchange: Advances in Theory and Research (pp. 27–55). New York, NY: Plenum. — p. 4

(21) Schneider (1975) discusses organizational climate as a collective psychological construct and reviews implications for behavior and attitudes at work. Schneider, B. (1975). *Organizational climates: An essay.* Personnel Psychology, 28(4), 447–479. — p. 4

(22) Victor & Cullen (1988) develop the concept of "ethical climate" and propose a typology describing organizational bases of ethical climates and their relation to decisions and behavior. Victor, B., & Cullen, J. B. (1988). *The organizational bases of ethical work climates.* Administrative Science Quarterly, 33(1), 101–125. — p. 4

(23) Feldman (1984) analyzes the development and enforcement of group norms, describing how norms emerge, are reinforced, and are enforced in organizational contexts. Feldman, D. C. (1984). *The development and enforcement of group norms.* Academy of Management Review, 9(1), 47–53. — p. 4

(24) Noelle-Neumann (1974) proposes the "spiral of silence" theory and explains how fear of isolation reduces public expression of opinions perceived as minority or costly. Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). *The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion.* Journal of Communication, 24(2), 43–51. — p. 4

(25) Tyler (1990) analyzes the relationship among legitimacy, procedural justice, and acceptance of decisions/authority, integrating evidence on obedience and cooperation with norms. Tyler, T. R. (1990). *Why People Obey the Law*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. — p. 5

(26) Verkuil, Atasayi, & Molendijk (2015) present a meta-analysis on workplace bullying and mental health using cross-sectional and longitudinal data, estimating associations and effect sizes. Verkuil, B., Atasayi, S., & Molendijk, M. L. (2015). *Workplace bullying and mental health: A meta-analysis on cross-sectional and longitudinal data.* PLOS ONE, 10(8), e0135225. — p. 5

(27) Colquitt et al. (2001) conduct a meta-analysis of organizational justice research (distributive, procedural, interpersonal, informational) and synthesize relationships with workplace attitudes and behaviors. Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E., Wesson, M. J., Porter, C. O. L. H., & Ng, K. Y. (2001). *Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research.* Journal of Applied Psychology, 86(3), 425–445. — p. 5

(28) Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner (2000) update a meta-analysis on antecedents and correlates of turnover, including intention to quit, satisfaction, commitment, and other organizational variables. Griffeth, R. W., Hom, P. W., & Gaertner, S. (2000). *A meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: Update, moderator tests, and research implications.* Journal of Management, 26(3), 463–488. — p. 5

(29) Pinder & Harlos (2001) conceptualize employee silence as a response to perceived injustice and distinguish motivational forms such as quiescence (fear) and acquiescence (resignation). Pinder, C. C., & Harlos, K. P. (2001). *Employee silence: Quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice.* Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, 20, 331–369. — p. 5

(30) Zapf (1999) reviews causes of mobbing/bullying at organizational, work-group, and individual levels, discussing contextual factors and associated processes. Zapf, D. (1999). *Organizational, work group related, and personal causes of*

mobbing/bullying at work. International Journal of Manpower, 20(1/2), 70–85. — p. 6

(31) Kalleberg (2009) analyzes the expansion of precarious work and job insecurity, describing transformations in employment relations and structural effects on workers. Kalleberg, A. L. (2009). *Precarious work, insecure workers: Employment relations in transition*. American Sociological Review, 74(1), 1–22. — p. 6

(32) Foucault (1977) examines disciplinary power and social normalization through institutions, describing technologies of surveillance, sanction, and control and their role in producing behavior. Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books. — p. 6

(33) French & Raven (1959) propose a typology of bases of social power (reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, expert), with implications for influence and dependence in hierarchical relations. French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. (1959). *The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright* (Ed.), Studies in Social Power (pp. 150–167). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research. — p. 6

(34) Fricker (2007) develops the framework of epistemic injustice (testimonial and hermeneutical), analyzing how power can degrade credibility and access to interpretive resources. Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. — p. 8

(35) Sweet (2019) analyzes gaslighting as a sociological phenomenon, describing relational/institutional mechanisms that erode credibility and the sense of reality in power contexts. Sweet, P. L. (2019). *The sociology of gaslighting*. American Sociological Review, 84(5), 851–875. — p. 8

