Workplace Incivility

Investigating bystander behavior, well-being, and coping responses to perceived incivility

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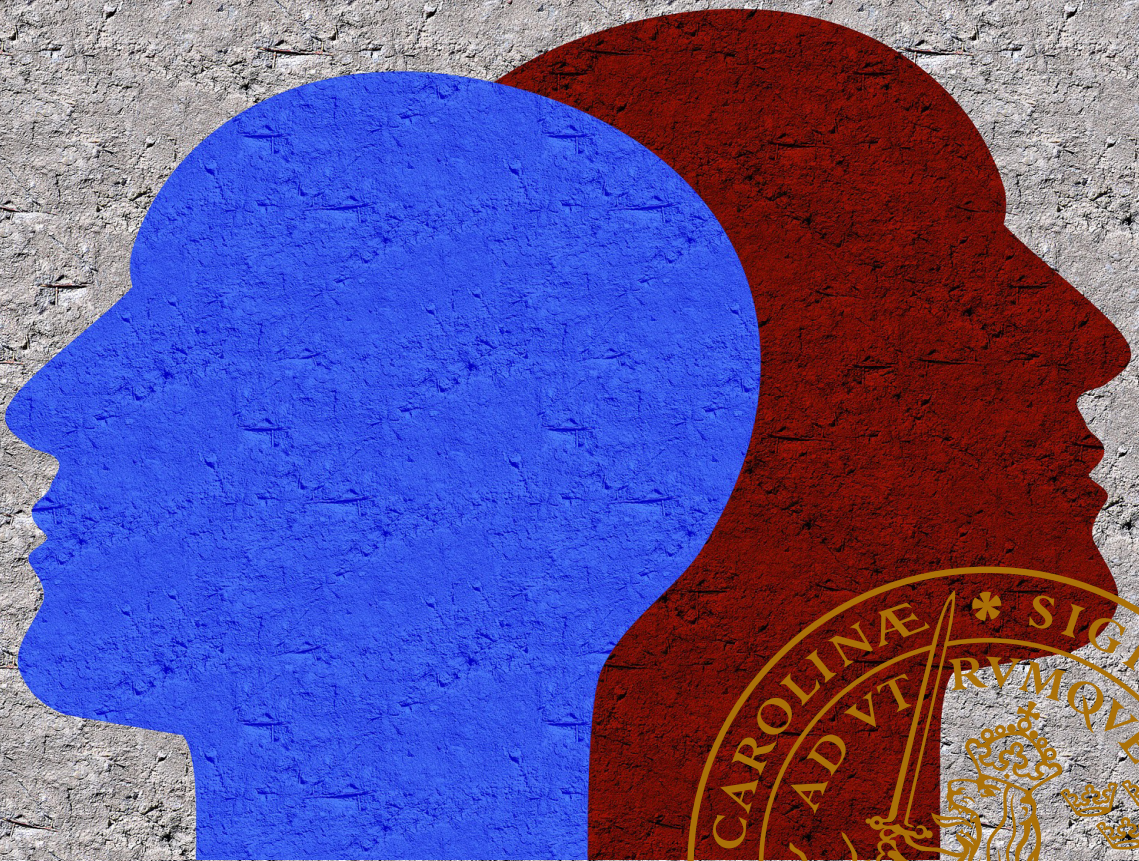
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Kristoffer Holm

LUND
UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Workplace incivility has been found to be a ubiquitous phenomenon, with adverse effects for individuals, organizations and society. Over the past two decades, substantial research efforts have been made to increase knowledge about workplace incivility, including investigations of its targets and perpetrators. However, less research has been conducted on how workplace incivility impacts bystanders. Additionally, few studies have explored how individuals appraise and cope with experienced and witnessed workplace incivility. To address this research gap, the purpose of the present thesis is to contribute knowledge about the social process of workplace incivility. Specifically, the aim is to investigate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility as well as mediators and moderators of the relationship cross-sectionally in study I, and over time in study II. Study II also aims to explore the relationship between witnessed incivility and well-being over time, as well as a possible mediator of the relationship. Study III aims to contribute knowledge about coping processes associated with workplace incivility by investigating which types of appraisals and coping responses that are described as a result of experienced and witnessed workplace incivility.

Study I found that witnessed incivility, primarily from coworkers but also from supervisors, was positively related to instigated incivility. Perceived stress and job satisfaction did however not mediate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. Witnessed coworker and supervisor incivility significantly interacted with control, social support from coworkers, and job embeddedness, predicting higher levels of instigated incivility. Additionally, a significant interaction between witnessed supervisor incivility and social support from supervisors was found. Results from study II showed that witnessed incivility was directly positively associated with instigated incivility over time, but the association was not stable across waves. Witnessed incivility was not directly related to well-being over time. Perceived organizational justice did neither mediate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility, nor between witnessed incivility and well-being over time. Control, social support from supervisors, and job embeddedness moderated the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility over time, strengthening the association when levels of the moderators were high. The interactions were however not consistently observed over measurement waves. Study III found that experienced and witnessed incivility was primarily appraised as stressful, and that several different types of coping responses were elicited, such as active, passive, and pro-active coping behaviors. The process of coping with incivility was also tightly linked to the social process of how uncivil behaviors are transmitted through the workplace.

Taken together, the findings of the present thesis indicate that witnessed incivility may influence the bystanders' behavior both in the short and long term, whereas well-being outcomes were more pronounced in the short term. Additionally, psychosocial work factors may enhance the spread of uncivil workplace behaviors. Lastly, individuals use a variety of responses to cope with workplace incivility, which may in turn result in the maintenance of an uncivil workplace culture. Overall, incivility in the workplace is a complex social phenomenon, with implications for bystanders' behavior, well-being, and coping responses.

Key words Workplace Incivility, Bystander; Social Learning Theory; Coping; Workplace Behavior; Well-Being

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Kristoffer Holm

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In memory of professor Magnus Lindgren. You are missed.

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Acknowledgements

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With gratitude,

Kristoffer Holm,

Malmö, January 2021

Abstract

Workplace incivility has been found to be a ubiquitous phenomenon, with adverse effects for individuals, organizations and society. Over the past two decades, substantial research efforts have been made to increase knowledge about workplace incivility, including investigations of its targets and perpetrators. However, less research has been conducted on how workplace incivility impacts bystanders. Additionally, few studies have explored how individuals appraise and cope with experienced and witnessed workplace incivility. To address this research gap, the purpose of the present thesis is to contribute knowledge about the social process of workplace incivility. Specifically, the aim is to investigate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility as well as mediators and moderators of the relationship cross-sectionally in study I, and over time in study II. Study II also aims to explore the relationship between witnessed incivility and well-being over time, as well as a possible mediator of the relationship. Study III aims to contribute knowledge about coping processes associated with workplace incivility by investigating which types of appraisals and coping responses that are described as a result of experienced and witnessed workplace incivility.

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psychosocial work factors may enhance the spread of uncivil workplace behaviors. Lastly, individuals use a variety of responses to cope with workplace incivility, which may in turn result in the maintenance of an uncivil workplace culture. Overall, incivility in the workplace is a complex social phenomenon, with implications for bystanders' behavior, well-being, and coping responses.

Summary in Swedish

Ohövliga beteenden har visats vara ett vanligt förekommande fenomen, med negativa effekter för individer, organisationer och samhället. Under de senaste två decennierna har omfattande forskningsfokus lagts på att öka kunskapen kring ohövlighet i arbetslivet, bland annat genom att undersöka utsatta, och utövare av ohövlighet. Trots detta så har färre studier undersökt hur ohövliga beteenden påverkar åskådare, och de som bevittnar ohövliga beteenden på arbetsplatsen. Få studier har även utforskat hur individer uppfattar och bedömer (appraise) ohövliga beteenden, och vilka copingmekanismer som används i respons till både upplevda och bevittnade ohövliga beteenden. Den föreliggande avhandlingen syftar till att delvis fylla denna kunskapslucka, genom att öka kunskapen om den sociala processen kring ohövliga beteenden. Mer specifikt syftar avhandlingen till att undersöka sambandet mellan bevittnad och utövad ohövlighet samt möjliga mediatorer och moderatorer av dessa samband i tvärsnitt i studie I, och över tid i studie II. Studie II har även som syfte att undersöka sambandet mellan bevittnad ohövlighet och välbefinnande över tid, samt en möjlig mediator i detta samband. Studie III syftar till att bidra med kunskap om copingprocesser associerade med ohövliga beteenden genom att undersöka hur ohövliga beteenden uppfattas och bedöms, samt vilka typer av coping-responser som beskrivs till följd av upplevd och bevittnad ohövlighet på arbetsplatsen.

Studie I fann att bevittnad ohövlighet, främst från kollegor men även från chef, var positivt relaterat till självrapporterad utövad ohövlighet. Upplevd stress och yrkestillfredsställelse medierade inte sambandet mellan bevittnad och utövad ohövlighet. Individer som rapporterade höga nivåer av bevittnad ohövlighet från kollegor och chefer, tillsammans med höga nivåer av kontroll, social stöd från kollegor, och förankring i organisationen, var än mer benägna att rapportera att de själva utövat ohövliga beteenden. Individer som rapporterade höga nivåer av ohövlighet från chef, samt höga nivåer av socialt stöd från chef, rapporterade också högre nivåer av utövad ohövlighet. Resultat från studie II visade att bevittnad ohövlighet var direkt positivt relaterat till utövad ohövlighet över tid. Detta samband observerades däremot inte konsekvent över flera mättillfällen. Bevittnad ohövlighet var inte relaterat till välbefinnande över tid. Upplevd organisatorisk rättvisa medierade inte sambanden mellan varken bevittnad och utövad ohövlighet, eller mellan bevittnad ohövlighet och välbefinnande, över tid. Sambandet mellan att bevittna och utöva ohövlighet över tid var starkare för de individer som rapporterade höga nivåer av kontroll, social stöd från chef, och förankring i organisationen. Dessa interaktioner observerades däremot inte heller konsekvent över flera mättillfällen. Studie III fann att upplevd och bevittnad ohövlighet främst uppfattades som stressande, och att flera olika typer av coping-responser användes, vilket inkluderade både aktiva, passiva, och proaktiva beteenden. Copingprocessen

framstod även som tätt kopplad till den sociala processen av hur ohövliga beteenden kan spridas på arbetsplatsen.

Sammantaget tyder resultaten från den föreliggande avhandlingen på att bevittnad ohövlighet kan påverka åskådarnas beteende både på kort och lång sikt. Sambandet mellan bevittnad ohövlighet och åskådarnas välbefinnande observerades främst på kort sikt. Utöver detta visade resultaten även på att psykosociala faktorer riskerar att förstärka spridningsprocessen av ohövliga beteenden på arbetsplatsen. Slutligen visade även fynden på att individer kan använda en mängd olika coping-beteenden i respons till ohövlighet på arbetsplatsen, vilket kan resultera i vidmakthållandet av en ohövlig arbetsplatskultur. Ohövlighet i arbetslivet är sammanfattningsvis ett komplext socialt fenomen, med implikationer för åskådares beteende, hälsa, och coping-responser.

List of papers

The present thesis is based on the following papers, hereafter referred to by their Roman numerals, as study I, study II, and study III, respectively.