(36) Merton (1936) theorizes unanticipated consequences of purposive social action, describing how goal-oriented actions can produce emergent, repeated effects that were not anticipated. Merton, R. K. (1936). *The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action*. American Sociological Review, 1(6), 894–904. — p. 9

(37) Withey & Cooper (1989) model and predict responses to organizational deterioration (exit, voice, loyalty, neglect) and analyze conditions that influence each response choice. Withey, M. J., & Cooper, W. H. (1989). *Predicting exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect*. Administrative Science Quarterly, 34(4), 521–539. — p. 9

(38) Seligman (1975) develops the concept of learned helplessness, describing how repeated exposure to lack of control can generate passivity, withdrawal, and affective changes, with implications for behavior and adaptation. Seligman, M. E. P. (1975). *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death*. San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman. — p. 9

(39) Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) propose an integrative model of organizational trust based on ability, benevolence, and integrity, and describe antecedents and consequences of trust. Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). *An integrative model of organizational trust*. Academy of Management Review, 20(3), 709–734. — p. 10

(40) Argyris and Schön (1978) develop a theory of organizational learning centered on theories-in-use, routines, and defensive mechanisms that influence how organizations learn and change. Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1978). *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. — p. 10

(41) McEwen (1998) explains the protective and harmful effects of stress mediators and develops the concept of allostatic load under sustained stress. McEwen, B. S. (1998). *Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators*. The New England Journal of Medicine, 338(3), 171–179. — p. 10

(42) Weick (1995) conceptualizes sensemaking as the process by which people build meaning under organizational ambiguity from environmental cues. Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 10

(43) Hobfoll (1989) formulates Conservation of Resources theory, describing how people seek to obtain, conserve, and protect resources in the face of threat or loss. Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). *Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress*. American Psychologist, 44(3), 513–524. — p. 10

(44) Tajfel and Turner (1979) develop Social Identity Theory and its implications for intergroup behavior, belonging, categorization, and conflict. Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). *An integrative theory of intergroup conflict*. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole. — p. 11

(45) Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that the need to belong is a fundamental human motive and review evidence of its effects on affect, cognition, and behavior. Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). *The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. Psychological Bulletin, 117*(3), 497–529. — p. 11

(46) Keltner, Gruenfeld and Anderson (2003) propose an approach-inhibition model of power, describing how power alters emotion, cognition, and behavior. Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). *Power, approach, and inhibition. Psychological Review, 110*(2), 265–284. — p. 11

(47) Festinger (1957) introduces Cognitive Dissonance Theory and describes mechanisms by which inconsistencies among cognitions, behavior, and self-image are reduced. Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. — p. 11

(48) Lerner (1980) examines belief in a just world and its psychological and social consequences, including responsibility

attributions in response to others' harm. Lerner, M. J. (1980). *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. New York, NY: Plenum Press. — p. 11

(49) Halbwachs (1992) develops the concept of collective memory and analyzes how social frameworks shape the reconstruction of the past. Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory* (L. A. Coser, Ed. & Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. — p. 11

(50) Goffman (1963) analyzes stigma and the social management of "spoiled" identities, describing processes of labeling and differential treatment. Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. — p. 11

(51) Link and Phelan (2001) conceptualize stigma as a process (labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination) and discuss the structural conditions that sustain it. Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). *Conceptualizing stigma. Annual Review of Sociology, 27*, 363–385. — p. 11

(52) Dotson (2011) develops the concept of epistemic violence through silencing practices and proposes a framework to identify mechanisms that block epistemic agency. Dotson, K. (2011). *Tracking epistemic violence, tracking practices of silencing. Hypatia, 26*(2), 236–257. — p. 11

(53) Van Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003) conceptualize voice and silence as multidimensional constructs and propose typologies to study motivations and forms of silence at work. Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Botero, I. C. (2003). *Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multidimensional constructs. Journal of Management Studies, 40*(6), 1359–1392. — p. 12

(54) Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar (1998) define organizational cynicism and describe its structure (beliefs, affect, behaviors) and its relationships with organizational experiences. Dean, J. W., Brandes, P., & Dharwadkar, R. (1998). *Organizational cynicism. Academy of Management Review, 23*(2), 341–352. — p. 12

(55) Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004) propose the concept of ethical fading and discuss how self-deception and framing processes reduce the salience of the ethical dimension in decisions. Tenbrunsel, A. E., & Messick, D. M. (2004). *Ethical fading: The role of self-deception in unethical behavior. Social Justice Research, 17*(2), 223–236. — p. 12

(56) Gumperz (1982) analyzes discourse strategies and the role of contextualization cues (intonation, pauses, rhythm) in the social interpretation of speech. Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. — p. 12

(57) Brown and Levinson (1987) develop Politeness Theory (face) and describe pragmatic strategies for managing threats to social image in interaction. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. — p. 12

(58) Sue et al. (2007) introduce the framework of microaggressions (in the context of racial microaggressions) and discuss their psychological and clinical implications. Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). *Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice*. American Psychologist, 62(4), 271–286. — p. 12

(59) Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) describe the turn-taking system in conversation and basic rules for allocation, interruption, and repair. Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). *A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. Language, 50*(4), 696–735 — p. 12

(60) Kuran (1995) explains preference falsification and its social consequences, analyzing conditions under which people hide real beliefs due to social costs. Kuran, T. (1995). *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. — p. 13

(61) Bies and Moag (1986) introduce interactional justice and propose communicative criteria of fairness (respect, dignity, appropriateness) in organizational interaction. Bies, R. J., & Moag, J. S. (1986). *Interactional justice: Communication criteria of fairness*. In R. J. Lewicki, B. H. Sheppard, & M. H. Bazerman (Eds.), *Research on Negotiation in Organizations* (Vol. 1, pp. 43–55). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press. — p. 13

(62) Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) systematize principles and techniques of qualitative interviewing, including planning, conducting, transcription, and ethical considerations. Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 14

(63) Orth (2002) analyzes secondary victimization in procedural contexts and its effects on the affected person's experience. Orth, U. (2002). *Secondary victimization of crime victims by criminal proceedings. Social Justice Research, 15*(4), 313–325. — p. 15

(64) Herman (1992) describes clinical dynamics of trauma, including the effects of subsequent impacts and their relationship to recovery, safety, and the continuity of harm. Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books. — p. 15

(65) Janoff-Bulman (1992) develops the “shattered assumptions” framework after traumatic events, including effects on self-esteem, trust, and sense of control. Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma*. New York, NY: Free Press. — p. 15

(66) Williams (2007) reviews the literature on ostracism/social exclusion, describing psychological and behavioral effects in group contexts. Williams, K. D. (2007). *Ostracism. Annual Review of Psychology, 58*, 425–452. — p. 15

(67) Herd and Moynihan (2018) develop the concept of administrative burden and describe how procedures and operational frictions generate psychological and behavioral costs for people. Herd, P., & Moynihan, D. P. (2018). *Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. — p. 15

(68) DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) synthesize research on rumor in social and organizational contexts, including propagation conditions, uncertainty, and effects on reputation and stigma. DiFonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (2007). *Rumor Psychology: Social and Organizational Approaches*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. — p. 15

(69) Jackall (1988) analyzes organizational dynamics where self-protection, reputation, and institutional risk management influence decisions and internal narratives. Jackall, R. (1988). *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. — p. 15

(70) Scott (1990) studies domination relations and mechanisms of social control over what can be said, distinguishing between “public transcripts” and “hidden transcripts.” Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. — p. 15

(71) Folger and Cropanzano (1998) develop a framework of organizational justice applied to people management, including procedural components and their implications for legitimacy, reactions, and behavior. Folger, R., & Cropanzano, R. (1998). *Organizational Justice and Human Resource Management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 16

(72) Alford (2001) analyzes whistleblowers’ experiences and organizational responses, including retaliation dynamics, exhaustion, and isolation after reporting. Alford, C. F. (2001). *Whistleblowers: Broken Lives and Organizational Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. — p. 16