I.   Holm, K., Torkelson, E., & Bäckström, M. (2019). Exploring links between witnessed and instigated workplace incivility. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management, 12*(3), 160-175. doi:10.1108/IJWHM-04-2018-0044

II.   Holm, K., Torkelson, E., & Bäckström, M. (submitted). Longitudinal outcomes of witnessed workplace incivility: A three-wave full panel study exploring mediators and moderators. *Re-submitted to Occupational Health Science.*

III.   Holm, K., Torkelson, E., & Bäckström, M. (submitted). Workplace incivility and coping: A process-oriented approach. *Submitted to Work.*

List of abbreviations

CMV = Common method variance

COPSOQ = Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire

CREW = Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce

DV = Dependent variable

EU = European Union

FIML = Full information maximum likelihood estimation

IV = Independent variable

MCAR = Missing completely at random

NAQ-R = Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised

US = United States

USD = United States Dollar

WIS = Workplace Incivility Scale

WLSMV = Weighted least square, mean and variance adjusted estimation

Introduction

Working and professional employment constitutes a large part of life for a substantial share of the adult population across the globe. In addition to being a place for earning a living, vocational development, and making contributions to society, the workplace can also be a social arena, filled with interactions, meetings and collaborations with other people. However, social interactions are not always unproblematic, and there has been a growing concern focused on interpersonal problems in the workplace, such as workplace mistreatment (Hanrahan & Leiter, 2014). In the latest round of the European Working Conditions Survey, it was reported that approximately 16 % of European workers have been exposed to adverse social behavior at work during the past month (Eurofound, 2017). At 21 %, Sweden reported the fifth highest proportion of exposure to adverse social behavior at work in the EU (Eurofound, 2017). Similarly, the Swedish Working Environment Authority has reported an increase of reported occupational illnesses due to organizational or social factors over the past years. In 2009, nearly a quarter of the reported occupational illnesses were due to organizational and social factors (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2010). In 2019, this figure was 40 % (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2020). One component of these reports are problematic social relationships at work. In 2018, more than one in ten of the reported occupational illnesses were due to reports of violations, bullying, harassment, or ostracism (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2019). Based on these figures, it is clear that adverse social behavior is a costly societal issue, with negative health-related consequences for individuals. However, these figures represent reported cases, which likely shows the consequences of severe mistreatment. Consequently, these reports may not reflect the impact of less overt adverse social behavior at work, such as low intensity mistreatment. These type of low intensity negative behaviors have been referred to as 'workplace incivility' (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), which despite their low intensity have negative consequences for individuals, organizations, and consequently society. Recently, claims have been made about a crisis of incivility in modern workplaces (Leiter, 2013; Pearson & Porath, 2005). These accounts have suggested that there has been an increase of low intensity adverse social behaviors in workplaces over the recent years, and that this might constitute an even larger organizational challenge, as subtle transgressions in the workplace can be more difficult to recognize, deal with, and receive proper training to handle, compared to more overt forms such as discrimination and sexual harassment (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Given this

background, it is important to increase the knowledge about workplace incivility and better understand the phenomenon, in order to provide insights into how it is possible to prevent future ill-health, and reduce associated costs to society.

What is workplace incivility?

Workplace incivility is defined as "low intensity deviant behavior, with ambiguous intent to harm the target" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457), and constitutes rude behaviors that are enacted in the workplace. Examples of uncivil behaviors are, among others, derogatory comments, interrupting others, not responding to them, condescending behavior, and dismissive body language (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013). These behaviors could be both intentional and unintentional, but they are characterized by their low intensity (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). There has been a long tradition of research on workplace mistreatment in the field of occupational health psychology, on constructs such as workplace aggression (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004), workplace bullying (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011), workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), and counterproductive workplace behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2005), to name a few. However, research on workplace incivility originated with the seminal publication by the two management scholars Andersson and Pearson in 1999. This has widely been regarded as the start of the field (Schilpzand, de Pater & Erez, 2016a), and the definition provided by Andersson and Pearson quickly became the most cited in studies on workplace incivility (Hutton, 2006). Andersson and Pearson (1999) described how workplace incivility can spread in the workplace and become part of the workplace culture through social exchanges between coworkers, which they dubbed 'incivility spirals'. Andersson and Pearson's (1999) incivility spiral refers to how incivility may spread in the workplace through a social process of reciprocal, interchanging incivilities between coworkers (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This indicates a social process that eventually will lead to a deterioration of the workplace culture, as uncivil behaviors become increasingly intentional and more intense. Consistent with how other scholars have defined organizational culture (e.g. Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013; Schneider, González-Romá, Ostroff, & West, 2017), Pearson, Andersson, and Porath, (2005) refer to workplace culture as the enactment of norms and values of the organization, and they discuss the possibility that workplace's culture can encourage incivility. In other words, rude interactions would be exchanged between coworkers in the workplace in an increasingly negative and spiraling way (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This idea has since remained influential in the literature on workplace incivility. Research on workplace incivility within the psychology field took off after Cortina, Magley, Williams and Langhout (2001) published the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS), together with a comprehensive investigation of workplace incivility in the American judicial

system. In that study, many of the ideas that are still prominent in workplace incivility research took form, such as the conceptualization of workplace incivility as a minor inconvenience or stressor in the form of 'daily hassles', the pervasiveness of workplace incivility, and the operationalization of workplace incivility into items such as demeaning and condescending behavior, as well as social exclusion from the camaraderie. To demonstrate how workplace incivility typically has been operationalized within psychology, the seven items from the WIS are presented in table 1. These items have since been used in most studies on workplace incivility (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Magley, & Nelson, 2017).

Due to the relatively nascent nature of the field, only a few literature reviews have been published on workplace incivility, that document antecedents and outcomes of incivility. The first review article to specifically focus on workplace incivility was published online in 2014 (reprinted in press 2016) by Schilpzand, et al., focusing on antecedents and outcomes of experienced, witnessed and instigated workplace incivility. This review article summarized the first decade of research on workplace incivility and demonstrated the increase in publication volume on the topic, as well as the spread of studies over different countries during this era, from the United States, to Australia, Canada, China, Korea, the Philippines, Singapore and the United Kingdom (Schilpzand et al., 2016a). Since this publication, three more reviews have surfaced. One by Cortina et al (2017) as a mark of 15 years since their scale development article came out, and another by Miner, Diaz, Wooderson, McDonald, Smittick, and Lomeli (2017), providing a roadmap for a future research agenda on workplace incivility. Most recently, Vasconcelos (2020) provided a detailed review of the research on workplace incivility from the years 2000 – 2019. Over the years, the incivility literature has grown in different directions, which is reflected in the introduction of concepts such as cyber incivility (Lim & Teo, 2009), and customer incivility (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010). These refer to uncivil behaviors displayed online, or uncivil behaviors from customers in service occupations, respectively. Although interesting areas in their own respect, these fall outside the scope of the present thesis, which instead focus on incivility from either coworkers or supervisors in the workplace, as well as physical rather than online behaviors.

Despite the large increase of research on workplace incivility over the past two decades, there is still much to be learned about the phenomenon. Particularly, little attention has been paid to how it can impact bystanders in the workplace, and how it is handled on an individual level (i.e. how individuals cope with incivility). Bystanders are in this case defined as those that witness or observe uncivil behavior from others in the workplace. In the present thesis, the social process of workplace incivility will be investigated over three studies, with a particular focus placed on implications for bystanders' behavioral and psychological outcomes, as well as coping responses. Several of the assumptions of Andersson and Pearson's (1999) incivility spirals will therefore be approached in the present thesis. This includes

exploring mediators and moderators of relationships involved in the incivility process, but also exploring outcomes of witnessing incivility over time, and an investigation of how uncivil workplace experiences are appraised and coped with in working life.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured in the following way. First, workplace incivility will be demarcated from other mistreatment constructs, in order to illustrate where it overlaps with other workplace mistreatment constructs, and what separates it. This is necessary in order to outline what workplace incivility is, and what it is not. Then, what research to date has shown about the prevalence of workplace incivility, antecedents of workplace incivility, as well as outcomes of workplace incivility will be presented. This will demonstrate the current state of the art, and highlight important knowledge gaps in the area. A particular focus will be placed on witnessed workplace incivility, the role of bystanders in the workplace, and coping processes. Additionally, a theoretical framework built on two major theoretical perspectives will be presented, one derived from the social cognitive literature, and one from stress research, that will come to permeate the thesis. I will explicate how these two models both can contribute to our understanding of behavioral and psychological outcomes of witnessing workplace incivility, as well as how individuals appraise and cope with such a low intensity stressor in the workplace. The goal is to provide a rationale, based on existent knowledge on workplace incivility, for the studies included in this thesis, and illustrate what research gaps that are addressed by conducting these investigations. Derived from these knowledge gaps, the aims of the thesis will be presented, followed by a summary of the three empirical studies the thesis consists of, and a general discussion about the finding's theoretical contributions, practical implications, strengths and limitations, ethical considerations, and suggestions for future research. Last, the three empirical studies, I, II and III respectively, will follow.

Table 1

Original items from the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001). The prompt before the items was "*During the PAST FIVE YEARS […], have you been in a situation where any of your superiors or coworkers*":

Item
Put you down or was condescending to you?
Paid little attention to your statement or showed little interest in your opinion?
Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you?
Addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately?
Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie?
Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility?
Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters?

Note. Response options ranged from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*most of the time*). The original recall window for the scale was "during the past five years". In subsequent studies, this was altered to one year (Cortina & Magley, 2009), and then one month (Matthews & Ritter, 2016).

Differentiating workplace incivility from other workplace mistreatment constructs

There is a long tradition of research on workplace mistreatment (Hershcovis, 2011). For example, studies have focused on constructs such as workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), and counterproductive workplace behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2005), that have generally been used as umbrella terms for workplace mistreatment (Cowen Forssell, 2019), although each with their own specific features. In this context, the addition of workplace incivility to these constructs have added a richness to the field, but also raised questions whether the construct itself contributes uniquely to our understanding of negative workplace behaviors, beyond existing constructs and studies (Hershcovis, 2011). Most notably, the incivility construct has been compared to workplace bullying. For instance, Cortina and colleagues (2001), posited that although there is a similarity to the construct of bullying, the constructs do not completely overlap. Pearson et al. (2005) noted that bullying and incivility often are confused with each other, but that bullying includes a more clear intent to harm and is carried out over time. Workplace bullying has been defined in the following way:

> Bullying at work means harassing, offending, or socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction, or process, the bullying behavior has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal strength are in conflict. (Einarsen et al., 2011, p. 22).