(73) World Health Organization (2022) publishes guidelines on mental health at work, including organizational measures, prevention and support, and recommendations for workplace contexts. World Health Organization. (2022). *WHO guidelines on mental health at work*. Geneva: World Health Organization. — p. 16

(74) OECD (2012) reviews evidence and policy on mental health and work, including absenteeism, return to work, and the design of support and protection systems. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012). *Sick on the Job? Myths and Realities about Mental Health and Work*. Paris: OECD Publishing. — p. 17

(75) Kivimäki, Elovainio and Vahtera (2000) study the relationship between workplace bullying and sickness absence in hospital staff. Kivimäki, M., Elovainio, M., & Vahtera, J. (2000). *Workplace bullying and sickness absence in hospital staff. Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 57*(10), 656–660. — p. 17

(76) Mobley (1977) proposes a turnover process model describing intermediate stages between job satisfaction/experience and intent to leave/turnover. Mobley, W. H. (1977). *Intermediate linkages in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover. Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(2), 237–240. — p. 18

(77) Rousseau (1995) develops the psychological contract framework (explicit and implicit agreements) and analyzes its formation, change, and consequences when breach is perceived. Rousseau, D. M. (1995). *Psychological Contracts in Organizations: Understanding Written and Unwritten Agreements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 18

(78) Mitchell et al. (2001) introduce “job embeddedness” and relate it to retention and voluntary turnover, describing links, fit, and sacrifices associated with staying or leaving. Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., Lee, T. W., Sablynski, C. J., & Erez, M. (2001). *Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. Academy of Management Journal, 44*(6), 1102–1121. — p. 18

(79) Meyer and Rowan (1977) analyze how formal structures and policies can function as “myth and ceremony,” and describe decoupling between what is declared and what is implemented. Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). *Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. American Journal of Sociology, 83*(2), 340–363. — p. 19

(80) Greenberg (1990) reviews the development of organizational justice and synthesizes dimensions and findings on fairness perceptions (including procedural justice). Greenberg, J. (1990). *Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Journal of Management, 16*(2), 399–432. — p. 19

(81) Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) present a meta-analysis on whistleblowing, including correlates of reporting and evidence on retaliation. Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., & Viswesvaran, C. (2005). *Whistleblowing in organizations: An examination of correlates of whistleblowing intentions, actions, and retaliation. Journal of Business Ethics, 62*, 277–297. — p. 19

(82) The ILO (2019) establishes international standards on violence and harassment in the world of work, including prevention approaches, measures, training, and complaint/protection mechanisms. International Labour Organization. (2019). *Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (*No. 190). Geneva: ILO. International Labour Organization. (2019). *Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019* (No. 206). Geneva: ILO. — p. 19

(83) ISO (2021) publishes guidelines for whistleblowing management systems, including principles of confidentiality, impartiality, follow-up, case management, and protection. International Organization for Standardization. (2021). ISO 37002:2021. *Whistleblowing management systems — Guidelines*. Geneva: ISO. — p. 19

(84) NIOSH (1999) provides a reference guide on job stress and prevention, describing organizational risk factors and intervention/follow-up lines. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (1999). *Stress at Work*. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 99–101. Cincinnati, OH: NIOSH. — p. 19

(85) Lind and Tyler (1988) develop the psychosocial framework of procedural justice and its relationship with legitimacy, acceptance of decisions, and cooperation with norms. Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*. New York, NY: Plenum Press. — p. 19

(86) Directive (EU) 2019/1937 sets minimum standards to protect people who report breaches, including internal/external channels, confidentiality, and anti-retaliation measures. Unión Europea. (2019). *Directiva (UE) 2019/1937 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2019, relativa a la protección de las personas que informen sobre infracciones del Derecho de la Unión. Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea.* — p. 20

(87) ACAS (2015) sets practical criteria for disciplinary and grievance procedures, including investigation, impartiality, communication, and procedural reasonableness. Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. (2015). *Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (Code of Practice 1)*. London: ACAS. — p. 20

(88) Ross (1977) describes attributional biases (including over-attributing personal traits) and their effects on interpreting behavior in social contexts. Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 173–220). New York, NY: Academic Press. — p. 20

(89) Allport and Postman (1947) analyze the psychology of rumor and conditions for propagation under uncertainty, perceived importance, and anxiety. Allport, G. W., & Postman, L. (1947). *The Psychology of Rumor*. New York, NY: Henry Holt — p. 20

(90) Fisher and Geiselman (1992) systematize the cognitive interview as a technique to maximize recall and narrative quality, emphasizing open questions and minimizing interruptions/suggestion. Fisher, R. P., & Geiselman, R. E. (1992). *Memory-Enhancing Techniques for Investigative Interviewing: The Cognitive Interview*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas. — p. 21

(91) Sunstein (2021) develops the concept of “sludge” as administrative friction that hinders access to rights/services and generates behavioral and psychological costs. Sunstein, C. R. (2021). *Sludge: What Stops Us from Getting Things Done and What to Do about It*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. — p. 21

(92) Tepper (2000) studies consequences of abusive supervision, including effects on stress, satisfaction, commitment, and withdrawal/turnover behaviors. Tepper, B. J. (2000). *Consequences of abusive supervision. Academy of Management Journal, 43*(2), 178–190. — p. 21

(93) Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) governs personal-data processing, including sensitive categories (health) and confidentiality/minimization/security principles applicable to internal communications. Unión Europea. (2016). *Reglamento (UE) 2016/679 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 27 de abril de 2016 (Reglamento General de Protección de Datos). Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea.* — p. 22

(94) Reason (1997) analyzes how latent failures and organizational conditions cause harm and proposes learning, pattern review, and systemic improvement approaches. Reason, J. (1997). *Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate. — p. 23

(95) Hollnagel (2014) proposes the Safety-II approach and discusses the importance of system response/capacity to act in addition to signal detection. Hollnagel, E. (2014). *Safety-I and Safety-II: The Past and Future of Safety Management*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate. — p. 23

(96) Brunsson (1989) analyzes discrepancies between talk, decisions, and actions in organizations and how practices can stabilize through “organizational hypocrisy.” Brunsson, N. (1989). *The Organization of Hypocrisy: Talk, Decisions and Actions in Organizations*. Chichester, UK: Wiley. — p. 24

(97) Galanter (1974) develops the “repeat players vs. one-shotters” framework and analyzes how resources, experience, and continuity create structural advantages in disputes and long processes. Galanter, M. (1974). *Why the “Haves” Come Out Ahead: Speculations on the Limits of Legal Change. Law & Society Review, 9*(1), 95–160. — p. 24

(98) Spain's Workers' Statute regulates in Article 50 contract termination at the employee's initiative due to serious employer breaches, with associated compensatory effects when applicable. España. (2015). *Real Decreto Legislativo 2/2015, de 23 de octubre, por el que se aprueba el texto refundido de la Ley del Estatuto de los Trabajadores. Boletín Oficial del Estado*. — p. 24

(99) Steel (2002) reviews turnover theory and discusses fit issues between theoretical models and empirical evidence in predicting exit/withdrawal. Steel, R. P. (2002). *Turnover theory at the empirical interface: Problems of fit and function. Academy of Management Review, 27*(3), 346–360. — p. 25

(100) Lee and Mitchell (1994) propose the unfolding model of voluntary turnover, describing decision paths and the role of triggering events ("shocks"). Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (1994). *An alternative approach: The unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover. Academy of Management Review, 19*(1), 51–89. — p. 25

(101) Rhode (2004) reviews barriers to access to justice and inequalities in the practical capacity to exercise rights, including costs, information, time, and representation. Rhode, D. L. (2004). *Access to Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. — p. 25

(102) OECD (2016) synthesizes whistleblower protection practices and principles, including channel design, investigation, follow-up, and safeguards against retaliation. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *Committing to Effective Whistleblower Protection*. Paris: OECD Publishing. — p. 25

(103) Eubanks (2018) analyzes how digital and automated systems can produce exclusion and unequal adverse effects on populations with fewer resources and less margin. Eubanks, V. (2018). *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. — p. 26

(104) Spain's Law 2/2023 regulates the protection of reporting persons and sets requirements for internal systems and external channels, as well as anti-retaliation measures. España. (2023). *Ley 2/2023, de 20 de febrero, reguladora de la protección de las personas que informen sobre infracciones normativas y de lucha contra la corrupción. Boletín Oficial del Estado*. — p. 28