In the definition of workplace bullying by Einarsen et al. (2011), bullying consists of (a) negative acts, (b) repeated behavior, (c) a period of time, and (d) an imbalance of power, where the target is placed in an inferior position to the perpetrator(s). In the definition of workplace incivility offered by Andersson and Pearson (1999) on the other hand, it is stated that incivility consists of (a) deviant behavior, (b) with a low-intensity, and (c) an ambiguous intent to harm. The two constructs are therefore mainly differentiated by the temporal aspect, and the perceived power imbalance. An ambiguous intent to harm is also defining of workplace incivility, and not an aspect that is found in the definition of workplace bullying. In the definition of bullying, behaviors such as harassing or offending someone, socially excluding them, or negatively affecting someone's work, are mentioned (Einarsen et al., 2011). As for incivility, only deviant behavior that violate norms for respect is specified (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The distinction of what constitutes bullying and what constitutes incivility in cases of low-intensity negative behaviors could therefore

fully depend on if the target is systematically abused as well as their perceived position of power. Behaviors that have a higher intensity on the other hand, such as obvious aggression, would be considered more severe, and fall outside of the incivility framework. As pointed out by Leiter (2019), behaviors that are displayed with a high intensity are not perceived as ambiguous, thus falling outside the scope of incivility. Leiter (2019) also pointed out that workplace bullying is more uncommon than workplace incivility. It is therefore possible to conceptually distinguish workplace bullying from workplace incivility (Hershcovis, 2011).

Conversely, workplace bullying and workplace incivility are similar in the way that there may be an overlap in some of the conceptualized negative behaviors, such as neglecting or showing little attention to others' statements, the social exclusion of others, or behaviors that are demeaning and condescending, as well as ridicule and teasing of others. Workplace bullying and incivility are both to some extent associated with similar outcomes, and they have often been measured with similar instruments (Hershcovis, 2011). But the constructs can still be differentiated in the way that bullying requires the negative behavior to persist over a period of time, and that there has to be a difference in power between target and perpetrator. In a meta-analysis, it was found that workplace bullying was not more strongly related to any outcome than incivility, except for physical well-being, that had a stronger association with workplace bullying than workplace incivility (Hershcovis, 2011). Workplace incivility, on the other hand, was more strongly related to turnover intentions than workplace bullying was (Hershcovis, 2011). This demonstrates that on one hand, the two constructs both share similarity in that their relation to certain outcomes cannot be distinguished from each other, and on the other hand it shows that the constructs are related with different strength to physical well-being and turnover intentions. In other words, although the constructs share several similarities, they are distinct from each other, defined differently, and to a certain degree differently associated with outcomes.

In relation to other mistreatment constructs, Hershcovis (2011) conducted a meta-analysis that reviewed empirical findings on abusive supervision, bullying, incivility, social undermining, and interpersonal conflicts. However, the study did not include constructs such as social ostracism and harassment, that also are similar to incivility (Cortina et al., 2017). In the study, it was shown that although there is a clear empirical overlap between many constructs, there are also clear conceptual differences. But the workplace mistreatment field has primarily lacked more explicit operationalizations and detailed measurements of the constructs, including key features from their definitions in actual measures (Hershcovis, 2011). Nevertheless, a certain degree of overlap is perhaps to be expected. After all, workplace mistreatment concerns escalating and deescalating social processes of various intensity, where experiences of mistreatment can vary, sometimes pertain to personal characteristics (such as in harassment), and sometimes not. In line with this, Andersson and Pearson (1999) assumed incivility in the workplace to both

differ and overlap with other mistreatment constructs, as subtle rude everyday behaviors likely would. This would not by itself discount the merit of focusing attention on this type of low-intensity stressor in the workplace. For an overview of different definitions of workplace mistreatment constructs, and what demarcates them from workplace incivility, see table I in the appendix.

The prevalence of workplace incivility

In the early studies on workplace incivility, most data were gathered in North American countries, primarily the United States of America (Vasconcelos, 2020). Vasconcelos (2020) reported that an estimated 55.9 % of studies on workplace incivility, up to and including the year 2019, had been conducted in the US, with a total of 18 countries being represented overall, dispersed over North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. In a number of these studies, researchers have sought to examine the prevalence of workplace incivility.

Few studies with representative sampling of the population have been conducted, but in one study by Torkelson, Holm, and Bäckström (2016a), a sample that was aimed to be representative of the demographics of the Swedish working population was drawn in order to explore prevalence rates of workplace incivility. In this study, 73 % of respondents reported having been targeted at least once or twice by coworker incivility in the past year, whereas 52 % reported being targeted at least once or twice by supervisor incivility. A total of 75 % had witnessed workplace incivility from a coworker take place during the past year, 58 % had witnessed supervisor incivility, and 66 % reported that they themselves had instigated incivility towards other during the past year. For a breakdown of percentages per category, and which items that were most frequently reported, see Torkelson et al (2016a). Comparatively, in a North American sample, the prevalence for having experienced incivility from a supervisor was reported to be 78 %, whereas the prevalence for experiencing incivility from coworkers was 81 % over the last year (Reio Jr & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Utilizing the same time frame, 54 % reported that they had instigated incivility during the previous year, with 12 % of these reporting doing so several times (Reio & Ghosh, 2009).

When considering a recall window of five years, Cortina et al (2001) reported a prevalence rate of 71 %, with 39 % reporting more than one uncivil incident during the past five years, 25 % reporting experiencing incivility "sometimes", and 6 % "more often" or "many times". In an Asian context with a Singaporian sample, 91 % reported that they had been targeted by incivility during the past 5 years (Lim & Lee, 2011). Conversely, when using a much shorter time frame, Pearson and Porath (2005) reported that 20 % were targeted by incivility weekly. As for witnessing incivility, Pearson and Porath (2009) found that 99 % in a Canadian sample reported

to have witnessed workplace incivility, of which 10 % did so on a daily basis. In the study by Pearson and Porath (2005), 25 % witnessed incivility daily.

These figures were however gathered from diverse samples, drawn from different types of organizations. They are therefore not necessarily a representative cross-section of the population. Nevertheless, although no exact figure has been produced, the prevalence of experienced, witnessed and instigated incivility in these different studies indicate that workplace incivility is a common phenomenon, much in line with the theorization of Andersson and Pearson (1999), where it was described as a pervasive problem in modern organizations, present on several continents.

Antecedents to workplace incivility

Pearson et al (2005) described two potential streams of causes of incivility in the workplace. In the first stream, they emphasized the importance of social contextual shifts, such as the changing nature of work, which is reflected in reframing of the psychological contract between employer and employee (Pearson et al., 2005). They discussed the reduced amount of long-term commitment to a particular organization, which they believed could erode common courtesy and civility, as both employer and employees become more self-involved, and inclined to their own self-interest. The other stream referred to organizational pressures, which focused more specifically on occurrences within a particular workplace that could foster incivility. For instance, they discussed uncertainties in working life, such as downsizing, reorganization, and out-sourcing. These changes were proposed to make employees less willing to internalize the values of their organization, and lead to negative emotions that ultimately may result in incivility (Pearson et al., 2005). Pearson and colleagues (2005) proceeded to discuss misinterpretations through digital communication, and poor-quality leaders becoming role models for less respectful conduct in the workplace. Lastly, they pointed out that increased job demands could, due to its taxing nature, result in less focus on civility and courteous behavior.

Since these propositions were presented, several studies have explored the possible causes of, and antecedents to, workplace incivility. These studies have focused on personal characteristics (e.g. Sliter, Withrow, & Jex, 2015), behavioral predictors (e.g. Foulk, Woolum, & Erez, 2016), situational factors (e.g. Walsh, Magley, Reeves, Davis-Schrils, Marmet, & Gallus, 2012), as well as organizational factors (e.g. Torkelson, Holm, Bäckström & Schad, 2016b), partly addressing the suggestions presented by Pearson et al (2005). In their review, Schilpzand et al (2016a) divided the empirical material into antecedents of experienced incivility, and antecedents of instigated incivility. As noted by Schilpzand et al (2016a), the topic of witnessed incivility has received less empirical focus, thus limiting their

review to suggest, rather than review, possible antecedents of witnessing incivility in the workplace.

Antecedents to experienced incivility

Schilpzand and colleagues (2016a) described three categories of antecedents to experienced incivility. These were dispositional antecedents, behavioral antecedents, and situational antecedents. Dispositional antecedents refer to dispositional characteristics of the target and cover studies exploring whether specific characteristics are associated with a higher degree of reported experienced incivility. These studies often draw on the selective incivility hypothesis (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013). The selective incivility hypothesis posits that workplace incivility, as subtle and low intensity behavior, may be used as a way of discriminating marginalized groups, as more overt harassment is easier to detect and take action against (Cortina, 2008). In this way, incivility would constitute micro aggressions directed at others because of their gender, race, age or other disposition (Robotham & Cortina, 2019). For instance, among the personal characteristics that have been studied, it has been found that women report higher amounts of experienced incivility than men in American samples (Cortina et al., 2001; 2013). Conversely, in an Asian sample, men reported higher levels of incivility (Lim & Lee, 2011). This pattern also emerged in a small sample of 50 employees (Holmvall & Sobhani, 2020). In a Swedish context, women reported higher levels of exposure to workplace incivility, but the effect size was quite small overall (Torkelson et al., 2016a). In terms of racial discrimination, a few studies have indicated that racial minorities report higher levels of incivility exposure (Cortina et al., 2013; Daniels & Thornton, 2020). Others have not found such an association (Torkelson et al., 2016a), or mixed support (Welbourne, Gangadharan & Sariol, 2015). Lastly, younger age has been found to be a risk factor for experiencing incivility (Leiter, Price, & Laschinger, 2010; Lim & Lee, 2011; Torkelson et al., 2016a). In a recent meta-analysis, exposure to incivility was found to be slightly elevated for women and racial minorities, again with quite small, but significant effect sizes (McCord, Joseph, Dhanani, & Beus, 2018). An overview of the research on selective incivility can be found in Kabat-Farr, Settles, and Cortina (2020). Interestingly, in terms of personality, a study by Sliter et al (2015) demonstrated differences in perceived incivility of ambiguous situations, where participants with lower levels of emotional stability and openness to experience perceived the situation as more uncivil. There was also a positive relationship between trait anger and perceived incivility. More surprisingly, positive affect also correlated positively with higher ratings of perceived incivility of the ambiguous situation (Sliter et al., 2015). This suggests that there may be individual differences in how people process and respond to ambiguous situations, resulting in different interpretations of workplace incivility. Other personality factors that have been related to workplace incivility are high levels of achievement orientation, and having a high conflict self-efficacy, which

were both positively related to workplace incivility (Liu, Chi, Friedman, & Tsai, 2009). Taken together, dispositional characteristics may be risk factors for experiencing workplace incivility.

In investigations of behavioral antecedents, counterproductive work behaviors have been shown to predict experienced incivility, suggesting that individuals are targeted by incivility from others if the target previously has engaged in counterproductive behaviors (Meier & Spector 2013). Additionally, the conflict management style of the target has been linked to experienced incivility, in the way that individuals with a self-reported tendency to have a dominating style, or low levels of integration (i.e. attempting to find solutions that benefits both parties), reported higher levels of experienced incivility (Trudel & Reio, 2011). A more severe form of workplace mistreatment, workplace bullying from coworkers, but not supervisors, has also been shown to predict subsequent workplace incivility (Viotti, Essenmacher, Hamblin & Arnetz, 2018).

Studies on situational antecedents to experienced incivility have focused on workplace norms and aspects of the organization, where civility norms reduced the amount of experienced incivility overall in the workplace (Walsh et al., 2012). In relation to leadership, ethical leadership has been negatively associated with workplace incivility indirectly, via norms for respect (Walsh, Lee, Jensen, McGonagle, & Samnani, 2018). In line with this, organizational climate has also been related to the occurrence of workplace incivility, where a better climate was associated with lower occurrence of workplace incivility (Powell, Powell, & Petrosko, 2015). A lack of reciprocity in the organization was also found to be an antecedent of uncivil behavior (Meier & Semmer, 2013). Role stress, particularly role ambiguity and role conflict, was also related to higher levels of experienced incivility (Taylor & Kluemper, 2012). In a longitudinal study, organizational efficiency, that is, how well processes worked in the workplace, had a reciprocal negative relationship with experienced incivility over a one-year time period (Viotti et al., 2018). On a larger societal scale, cultural collectivism was associated with lower levels of workplace incivility (Liu et al., 2009), suggesting that cultural variations may also occur in incivility experiences.

To summarize, although there has been mixed support over studies, meta-analyses suggest that dispositional characteristics, such as female gender and belonging to an ethnic minority, are risk factors for experiencing incivility, although the effects overall are small. Support for being at increased risk if one is of younger age has also consistently been demonstrated. An individual may also be of increased risk of being targeted by incivility if their behavior has been counterproductive, if they have a dominating conflict management style, or if they are already subjected to bullying from coworkers. Personality differences could to some degree affect whether or not we perceive a behavior as uncivil, and there may be cultural variations in incivility frequency. Lastly, situational and organizational factors, mostly concerning a negative workplace climate, poor workplace norms, high levels of role stress, and

poor efficiency, appear to increase the risk of experiencing incivility in the workplace. This shows that there are diverse causes of incivility, referring to characteristics of the person, their behavior, and situational circumstances.

Antecedents to instigated incivility

In relation to instigated incivility, previous studies have focused on characteristics of the perpetrator, the perpetrators attitudes and perceptions, as well as situational factors such as behavior in the workplace (Schilpzand et al., 2016a).

Among perpetrator characteristics, which refer to the perpetrators behavior, personality traits, or social standing, studies have found effects of the perpetrators level of power (Cortina et al., 2001; Torkelson et al., 2016a), trait anger (Meier & Semmer, 2013), and conflict management styles (Trudel & Reio, 2011), on self-reported incivility perpetration. As for conflict management styles, dominating and low integration styles were associated with instigated incivility (Trudel & Reio, 2011). In studies focusing on the perpetrators attitudes and perceptions, it has been found that instigated incivility is related to low levels of job satisfaction (Blau & Anderson, 2005), perceived distributive and procedural injustice (Blau & Anderson, 2005; Blau, 2007), perceived lack of reciprocity (Meier & Semmer, 2013), as well as depression and strain (Blau, 2007). Negative affect has also been significantly related to incivility perpetration (Ghosh, Dierkes, & Falletta, 2011). Factors pertaining to the perpetrator's personality have not been well explored, but one study found a relationship between the dark triad trait of Machiavellianism and self-reported instigation of incivility in the workplace (Lata & Chaudhary, 2020).

Behavioral predictors of instigated incivility have been the focus of a large amount of studies. Both experienced and witnessed incivility have been found to predict reports of instigated incivility in several studies (e.g. Gallus, Bunk, Matthews, Barnes-Farell, & Magley, 2014; Trudel & Reio, 2011; Van Jaarsveld, Walker, & Skarlicki, 2010). Although many of these studies have been cross-sectional, a few have utilized an experimental (Foulk et al., 2016), or daily diary design (Meier & Gross, 2015; Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016; Vahle-Hinz, Baetghe, & van Dick, 2019). In these studies, experienced incivility was shown to temporally precede instigated incivility (Foulk et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2016; Vahle-Hinz et al., 2019). These studies have often drawn on social exchange-based theories, and specifically the incivility spiral proposed by Andersson and Pearson (1999). Foulk et al (2016) compared the spiral metaphor to a virus, spreading over the workplace as individuals 'catch' rudeness from each other's behavior. When exploring mechanisms involved in this process, they found support for cognitive processes to be involved, where exposure to rudeness would make rudeness more cognitively accessible, resulting in a behavioral outcome (Foulk et al., 2016). To date, one of the most well-documented antecedents of instigated incivility is having been exposed to incivility, either as a target or as a witness.

In line with the suggestions by Pearson et al (2005), Torkelson et al (2016b) found recent organizational change, perceived job insecurity, and high job demands to predict self-reports of instigated incivility towards others. Other studies on organizational predictors of workplace incivility have identified psychological contract violation (Sears & Humiston, 2015), workaholism and stress (Lanzo, Aziz, & Wuensch, 2016), as well as high job demands indirectly via emotional exhaustion and low job satisfaction (Koon & Pun, 2018), to predict instigated incivility. Taken together, the interplay between organizational factors and workplace incivility has received some attention, but still warrants further focus in order to unravel the contextual causes, or enhancing/buffering factors, of workplace incivility in the immediate work environment.

As for the other stream of causes referred to by Pearson et al (2005), few studies have explored the impact of social contextual shifts on the occurrence of workplace incivility. This is not surprising, as there may be inherent methodological challenges in investigating the impact of a macro level factor such as the fundamental nature of work on behavior, without any specific prior data on incivility to compare recent levels to. However, one qualitative study by Holm, Torkelson and Bäckström (2016), approached the changing nature of work by exploring whether contingent employment forms, which have increased over the past decades (Capelli & Keller, 2013), give rise to specific types of incivility. In the study, temporary agency workers answered open ended questions about their experiences of workplace incivility. Through thematic analysis, several themes of workplace incivility were identified, demonstrating ties to the contingent nature of the employment form (Holm et al., 2016). These data can however not be used to explore Pearson et al's (2005) claim about social contextual shifts as a cause of workplace incivility, but it can provide some initial evidence of incivility occurrences in temporary work. Whether employment form is a predictor of workplace incivility on a population level is an interesting question that remains to be explored.

Overall, a large number of predictors of workplace incivility have been investigated, illustrating that possible causal factors can be diverse and stem from individual, situational, organizational and behavioral strands. However, there is still much to be learned about the root causes of workplace incivility, and specifically, under what circumstances risk factors become particularly pronounced, or possibly ameliorated.

Consequences of workplace incivility

A wide range of consequences of workplace incivility has been studied. The negative consequences can affect both the targeted individual, as well as impact the organization in which they work. Below, the consequences that have been linked to being targeted by incivility are outlined.

Individual consequences of workplace incivility

In terms of consequences of workplace incivility to the individual, several studies have found detrimental effects of workplace incivility. For instance, associations have been found between incivility and increased depression (Lim & Lee, 2011), higher ratings of job burnout (Loh & Loi, 2018; Hur, Moon, & Jun, 2016; Moon & Hur, 2018; Rahim & Cosby, 2016; Trent & Allen, 2019), higher levels of sleeping problems (Holm, Torkelson, & Bäckström, 2015), more perceived stress on days of experiencing incivility (Beattie & Griffin, 2014), and lower levels of well-being (Holm et al., 2015; Torkelson et al., 2016a). Workplace incivility has also been directly related to reduced mental health, and lower physical health via mediation of reduced mental health (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Reio & Ghosh, 2009). Interestingly however, in a time-lagged study, Matthews and Ritter (2019) found that workplace incivility was related to lower levels of subjective well-being at each contemporary measurement occasion, but slightly positively related to subjective well-being at the subsequent measurement occasion, 1 month later. The same trend was observed when burnout was the dependent variable in the same study, as workplace incivility was related to higher levels of burnout in the short term, but slightly lower levels of subsequent burnout (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). But they also found a negative impact on employee well-being for those repeatedly exposed to incivility (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). Furthermore, Schilpzand et al (2016a) report that workplace incivility has been associated with negative affect, such as more negative emotions over time (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), less optimism (Bunk & Magley, 2013), and reduced trust (Cameron & Webster, 2011). Daily fluctuations of incivility have also been associated with greater feelings of embarrassment (Hershcovis, Ogunfowora, Reich, & Christie, 2018a). In addition, Porath and Pearson (2012) found workplace incivility to predict the emotions anger, fear and sadness. A study by Ferguson (2012) found support for the hypothesis that there is a spill-over effect of workplace incivility into the personal sphere. Specifically, workplace incivility had a negative impact on the target's marital satisfaction and increased family-to-work-conflict, indirectly via the partners' perceived stress transmission of the uncivil experiences (Ferguson, 2012). Similar results of experienced workplace incivility impacting marital relationships have also been found in a daily diary-study by Lim, Ilies, Koopman, Christoforu and Arvey (2018). This demonstrates that the negative consequences of workplace incivility do not stop at the workplace but can possibly affect the personal life of those targeted by it.

To summarize, there are clear detrimental outcomes connected with workplace incivility. This is primarily expressed in the form of stress-related symptoms and burnout, but also by negative effects on emotions and lower well-being. It should be noted, however, that the aforementioned studies, unless specified otherwise, have been cross-sectional. The individual consequences of workplace incivility are therefore quite clearly established in cross-sectional terms, but less frequently

explored over time. Interestingly, although the short term consequences of experienced incivility have been negative in several studies, Matthews and Ritter (2019) found that incivility exposure predicted slightly higher levels of well-being and reduced levels of burnout over time. Matthews and Ritter (2019) argued that this supports an adaption hypothesis, where well-being is impacted in the short term, but that individuals recover over time from low-intensity stressors. Moreover, they found that repeated exposure to incivility still carried negative effects on well-being indicators over time (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). This indicates that isolated instances of workplace incivility may be negative, but that it is possible to recover without long-term harm. Repeated exposure on the other hand appears to impact well-being negatively, consistent with propositions previously made about workplace incivility as a possibly frequent, but taxing daily hassle (Cortina et al., 2001). Another possibility is that repeated exposure in this case reflected a more severe type of mistreatment, such as workplace bullying. On the other hand, the authors used an incivility measure which had previously been validated in relation to criteria specific to incivility, such as ambiguous intent and low-intensity degree of harmfulness (Matthews & Ritter, 2016), strengthening the assumption that the scale measured workplace incivility, rather than any other mistreatment construct. Taken together, this suggests that workplace incivility has notable negative health-related consequences for those that experience it.

Work-related consequences of workplace incivility

Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2000) argued that there are several hidden costs of incivility, such as lost or wasted work time, reduced commitment, disengagement, and reduced effort at work. In support of this, Porath and Pearson (2010) reported that about half of their polled sample intentionally reduced work efforts or time spent at work, 80 % had lost time at work from worrying about an uncivil incident, and almost two thirds, 63 % lost work time from avoiding an instigator of incivility. In addition, they found that 38 % intentionally decreased work quality, 66 % reported performance declines, and 78 % felt less commitment to their organization. A total of 12 % reported to have left their organization because they were treated uncivilly (Porath & Pearson, 2010). Considering the findings from other studies, it is clear that workplace incivility has been tied to several negative work-related consequences (Schilpzand et al., 2016a). Studies have demonstrated relationships between incivility and how employees perceive their workplace, as well as their attitudes towards it. Primarily, these studies have concerned employee satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. Furthermore, a few studies have focused on employees' work effort, productivity, and performance. To a smaller extent, attempts have also been made to study the financial costs of workplace incivility.