(105) Popper (1959) formalizes the criterion of falsifiability and the logic of testing: a scientific proposition must be formulated so that it can be tested and potentially refuted. Popper, K. (1959). *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London: Hutchinson. — p. 30

(106) Morrison (2014) reviews the literature on voice and silence in organizations, synthesizing antecedents, perceived costs, and contextual conditions that encourage or inhibit the communication of problems. Morrison, E. W. (2014). *Employee voice and silence. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*(1), 173–197. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328 — p. 30

(107) Bandura (1999) develops the moral disengagement framework: cognitive mechanisms (e.g., diffusion of responsibility, minimization of harm, attribution to the victim) that allow people to justify omissions or harmful conduct without triggering moral self-sanctions. Bandura, A. (1999). *Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3*(3), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3 — p. 30

(108) MacKinnon (2008) systematizes mediation analysis (direct and indirect effects), assumptions, estimation methods, and interpretation for testing hypothesized causal paths. MacKinnon, D. P. (2008). *Introduction to Statistical Mediation Analysis*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. — p. 30

(109) Latané and Darley (1970) study the bystander effect and diffusion of responsibility: in the presence of others, the probability of intervening decreases, with situational and cognitive mechanisms associated with passivity. Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1970). *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help?* New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts. — p. 30

(110) Shaver (1985) analyzes the attribution of blame (causality, responsibility, and "deservingness"), clarifying how judgments of blameworthiness are constructed and why blaming patterns appear in ambiguous or threatening contexts. Shaver, K. G. (1985). *The Attribution of Blame: Causality, Responsibility, and Blameworthiness*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag. — p. 30

(111) Frazier et al. (2017) conduct a meta-analytic review of psychological safety and its organizational correlates (including willingness to speak up, learning, and performance), consolidating empirical evidence of its effects. Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). *Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. Personnel Psychology, 70*(1), 113–165. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12183 — p. 30

(112) Boje (1991) studies the organization as a storytelling system: stories are "performed," circulate, and shape shared meaning and legitimacy, showing how narrative organizes what is considered true/reasonable within the group. Boje, D. M. (1991). *The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. Administrative Science Quarterly, 36*(1), 106–126. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393432 — p. 30

(113) Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) provide a classic meta-analysis on organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional), its correlates and consequences, consolidating evidence of its role in workplace attitudes and behaviors. Cohen-Charash, Y., & Spector, P. E. (2001). *The role of justice in organizations: A meta-analysis. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 86*(2), 278–321. https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.2001.2958 — p. 30

(114) Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) examine the multilevel effect of procedural justice climate on silence: they show how procedural justice (at the group level) relates to the intentional withholding of critical information. Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2008). *Employee silence on critical work issues: The cross level effects of procedural justice climate. Personnel Psychology, 61*(1), 37–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2008.00105.x — p. 30

(115) Aiken and West (1991) standardize the treatment of interactions in regression (moderation): centering, estimation, and interpretation of conditional effects and interaction tests. Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE. — p. 30

(116) Rehg et al. (2008) study retaliation against whistleblowers and the role of power relationships, identifying conditions associated with retaliation and outcomes for the reporter in organizational contexts. Rehg, M. T., Miceli, M. P., Near, J. P., & Van Scotter, J. R. (2008). *Antecedents and outcomes of retaliation against whistleblowers: Gender differences and power relationships. Organization Science, 19*(2), 221–240. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0310 — p. 30

(117) Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) position mixed methods as an integrative paradigm and describe design rationales for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches with methodological coherence. Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). *Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. Educational Researcher, 33*(7), 14–26. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014 — p. 31

(118) Gee (2014) develops an accessible framework for discourse analysis as a method: tools for analyzing language-in-use, identities, social practices, and meaning-making in interaction. Gee, J. P. (2014). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315819679 — p. 31

(119) Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) edit a reference handbook on mixed methods and describe designs, integration rationales, and quality criteria for research that combines quantitative and qualitative evidence. Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2010). *The SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 32