For instance, in studies on work-related attitudes, a negative relationship has been found between workplace incivility and job satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2001; Holm

et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2008; Welbourne, Gangadharan, & Esparza, 2016), as well as increased perceptions of unfairness and lower coworker satisfaction (Lim & Lee, 2011), and injustice (Caza & Cortina, 2007). Additionally, incivility has been linked to lower supervisor satisfaction (Bunk & Magley, 2013), lower affective and organizational commitment to the workplace (Reio, 2011; Smith, Andrusyszyn, & Laschinger, 2010; Taylor, Bedeian, & Kluemper, 2012), less work engagement (Jawahar & Schreurs, 2018), and higher job insecurity (Itzkovich, 2016). Studies have also found a significant relationship between workplace incivility and increased turnover intentions for the target (Cortina et al., 2001; Ghosh, Reio, & Bang, 2013; Griffin, 2010; Holm et al., 2015).

The negative effects of incivility are also reflected in lower work-effort (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), impaired self-reported work productivity (Hutton & Gates, 2008), and lower perceived work ability (Kabat-Farr, Walsh, & McGonagle, 2019). In an experimental study, Porath and Erez (2007) found that incivility reduced task performance, impacting both routine and creative tasks. This was largely mediated by disrupted cognitive processes, suggesting that experiencing rudeness may steal cognitive focus, impacting work performance, and have a negative impact on the targets' helpfulness behaviors towards others, demonstrating quite a pervasive effect of rudeness on performance (Porath & Erez, 2007). Similar results have been found in a recent experimental study, where incivility from a female coworker reduced team positive affectivity, in turn associated with lower team creativity (Motro, Spoelma, & Ellis, 2020). In this study, gender moderated the association to positive affectivity, suggesting that incivility was perceived worse when exhibited by a woman. Possibly because societal norms create expectations on women to take on more communal and relational roles, whereas males may be expected to use more dominant and agentic behaviors (Motro et al., 2020). However, these were experimental and not field based studies, which possibly limits the generalizability of these results in comparison to when rudeness is applied in an everyday context. Most notably, the college students comprising the sample in both studies may have lacked strong incentives for carrying out the tasks (Porath & Erez, 2007). However, in a field study, team's creative performance was found to be negatively impacted by experienced supervisor incivility, through the mediation of less knowledge sharing within the team (Sharifirad, 2016), lending more support to the impact of incivility on task performance.

In an attempt to estimate the costs of workplace incivility in the form of production losses per employee, a large range was observed. Incivility was found to cost in between the range of $1383.84 – $12.633.13 (USD in 2014) annually (Hassard, Teoh, Visockaite, Dewe & Cox, 2018). However, both studies used as the basis for calculation in that study were from the health care sector, investigating the nursing profession, which limits the generalizability of the conclusions. Naturally, the costs of a low intensity stressor such as workplace incivility are difficult to estimate. Overall however, these findings illustrate that incivility carries negative

consequences on an individual as well as organizational level, including production losses, costs and lower commitment and satisfaction with the job.

Behavioral consequences of workplace incivility

Besides the health and work-related consequences tied to workplace incivility, behavioral outcomes have been the focus of many studies. This has for instance concerned withdrawal behaviors, where individuals withdraw from the organization after having been exposed to workplace incivility (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Martin & Hine, 2005; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007; Schilpzand, Leavitt, & Lim, 2016b; Sliter, Sliter, Withrow, & Jex, 2012), and reduced helping behaviors (Arshad & Ismail, 2018; De Clerk, Haq, Azeem, & Ahmad, 2019). Another behavioral consequence that has been in focus is that of enactments of workplace aggression, or mistreatment. For instance, a relationship between experiencing incivility and being the instigator of incivility has been demonstrated in several studies (Foulk et al., 2016; Gallus et al., 2014; Holm et al., 2015; Rosen et al., 2016; Torkelson et al., 2016b; Vahle-Hinz et al., 2019). When exploring how long the effect persisted, Meier and Gross (2015) found the relationship to be statistically significant when uncivil interactions between coworkers occurred within the same day. Conversely, Vahle-Hinz et al (2019) found a significant association between being targeted by workplace incivility and exhibiting rude behaviors towards others on a following day, suggesting that there was a carry-over effect from one day to another.

Overall, the behavioral consequences of experienced incivility have been linked to either withdrawal or enacted aggression. The latter will be explored in further detail in a following section about the incivility spiral, in this case from the perspective of bystanders. Largely, despite the substantial amount of work that has been conducted on antecedents and consequences of experienced workplace incivility, little focus has yet been placed on bystanders to uncivil interactions in the workplace (Schilpzand et al., 2016a). The bystander perspective can be an important addition to the field, to explore possible vicarious impact for those not directly affected by incivility. In order to advance knowledge about how workplace incivility impacts bystanders in the workplace, the present thesis will focus particularly on those who witness incivility in the workplace.

Witnessed workplace incivility

This section will introduce the bystander perspective, and empirical research on consequences of witnessing incivility in the workplace. As noted by Schilpzand et al (2016a), research on bystanders of workplace incivility has been scarce. Little is

therefore known about the vicarious impact of workplace incivility, that extends beyond the target. In the few studies that have been conducted on witnessed incivility, a link has been established between witnessing workplace incivility and lower performance, as well as decreased citizenship behavior (Porath & Erez, 2007). Additionally, witnessed incivility has been associated with negative emotionality (Miner & Eischeid, 2012), negative affect, and emotional exhaustion (Totterdell, Hershcovis, Niven, Reich, & Stride, 2012). Observed incivility towards women has been related to increased withdrawal and lower occupational well-being (Miner & Cortina, 2016; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007). From a coping perspective, witnesses to workplace incivility with higher relative power were more prone to confront, and less likely to avoid a perpetrator of incivility, as well as more likely to offer social support to the target (Hershcovis, Neville, Reich, Christie, Cortina, & Shan, 2018b). Some mechanisms involved in this coping process were perceived status challenges, and perceived responsibility (Hershcovis et al., 2018b). These studies on witnessed incivility suggest that there is support for the notion that witnessed incivility also can be considered a stressor.

Bystanders in the social process of workplace incivility

Andersson and Pearson (1999) described the process of the 'incivility spiral' as interchanging incivilities between employees in the workplace. However, they proceeded to define what they referred to as 'secondary spirals' of incivility. Secondary spirals of incivility would occur when an employee witness uncivil behavior in the organization and model their own behavior accordingly after the witnessed event, thus contributing to the perpetration of more incivility in the workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The suggested mechanism behind this was that norms for civility over time would be eroded in the workplace, consequently leading to a workplace culture that accepted or condoned deviant behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Secondary spirals were suggested to facilitate the spread of incivility through an organization, as incivility became established as a new organizational norm (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Through this conceptualization, Andersson and Pearson put an emphasis on both the bystander to an initial uncivil incident, as well as a connection to the workplace culture, as they brought workplace norms into the equation.

Before exploring what empirical support that has been presented for this type of vicarious social exchange relationship, it is important to note that Andersson and Pearson viewed the incivility spiral as cyclical occurrences, that can both escalate and deescalate. For instance, they provided the example of an initial minor transgression, that is perceived as rude and discourteous, which in turn is returned by a remark of similar tone. As the initial perpetrator may have been unaware of their transgression, they see themselves as the first target of an uncivil action, which prompts them to feel disrespected, and return in kind. In such a way, the process

could subsequently become more overt, leading to conflict escalation between the two involved parties, ultimately resulting in more severe mistreatment (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). For instance, if the power balance shifts, or the exposure is repeated, the resulting consequence could be workplace bullying. Alternatively, Andersson and Pearson also described that each altercation could leave room for the disrespected party to depart from the process, and not respond in kind. Thus, allowing the spiral to die out and not lead to any new rude interactions. It is only when a tipping point is reached that a spiral is formed, in the form of a vicious circle that can be hard to break (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). As for the bystander perspective, the number of observers can be larger than targets, which introduces a risk factor in the creation of a secondary spiral. Although the target may have departed from the process, it is not certain that this is the case for all of the individuals that have observed the transgression take place. The bystander perspective is therefore an important area of research, in order to address the spread of incivility in the workplace.

Empirical support for secondary incivility spirals

In support of the proposition that incivility spreads, an experimental study by Foulk and colleagues (2016), showed that incivility was not only exchanged between two parties, but that those who had experienced incivility subsequently acted more uncivil in future interactions with other people. These results are in line with the negative spiral proposed by Andersson and Pearson (1999), where workplace incivility simultaneously can be both an antecedent and an outcome. When investigating the relationship between experienced and instigated incivility, some mechanisms in this process have been examined. These are primarily mediation via reduced self-control (Rosen et al., 2016), and the activation of a semantic network of concepts related to incivility, priming the individual with rudeness, that in turn affect their behavior (Foulk et al., 2016). This social process of reciprocal exchanges of rudeness is consistent with what Leiter (2013; 2019) describes as uncivil behaviors becoming part of the organizational culture. As indicated by the findings by Foulk et al (2016), the social process does however not stop at the individual being targeted by incivility. Rather, it extends beyond the target, similarly as how a workplace culture can extend beyond the individual to affect several people in the workplace. In other studies on behavioral outcomes related to the secondary spirals, it has been found that individuals that witnessed workplace incivility were more prone to punish the perpetrator of incivility, by giving them less favorable evaluations (Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). These effects were mediated by negative emotional responses in regard to the perpetrator (Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). More explicitly, a direct correlation has been found between witnessed and instigated incivility in two Swedish studies (Holm et al., 2015; Torkelson et al., 2016a). In these studies, witnessed incivility contributed to the prediction of instigated incivility beyond the contribution of experienced incivility. Additionally, the

correlation between witnessed and instigated incivility was stronger than the correlation between experienced and instigated incivility (Holm et al., 2015; Torkelson et al., 2016a), suggesting that the influence of incivility on bystander's behavior could be greater than the influence on the target's behavior.

Mediators and moderators of the social process

Several studies have demonstrated a type of contagion effect of both experienced and witnessed incivility. However, little is still known about why and under what circumstances these effects occur. More knowledge has been requested about both mechanisms and boundary conditions of the relationships involved in the incivility spiral (Vahle-Hinz et al., 2019). Mediation refers to a sequence of events, where an antecedent factor influences a mediating variable, which in turn influences an outcome variable (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). In this way, the mediating variable (M) indirectly links the antecedent (X) to the outcome (Y), by transmitting the effect. Thus, it is a possible way to investigate a mechanism between two related variables, or the process of which variables influence one another (MacKinnon et al., 2007). Moderation on the other hand, is when the strength (and possibly direction) of a relationship between two variables vary depending on levels of a third factor (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Statistically, this is equivalent to an interaction between the antecedent variable and the moderator, as the prediction of an outcome (the influence of X on Y) may vary dependent on levels of the moderator (Z) (Cohen et al., 2003). To conceptually differentiate mediation and moderation, mediation refers to situations where X influences M, which in turn influences Y, suggesting a theoretical causal sequence. With moderation, X does not influence Z, but Z would influence the relationship between X and Y. In this way, mediation approaches questions such as why (mechanisms) an effect occurs, whereas moderation approaches the question of under what circumstances (boundary conditions) the effect occurs. Next, possible mediators and moderators of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility will be introduced.