(120) Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) present the “Tailored Design Method” for surveys (including web mode), with recommendations on design, administration, response rates, and bias control. Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. — p. 32

(121) Rubin and Rubin (2011) systematize the semi-structured qualitative interviewing approach, including guide construction, questioning, conducting, recording, and analysis. Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 32

(122) Patton (2002) develops qualitative sampling strategies (including maximum variation) and criteria for designing exploratory studies with diverse profiles and contexts. Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 32

(123) Wiles, Crow, Heath, and Charles (2008) analyze how anonymity and confidentiality are managed in social research, including practical limits, identification risks, and design decisions to mitigate them. Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S., & Charles, V. (2008). The management of confidentiality and anonymity in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11*(5), 417–428. — p. 32

(124) National Commission (1979) sets ethical principles and guidelines for research with human subjects (respect for persons, beneficence, and justice), including notions of informed consent and the right to withdraw. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. — p. 33

(125) Likert (1932) introduces a technique for measuring attitudes based on graded items and aggregated scores, the historical basis of Likert-type scales. Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology, 140*, 1–55. — p. 33

(126) Tourangeau, Rips, and Rasinski (2000) describe the psychology of survey response, including processes of recall, judgment, and reporting, and how the time frame affects recall quality. Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J., & Rasinski, K. (2000). *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. — p. 33

(127) Meade and Craig (2012) describe methods for detecting careless/inattentive responses in surveys and screening procedures to improve data quality. Meade, A. W., & Craig, S. B. (2012). Identifying careless responses in survey data.

Psychological Methods, 17(3), 437–455. — p. 34

(128) Cronbach (1951) introduces the alpha coefficient as an estimator of internal consistency and discusses its relationship with the internal structure of tests and scales. Cronbach, L. J. (1951). *Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. Psychometrika, 16*(3), 297–334. — p. 34

(129) Preacher and Hayes (2008) describe asymptotic and resampling strategies (including bootstrap) to evaluate indirect effects in mediation models. Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*(3), 879–891. — p. 34

(130) Maxwell and Cole (2007) analyze biases and limitations of mediation estimated with cross-sectional data when the real process is longitudinal, discussing conditions under which estimates may be distorted. Maxwell, S. E., & Cole, D. A. (2007). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation. *Psychological Methods, 12*(1), 23–44. — p. 34

(131) Potter and Wetherell (1987) develop a discursive psychology approach and propose tools to analyze language-in-use, construction of versions, attributions, and rhetorical strategies in interaction. Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London: SAGE. — p. 34

(132) Gelman and Hill (2007) develop a practical approach to regression models with covariates and statistical control, including interpretation and modeling in the social sciences. Gelman, A., & Hill, J. (2007). *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. — p. 34

(133) Hayes (2018) systematizes mediation, moderation, and interaction models within a regression framework, including estimation, interpretation, and inference procedures. Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press. — p. 34

(134) Dawson (2014) reviews moderation analysis in applied research and describes recommended practices for interpreting interactions and reporting simple slopes. Dawson, J. F. (2014). Moderation in management research: What, why, when, and how. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 29*(1), 1–19. — p. 34

(135) DeVellis (2017) presents criteria and steps for scale development, including index construction, item refinement, and evaluation of reliability/validity. DeVellis, R. F. (2017). *Scale Development: Theory and Applications* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 34

(136) Denzin (1978) systematizes the concept of triangulation (data, methods, investigators, and theories) and discusses its use to strengthen inferences in social research. Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. — p. 35

(137) Miles and Huberman (1994) describe qualitative analysis strategies, including the systematic search for discrepant/negative cases and their use to refine interpretations. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. — p. 35

(138) Morrison (2014) reviews the literature on employee voice and silence in organizations, including antecedents, perceived costs, and contextual dynamics that foster or inhibit raising problems. Morrison, E. W. (2014). *Employee voice and silence. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*(1), 173–197. doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328 — p. 36

(139) Fischer, Greitemeyer, Pollozek, and Frey (2011) present a meta-analysis of the bystander effect, comparing intervention in dangerous vs. non-dangerous emergencies and synthesizing effect sizes. Fischer, P., Greitemeyer, T., Pollozek, F., & Frey, D. (2011). *The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. Psychological Bulletin, 137*(4), 517–537. — p. 36

(140) Festinger (1957) introduces cognitive dissonance theory and describes mechanisms through which inconsistencies between cognitions, behavior, and self-image are reduced. Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. — p. 36

(141) Ryan (1971) analyzes victim blaming as a social pattern and describes how responsibility is shifted toward those who suffer harm to preserve explanations of order or normality. Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the Victim*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books. — p. 36

(142) Newman, Donohue, and Eva (2017) conduct a systematic review of psychological safety, identifying antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes in workplace contexts. Newman, A., Donohue, R., & Eva, N. (2017). *Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. Human Resource Management Review, 27*(3), 521–535. — p. 36

(143) Fairclough (1989) develops a critical discourse analysis framework and examines relationships between language, power, legitimation, and control in institutional contexts. Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman. — p. 36

(144) Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (Eds.) (2011) compile theoretical and empirical developments on workplace

bullying/harassment, including organizational dynamics, consequences, and research approaches. Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C. L. (Eds.). (2011). *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace: Developments in Theory, Research, and Practice* (2nd ed.). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press. — p. 37

(145) Pfeffer (1992) analyzes organizational power and politics as structural dimensions shaping decisions, access to resources, reputation, and career trajectories. Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press. — p. 37

(146) Lind and Tyler (1988) develop the psychosocial framework of procedural justice and its links to legitimacy, acceptance of decisions, and cooperation with norms. Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*. New York, NY: Plenum Press. — p. 37

(147) Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) study leadership inclusiveness and its relationship with psychological safety and improvement efforts in teams, considering differences in professional status. Nembhard, I. M., & Edmondson, A. C. (2006). *Making it safe: The effects of leader inclusiveness and professional status on psychological safety and improvement efforts in health care teams. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 27*(7), 941–966. — p. 37

(148) Hirschman (1970) develops the “exit/voice/loyalty” framework to describe responses to organizational/system decline, including exit and voice as alternatives. Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. — p. 37

(149) The International Organization for Standardization (2021) publishes guidelines for whistleblowing management systems, including channel design, confidentiality, follow-up, investigation, protection against retaliation, and continuous improvement. International Organization for Standardization. (2021). *ISO 37002:2021. Whistleblowing management systems — Guidelines*. Geneva: ISO. — p. 37

(150) Calvo Espinosa (2026) presents ontological and epistemological foundations of Universal Coherence (CU) and defines coherence as dynamic alignment across relational layers of a system. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Universal Coherence (UC) (Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18702121 — p. 37

(151) Calvo Espinosa (2026) introduces the model of 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions S(i) and proposes a functional grid for describing structural dynamics within the CU Project. Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). *The 16 Simultaneous Structural Functions (S(i)): A Dynamic Model for Universal Structural Dynamics in the Universal Coherence Project(Preprint v1.0)*. Zenodo. doi:10.5281/zenodo.18751249 — p. 37

Editorial note and statements

Editorial note

This text is born out of a real experience and the need to turn it into replicable learning. Out of respect for third parties, the examples are presented in an anonymized and typological manner: the focus is on mechanisms and the design of procedures, not on exposing individuals. If this essay achieves anything, let it be transforming harm into operational criteria so that others do not have to pay the same cost.

Acknowledgments

To my father, may he rest in peace, and to my mother: for bringing me into the world, for giving me a voice, and for teaching me that using it to build with respect and without fear is the most important thing one can do in this life. To Keise, for helping me not to stop being who I was, and for not allowing me to dissolve.

Funding

This work has not received specific funding from public agencies, commercial entities, or non-profit organizations.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest related to the content of this work. This text does not represent the official position of any religious, academic, or corporate institution, but exclusively the author's responsibility within the framework of the Universal Coherence (UC) project.

How to cite

Recommended citation (APA 7): Calvo Espinosa, A. (2026). Psychosocial Evolution Following Workplace Bullying. Beyond the Victim: Social Contagion, Narrative Control, and Organizational Climate (Preprint v1.0-EN). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18805173

Short in-text citation: (Calvo Espinosa, 2026)