Possible mediators in the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility
In terms of possible mediators, factors that have been explored in studies on the link between experienced and instigated incivility are self-control (Rosen et al., 2016), activation of semantic networks and priming (Foulk et al., 2016), as well as rumination (Vahle-Hinz et al., 2019). The first two were supported in the studies, whereas rumination was not a significant mediator in the experienced and instigated incivility relationship. However, these studies were either experimental studies on a student population, or daily diary studies ranging over one to two work weeks. In a process of mediation, it may take time for the possible causal steps to influence an outcome, whereas longer time frames may be needed to explore mechanisms involved in the social process. Additionally, few studies have focused on exploring

the possible mediators between witnessed and instigated incivility, indicating a knowledge gap. When proposing their model of the incivility spiral, Andersson and Pearson (1999) discussed both individual and organizational factors that could be possible mechanisms in a contagion process. On the individual level, they suggested emotional components such as negative affect, loss of face, and anger as consequences of workplace incivility, resulting in retaliation or instigated incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). From an organizational perspective, they suggested that the occurrence of incivility in the workplace subsequently would have a negative impact on interactional justice in the workplace, as rude treatment would be perceived as unfair. Consequently, they believed this would lead to individuals reciprocating by also engaging in unfair behavior towards their coworkers (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). From a bystander perspective, they argued that observing incivility in the workplace will lead to higher levels of distrust, similar to perceived injustice, which in turn would contribute to an erosion of norms for civility in the organization, further enabling individuals to engage in rude behavior towards each other. Andersson and Pearson (1999) suggested that ultimately, individuals' expectations on each other would have deteriorated, and civil conduct would be reduced.

In addition to this, Robinson, Wang and Kiewitz (2014) suggested that, based on the stressor-strain perspective, negative coworker behavior would constitute a stressor that over time taxes the individual, and subsequently could manifest in behavioral responses such as increased aggression as a way of coping with the demands. However, they note that there is a very limited amount of studies that have explored stress as a possible mediator in the relationship between coworkers' negative behavior and self-instigated aggression (Robinson et al., 2014). This could also apply to other occupational well-being indicators, such as job satisfaction (Robinson et al., 2014). Another factor highlighted by Robinson et al (2014), similar to the reasoning of Andersson and Pearson (1999), was injustice perceptions. They argue that as an individual witness misconduct in the workplace, they may experience a sense of injustice, which could lead to behavioral outcomes. In part, they draw on reasoning from deontic theory (Folger, 2001), which states that observers to moral rules being breached will feel a need to restore justice, if necessary, through both direct and indirect punishments (Robinson et al., 2014). However, these possible mechanisms have not been tested in models concerning bystanders to uncivil actions, in order to explore whether they indirectly link such behaviors to incivility instigation. This constitutes a gap in the literature, which will be addressed in the present thesis.

Possible moderators of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility
Several possible moderators of the relationship between coworker's negative behavior and outcomes were proposed by Robinson et al (2014). These included base rates of the bad behavior, social support, perceived risk, individual differences,

and social distance. In terms of base rates, they suggested that the general amount of mistreatment that occurs in a workplace could have a moderating influence on how individuals are impacted when mistreatment occurs, similar to a type of habituation. In relation to social support, it was suggested that support would moderate the behavioral responses when coworkers exhibit negative behaviors, buffering an escalation or retaliation process. As for perceived risks, it was suggested that employees take calculated risks, and only engage in negative behaviors when it is safe to do so. Individual differences could result in different attribution styles following workplace mistreatment, and social distance could affect in the way that employees will be more likely to mimic behaviors of colleagues that they are closer to (Robinson et al., 2014). These suggested moderators all serve interesting ground for further inquiries. Drawing on the empirical studies conducted on workplace incivility, very few have addressed these factors. A notable exception is one study by Sakurai and Jex (2012), which to some degree demonstrated a buffering effect of social support on the relationship between negative emotions (following coworker incivility) and the behavioral outcome of reduced work effort. Conversely, in a study exploring witnessed workplace incivility specifically, control and social support were not found to have a buffering effect, rather the opposite, in the relationship between witnessed supervisor incivility and instigated incivility (Holm et al., 2015). High levels of job control and social support appeared to enhance the relationship between witnessed supervisor incivility and instigated incivility, indicating that those who witnessed incivility from their supervisors, and at the same time had relatively higher levels of control and social support, were relatively more prone to instigate incivility. Holm et al (2015) suggested that this may be due to a negative social environment, where the social norms condone negative behaviors. This would be consistent with the reasoning presented by Andersson and Pearson (1999), of incivility permeating the organization, as norms for civility are eroded in the workplace. Thus, it would not be unfeasible to have both high levels of social support, and simultaneously report both witnessing and instigating workplace incivility. In a similar way, Robinson et al's (2014) suggestion of perceived risk may be linked to the moderating role of control, where individuals with a relatively higher degree of control may have more ample opportunities or perceive less risk from instigating incivility after having witnessed it. A similar result has been found by Fox, Spector and Miles (2001), where job autonomy was shown to enhance the association between stressors and engaging in counterproductive workplace behaviors.

It is interesting to consider social distance, as suggested by Robinson et al (2014), in relation to a possibly negative social environment. If there was a negative social environment, it is possible that individuals who are highly socially close to that environment, or heavily embedded into it, are more influenced by it. In recent years, scholars have focused more on the negative side of job embeddedness (Allen, Peltokorpi, & Rubenstein, 2016). Job embeddedness is defined as the degree to which an individual is linked to their current workplace (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee,

Sabylinski, & Erez, 2001). For example, job embeddedness moderated the relationship between low organizational trust and workplace deviance, in the way that high levels of embeddedness together with low levels of trust predicted relatively higher levels of enacted workplace deviance (Marasi, Cox, & Bennett, 2016). Conversely, a buffering effect of job embeddedness has been found in the relationship between abusive supervision and deviance (Avey, Wu, & Holley, 2014). But in relation to civility, employees reporting unsatisfying leadership relations and high levels of embeddedness were less likely to exhibit citizenship behaviors (Sekiguchi, Burton, & Sabylinski, 2008). In other words, job embeddedness may also be an important factor in the facilitation of the social process relationship of workplace incivility. However, these possible moderator effects warrant further investigation.

Coping with workplace incivility

Coping has been defined as "constantly changing cognitive or behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). In the first study addressing workplace incivility and coping, Cortina and Magley (2009) attempted to identify profiles of coping responses in relation to uncivil experiences. By using Fitzgerald's (1990) "Coping with Harassment"-questionnaire, originally defined to measure coping responses in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace, they employed cluster analysis to identify types of coping profiles. The profiles they identified were support seekers (primarily seeking support), detached (very little coping used), minimizers (downplaying the severity of the incident and avoiding conflict), prosocial conflict avoiders (high levels of conflict avoidance and some support seeking), and assertive conflict avoiders (asserted themselves to the perpetrator, but also avoiding the perpetrator and seeking support, Cortina & Magley, 2009). However, this study was limited to the coping responses available in the questionnaire and only referred to experienced, and not vicarious incivility. This led Cortina and Magley (2009) to specifically request qualitative studies to identify incivility-specific appraisals and coping responses. A gap in the literature that has not yet been addressed. Other studies within the domain of coping and incivility have focused on the effectiveness of confrontation or avoidance-coping, religious coping and support seeking in response to workplace incivility (Hershcovis, Cameron, Gervais, & Bozeman, 2018c; Welbourne et al., 2016). One study by Schilpzand et al (2016b) also found that shared incivility experiences reduced the harmful impact of incivility, by lowering the sense of self-blame. Despite the conceptualization of workplace incivility as a frequent workplace stressor (Cortina et al., 2017), little is still known about how individuals cope with such a low-intensity behavioral stressor.

Theoretical framework

In the present thesis, two theoretical frameworks are employed to understand workplace incivility and its possible implications.

Understanding witnessed workplace incivility (I): A social learning perspective

One way of understanding the social process of incivility, particularly the process regarding bystanders in the workplace, is via social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). In social learning theory, Bandura (1977) proposed that individuals use social information from their environment in order to determine how to appropriately behave in a particular situation. For instance, one would look at others to see which behaviors that were exhibited, in order to know how to behave. Specifically, individuals would use role models in guiding their behavioral actions. To explain how this works, Bandura (1977) introduced the concept of vicarious reinforcements. Vicarious reinforcements occur when an individual witness someone exhibit a particular behavior, and observe that they are rewarded, or at least not punished, for that behavior. This will lead the behavior to be reinforced by proxy in the individual, as they perceive the behaviors to be wanted, or at least not actively discouraged (Robinson et al., 2014). In earlier work, Bandura (1972) proposed that self-reinforcements (i.e. self-regulated standards for behavior akin to a type of internalization) also played a significant role, interacting with vicarious reinforcements in determining human behavior. By self-reinforcements, behavioral patterns that previously had been observed can be self-maintained even in lack of external reinforcements (Bandura, 1972). The main idea of social learning is that if a role model exhibited a particular behavior, the propensity for that behavior to be exhibited by the focal individual would also be increased. Robinson et al (2014) refer to this as a 'copycat' effect of imitating coworker's bad behavior. When it comes to workplace incivility, it is possible that the secondary spirals, as proposed by Andersson and Pearson (1999), are manifested as a type of behavioral learning from one employee watching another. Andersson and Pearson (1999) specifically referred to behavioral modeling in their argument about secondary spirals, which could lead the reader to infer that bystanders are prone to imitate behaviors that they witness in the workplace. This could also explain how uncivil behaviors spread in the workplace, as bystanders may be influenced to engage in incivility they have witnessed, subsequently leading to an erosion of norms for civility, or possibly even an uncivil culture developing in the organization (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Leiter, 2019). In an uncivil culture, it is possible that incivility has become so established in the workplace that efforts to reduce or resist the negative behaviors have ceased, thus leading to a tacit reinforcement of incivility in the workplace. This theoretical proposition could possibly explain why bystanders engage in incivility

after having witnessed it, beyond traditional social exchange perspectives that have been applied to those who act uncivilly after having been targeted, as the modelling framework extends beyond mere retaliation of the uncivil behavior as an explanation, to also include a more general behavioral norm as an explanatory factor.

Understanding witnessed workplace incivility (II): A stressor-strain perspective

Another way of understanding the effects of workplace incivility is via a stressor-strain perspective. For instance, an influential model concerning stress and strain, is the transactional model of stress and coping, introduced by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The transactional model of stress and coping posits that stress is an ongoing process resulting from the persons perception of demands in the environment and their own capability to cope with the demands. External or internal demands are continuously appraised by the individual. This entails a primary appraisal, whether the stressor is harmful, beneficial or irrelevant, as well as a secondary appraisal; do I have sufficient coping resources available to deal with the stressor? These appraisals would lead to coping responses in relation to the stressor, if appraised as harmful, and if resources are available. However, if these coping responses are unsuccessful, strain-related outcomes would follow. The novelty of Lazarus and Folkman's model lies in the process-oriented approach they adopt, as they see these ongoing interactions as intertwined. Coping efforts can lead to reappraisals of situations, as the person-environment relationship continues to shift (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, when the resources to cope are insufficient, the stressor, which is seen as an environmental demand, will results in psychological stress for the person being exposed to it. Subsequently leading to strain, in the form of stress symptoms, and ill-health. In addition to this, Robinson et al (2014) argued that even behavioral responses in the form of aggression could result from environmental stressors, as a way to cope with the perceived demand (Robinson et al., 2014). Consequently, the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility can be understood as a stress-response for the bystander.

In addition, this perspective can be applied to understand the negative impact that workplace incivility may have on well-being. As workplace incivility has been considered a low-intensity stressor, on par with 'daily hassles' (Cortina et al., 2001), the stressor-strain perspective would posit that this would be associated with subsequent strain for the person. This could have a negative impact on their occupational and psychological well-being. In the case of bystanders, vicarious exposure to a stressor has been called 'secondary trauma', or 'bystander stress' (Robinson et al., 2014). This could either be due to empathizing with the victim or fearing to also be targeted further on (Robinson et al., 2014). Within this framework, the individual's appraisals and coping responses would be instrumental in deciding

whether the stressor results in subsequent strain, or whether the individual can cope with the demands of the stressor in a satisfying way. As suggested by Robinson et al (2014), instigated aggression could be a behavioral outcome of being exposed to a stressor, as a way of coping with the demands by lashing out. In this way, occupational and general well-being could be both an outcome of workplace incivility, but possibly also a mechanism in the process between being exposed to incivility and instigating incivility. The stressor-strain perspective serves as an alternate way of interpreting the effects of incivility on individuals in the workplace, in relation to both behavioral and psychological outcomes, as well as coping responses.

In summary, both the social learning, and the stressor-strain perspective, could serve as explanations for behavioral and psychological outcomes of witnessed workplace incivility, as well as the need to cope with incivility in the workplace. Therefore, both these models are applied in the present thesis in order to hypothesize, interpret, and better understand the possible effects of workplace incivility.

General and specific aims of the thesis

As demonstrated, the potential ramifications and adverse effects of workplace incivility can be large for both individuals and organizations. One key component in addressing such negative consequences is to understand the way in which incivility occurs and is maintained in the workplace, as well as how it may spread within the workplace from one coworker to the next. In order to prevent incivility and negative consequences thereof, it is of importance to better understand the social dynamics of the incivility process. Consequently, it would be important to test relationships involved in the social process once proposed by Andersson and Pearson (1999). Relevant to the implications of workplace incivility on behavioral and psychological outcomes is also to understand how incivility experiences are appraised and coped with by those exposed to them. There are still considerable knowledge gaps pertaining to how, when, and why workplace incivility influences bystander's behaviors, and well-being, as well as how individuals cope with incivility in the workplace. Thus, a general aim of the thesis is to address these gaps by contributing knowledge about the social process of workplace incivility, and coping processes related to workplace incivility.

Specifically, the aim is to investigate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility both cross-sectionally and over time (study I and study II). An additional aim is to explore potential mechanisms between witnessed and instigated incivility, in order to better understand why bystanders engage in incivility after having witnessed it in the workplace (study I and study II). In addition, the thesis aims to investigate potential boundary conditions of the relationship between

witnessed and instigated incivility, in order to understand under what circumstances the spreading process is enacted, both cross-sectionally and over time (study I and study II). Furthermore, the thesis aims to investigate potential long-term consequences to employee well-being from witnessed incivility in the workplace, as well as a possible mechanism in this process (study II). Lastly, the thesis aims to increase our understanding of how uncivil workplace behaviors are appraised and which coping responses they generate, in order to further elucidate how this low intensity stressor is handled and reacted against in everyday working life (study III).

Summary of the studies

The overarching aim of this thesis is to increase knowledge about the social process of workplace incivility. Specifically, by investigating the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility, as well as which factors that mediate or moderate the relationship. The thesis also aims to explore temporal aspects of the social process of workplace incivility. By investigating the longitudinal outcomes of witnessed incivility, understanding of possible implications for bystanders' behavior and well-being over time is gained. Lastly, the thesis aims to contribute knowledge about how workers appraise uncivil situations, and which coping responses that emerge in response to incivility in the workplace. These aims are specifically addressed in the three studies described below. The background and aims, methods, results as well as contributions will be presented for each of the three studies. This section both summarizes and highlights key aspects of the three studies. Consequently, this section serves as an overview of the empirical work included in this thesis, and functions as an alternative to reading the full-length articles.

Study I

Background

Study I aimed to extend our understanding of the social process of incivility. Specifically, by investigating the relationship between witnessed incivility and instigated incivility. Furthermore, the aim was to investigate possible mediating mechanisms and moderating factors. Additionally, study I aimed to explore the impact of coworker and supervisor incivility separately, to gain a more detailed understanding of the possible effects of witnessed incivility from different sources. To explore possible mediating mechanisms, stress and job satisfaction were tested as mediators in the relationships between witnessed coworker and supervisor incivility and instigated incivility. Additionally, control, social support from coworkers and supervisors, and job embeddedness were tested as moderators of the relationships. For a conceptual model of the study relationships, see figure 1.
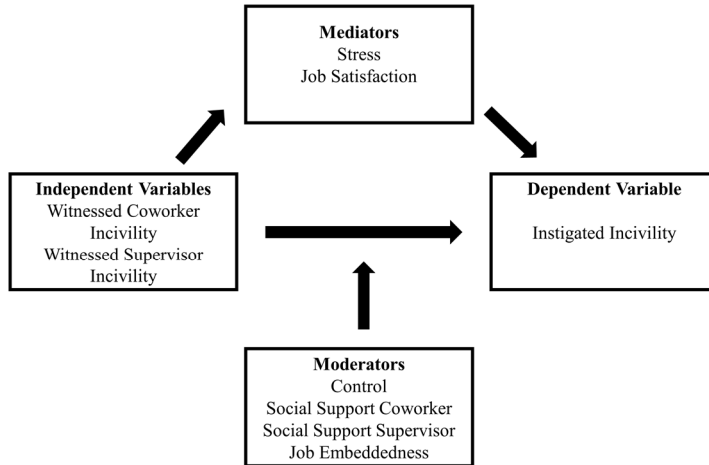
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the studied relationships in study I.

Methods

Participants and procedure

Study I is a cross-sectional survey study, with data gathered during the spring of 2017. The sample for this study was drawn randomly from a Swedish union primarily organizing employees working in municipalities, county councils and churches. Consequently, a diverse sample from different work sectors was obtained. A total of $N = 978$ (a response rate of 21.23 %) participants responded to an online questionnaire.

In study I, the union was asked to randomly draw about 5000 individuals from the union's member registry. They were then asked to send a cover letter to the sampled group with an invitation to participate in the study. The cover letter included a link to an online survey. The affiliate contact at the union selected 5000 e-mail addresses completely at random and invited them to participate in the study via e-mail. Due to some e-mail addresses being inactive, the invitation was received by 4607 individuals. The participants responded anonymously to the survey at a single time point. Two reminders were sent out.

Measures

Workplace Incivility measures. To measure witnessed workplace incivility and instigated workplace incivility, the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001) was used. For witnessed incivility, stems and referent of the scale were modified to

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reflect witnessed, rather than experienced, workplace incivility. For instance, "during the last month: have you been in a situation were any of your superiors or coworkers: made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you?" became "during the last month: have you witnessed a coworker or supervisor: make demeaning or derogatory remarks about others?". In study I, the questions were posed for supervisors and coworkers separately. To measure instigated incivility, the modification by Blau and Andersson (2005) was used to assess incivility conducted by the participant themselves toward others. The recall period reflected uncivil incidents during the last month as recommended by Matthews and Ritter (2016). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (most of the time). A Swedish translation of the original WIS-scale was used (Schad, Torkelson, Bäckström, & Karlson, 2014).

The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. The second version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ II; Pejtersen, Kristensen, Borg, & Björner, 2010) was used to measure stress, job satisfaction, control, social support from coworkers, and social support from supervisors. The COPSOQ-items were all measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never/almost never) to 5 (always). The Swedish version of COPSOQ II (Berthelsen, Westerlund, & Søndergård Kristensen, 2014) was used in the study.

Job Embeddedness. Crossley Bennett, Jex and Burnfield's (2007) global measure of job embeddedness was used to measure job embeddedness. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was translated to Swedish by the research group, and translated back to English in accordance with Hulin's (1987) guidelines, to ensure the content validity of the scale.

Data analysis

Structural equation models were used to test the direct and indirect effects in study I. Linear regression models were used to test the interaction effects. When estimating structural equation models in study I, weighted least squares with means and variance adjusted estimation (WLSMV) was used. This is suggested to be preferable when the variables consist of ordered categories (Schumacher & Lomax, 2010), as the case is with Likert-scale items. Additionally, as the workplace incivility variables are highly right skewed, indicating a large amount of low ratings, this estimator can be a consistent way of estimating parameters of such variables (Schumacher & Lomax, 2010). Little's MCAR-test was conducted prior to all analyses, to ensure that data were missing completely at random (MCAR).

To calculate indirect effects in order to test for mediation, the product of the path from the independent variable to the mediating variable, and the path from the mediating variable to the dependent variable, was calculated (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon et al., 2007). Because this parameter is a product of two paths, the

assumption of normality is violated for indirect effects, which may compromise significance testing (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Therefore, bootstrapping was used to empirically estimate a distribution for the indirect effect to yield more precise standard errors (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

In order to test moderation with two continuous variables, an interaction term (the product of two scales) is added to a regression model which includes the two main effects, to investigate whether there is an incremental contribution of the interaction term to the model. Such a significant contribution indicates that the strength of a relationship between an independent (IV) and dependent variable (DV) vary depending on levels of the moderator variable (Aiken & West, 1991). The scales were mean centered prior to analyses to reduce potential collinearity issues (Aiken & West, 1991).

Results

The results showed that both witnessed coworker and supervisor incivility was related to instigated incivility. Witnessed incivility from coworkers had the strongest association with instigated incivility. Witnessed incivility was related to both perceived stress and low job satisfaction, but there was no support for an indirect effect to instigated incivility via perceived stress or low job satisfaction. Specifically, witnessed coworker incivility was positively related to stress but not significantly related to job satisfaction, whereas witnessed supervisor incivility was significantly related to both higher levels of stress and lower levels of job satisfaction. The results also showed significant interactions between witnessed coworker incivility and control, social support from coworkers, and job embeddedness, predicting higher levels of instigated incivility. Lastly, the results showed significant interactions between witnessed supervisor incivility and control, social support (from both coworkers and supervisors) and job embeddedness, predicting higher levels of instigated incivility.

Contributions

This article adds to our knowledge about the social process of bystanders' tendency to engage in incivility, by testing mediators and moderators of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. The study found that witnessed incivility was related to both perceived stress and lower levels of job satisfaction. But these factors were not in turn linked to instigated incivility, suggesting that they are not mechanisms in the relationship between the stressor (witnessed incivility) and aggressive behavior (instigated incivility), as suggested by Robinson et al (2014). Interestingly, as the study differentiated between coworker and supervisor incivility, a stronger relationship to stress and job satisfaction could be observed for witnessed supervisor incivility, whereas witnessed coworker incivility was more

strongly related to the individuals' reports of instigated incivility. This suggests that witnessing workplace incivility in part can have differential effects, depending on whether the incivility was displayed by a coworker or a supervisor. Furthermore, the study contributes with information about factors that may enhance the spread of incivility, by moderating the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. These moderating effects could be interpreted in line with Andersson and Pearson's (1999) suggestion that an uncivil culture could be established in the workplace, explaining why the relationship between witnessing and instigating incivility was stronger for those reporting high levels of control, social support and job embeddedness. Specifically, job resources such as control and social support could be vicarious reinforcements given to those who conform to workplace norms, reinforcing their propensity to act uncivilly. Likewise, those that are highly embedded into an uncivil work environment may be more prone to adjust to the norms of the workplace by instigating incivility. However, the study design was cross-sectional, which makes the interpretation of any temporal or causal relationships tentative. Thus, the findings would need to be complemented by a longitudinal exploration of the effects that protruded in the present study.

Study II

Background

Study II addressed temporal aspects of the social process of workplace incivility, as well as possible consequences for employee's well-being. Specifically, study II aimed to explore longitudinal outcomes of witnessed workplace incivility over time. Study II investigated the relationships between witnessed incivility and instigated incivility, as well as well-being, over one year, as well as a possible mediator (perceived organizational justice) and possible moderators (control, social support and job embeddedness) of the relationships. In this study, perceived justice was investigated as a mediator between witnessed incivility and both instigated incivility and well-being. The study also investigated whether the same moderators included in study I, control, social support from coworkers and supervisors, as well as job embeddedness, enhanced the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility over time. For two conceptual models of the study relationships, see figure 2 and 3.

Time 2

Mediator

Perceived Justice

Time 1

Time 3

Independent Variable
Witnessed Incivility

Dependent Variables
Instigated Incivility
Well-Being
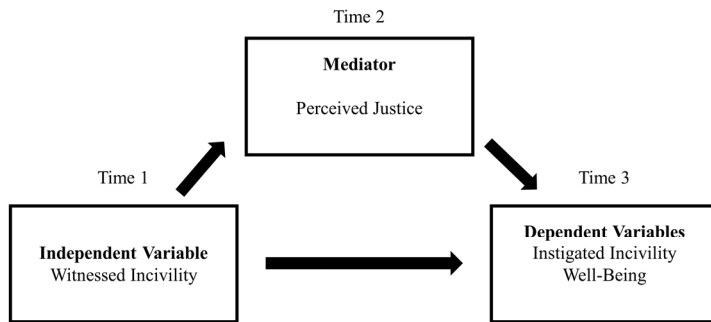
Figure 2. Conceptual model of the direct and indirect relationships between the variables in study II.

Independent Variable
Witnessed Incivility

Dependent Variable
Instigated Incivility

Moderators
Control
Social Support Coworker
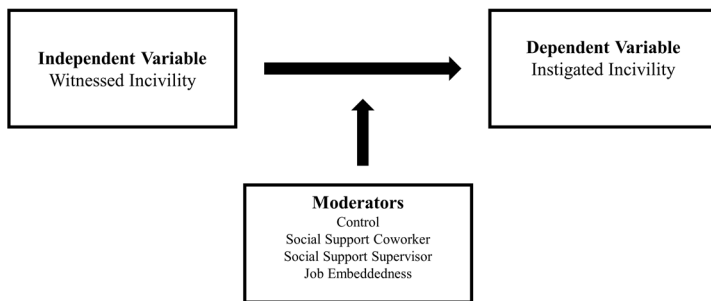Social Support Supervisor
Job Embeddedness

Figure 3. Conceptual model of the moderated relationships in study II.

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Methods

Study II is a longitudinal online survey study, with data gathered during January 2019 (time 1), June 2019 (time 2), and January 2020 (time 3). The sample was drawn randomly from a Swedish union organizing engineers. All of the sampled individuals' in the present study had an engineering degree, but were employed in a diverse range of sectors. The study had a full-panel design, meaning that all of the study variables were measured at all three measurement occasions, in order to allow for analysis of cross-lagged relationships. A total of 517 respondents completed the survey at the first measurement occasion, 498 at the second occasion, and 490 at the last occasion. In total, $N = 1005$ (an overall response rate of 19.8%) unique respondents participated in at least one of the three surveys. Of these, 341 individuals completed two or more questionnaires, and 111 individuals responded to all three surveys.

In the case of study II, the union was contacted with a request to disseminate invitations to participate in a longitudinal study to their members. The union was requested to randomly sample about 5000 individuals to a panel. The individuals in the panel would receive invitations to three surveys over the course of one year. A total of 5073 individuals received the invitation in January 2019, 4878 received it in June 2019, and 4630 in January 2020. The three survey invitations were sent out to all participants of the drawn panel at all three measurement occasions. The only exception was when a person no longer belonged to the union, or if they had explicitly asked the union contact to remove them from the mailing-list. One reminder was sent out at each measurement occasion. The participants responses were matched over occasions via a unique self-generated identifier code (Carifio & Biron, 1978; Kearney, Hopkins, Mauss, & Weisheit, 1984). This approach has been considered a valid way of tracking participants in longitudinal studies, with minor use of personal data and a low respondent burden (Yurek, Vasey, & Havens, 2008).

Measures

Study II used the same scales as study I to measure witnessed incivility, instigated incivility, control, social support from coworkers and supervisors, as well as job embeddedness. However, participants were not prompted to answer questions about coworker and supervisor incivility separately in this study. Instead, the scale reflected witnessed incivility from both coworkers and supervisors in the workplace. In addition, study II included questions measuring perceived organizational justice and well-being.

Perceived organizational justice. The 4-item measure of justice from COPSOQ II (Pejtersen et al., 2010; Berthelsen et al., 2014) was used to measure perceived organizational justice. In addition to the items from COPSOQ II, items from Ambrose and Schminke (2009), and Donovan, Drasgow and Munson (1998), were also included to create a 9-item measure of overall justice. Overall justice has been

suggested to be preferable when measuring justice perceptions, as overall justice has been shown to mediate the relationship between facet level justice components and behavioral responses (Mohammad, Quoquab, Idris, Al Jabari, & Wishah, 2019). The perceived justice measure was pilot tested on a convenience sample of 120 participants prior to being used in the longitudinal study (Holm, Torkelson, & Bäckström, 2018). The measure demonstrated high reliability, and satisfying divergent and convergent validity was suggested by interpretation of its bivariate correlations with other constructs. The perceived justice scale was measured on a 5-point Likert scale with the anchors 1 (to a very small extent) to 5 (to a very large extent).

Well-Being. The WHO-5 Well-Being Index (Bech, Olsen, Kjoller, & Rasmussen, 2003), was used to measure well-being in study II. The WHO-5 is a measure of general, not specifically work-related, well-being. The items were measured on a scale from 1 (never) to 6 (all of the time) and referred to how participants had been feeling the last two weeks. A Swedish version of the scale was used (Psychiatric Research Unit North Zealand, 2020).

Data analysis

Longitudinal structural equation models were used to test the direct and indirect effects in study II. When estimating the structural equation models, the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimator was used. FIML is usually recommended for continuous measures that do not violate the normality assumption (Schumacher & Lomax, 2010). However, simulation studies have shown the maximum likelihood estimator to be quite robust to violations of the normality assumption, although the evidence on this is mixed (Iacobucci, 2010). The FIML-estimator was used in study II in order to use the full information of the sample to estimate model parameters, as there were missing data points occurring due to the panel design, where respondents may have participated in two waves of the survey, but not all three. With FIML-estimation, the model can estimate missing data during the analysis, accounting for the participants different response patterns. For a longer discussion on designs including missing data, an extensive demonstration is provided by Little, Jorgensen, Lang, and Moore (2014). Additionally, Little's MCAR-test was conducted prior to analyses in study II to ensure that data were missing completely at random (MCAR).

In the longitudinal models, prior levels of the predictor, mediator and outcome-variables could be controlled via autocorrelations specified in the models (i.e. IV1 at t1 predicts IV1 at t2, and so on). Therefore, the focus in these models were on whether the predictor(s) predicted change in the outcome variable(s) over time. As there were three measurement occasions in study II, this allowed for exploration of whether witnessed incivility (IV) predicted change in perceived justice (mediator), and if this subsequently predicted change in instigated incivility or well-being (DVs). Mediation was examined in the same way as in study I, i.e. by calculating

the product of the two paths to and from the mediator variable. In the same way as in study I, bootstrapping (1000 draws) was used to generate a confidence interval for the indirect effect. For examining longitudinal moderation, scales rather than latent variables were used. This was done in order to reduce the complexity of the models. Latent variable moderation requires numerical integration, which is only available in commercial software such as Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). It is not yet featured in the R-package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012), which was used to estimate the models in study II. Thus, interaction terms were calculated in the same way as in study I, and added (one for t1 and one for t2, predicting the DV at t2 and t3 respectively) to the models.

Results

The results showed that witnessed incivility was related to instigated incivility, but not well-being, over time when controlling for baseline instigated incivility and well-being. However, the association was only significant between t1 and t2, and not from t2 to t3. Perceived organizational justice did not mediate the relationships between witnessed incivility and the two outcomes, instigated incivility and well-being. Lastly, the results showed that the relationship between witnessed incivility and instigated incivility over time was partly moderated by control, social support from supervisors, and job embeddedness. However, this moderating effect was only demonstrated between t1 and t2, and not between t2 and t3. Social support from coworkers did not moderate the relationship at any time points. In all cases, the relationship between the incivility variables was stronger when levels of the moderator were high. When estimating robust models however, the only significant interaction effect that remained was that between witnessed incivility and job embeddedness, predicting higher levels of instigated incivility.

Contributions

This study contributes information about the temporal dynamics of the social process of workplace incivility. Specifically, by extending the previously found cross-sectional associations between witnessed and instigated incivility over time, as well as including a test of the observed and suggested moderator effects (control, social support from coworkers and supervisors, job embeddedness) of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility over time. The study also contributes knowledge about witnessed incivility as a stressor, by exploring possible impact on well-being over time. Over the six month time gaps in the present study, no such associations were found, suggesting that witnessed incivility may be a more salient stressor in the short, rather than long, term when concerning impact on employee well-being. In addition to this, the present study tested a theoretical assumptions proposed by Andersson and Pearson (1999) in their initial presentation

of the incivility spiral. Namely, that perceived organizational justice could have a mediating role in the relationship between exposure to workplace incivility and instigated incivility. This proposition was not supported in the present study, suggesting that perceived organizational justice is not one of the mechanisms explaining why bystanders instigate incivility. However, the moderator effects were observed longitudinally over one measurement occasion, but not the next. This replication and extension of the findings from study I provides a methodological contribution by testing the robustness of the previously observed boundary conditions of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility over time. However, this was not consistently observed. Nor was the prediction of subsequent instigated incivility by witnessed incivility consistently found, providing only weak support for longitudinal effects. Further studies are required to elucidate the role of time in, and boundary conditions of, the social process of workplace incivility.

Study III

Background

In study III, the focus was on how individuals appraise and cope with uncivil incidents they have either experienced or witnessed. The aim of study III was to explore kitchen and restaurant-workers' appraisals and coping responses to experienced or witnessed workplace incivility. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping was used as a guiding framework for identifying appraisals and coping responses related to workplace incivility, which previously has been described as a frequent low intensity stressor in the workplace (Cortina et al., 2001). The kitchen and restaurant-sector was chosen as context for the interview study as previous studies have found that the levels of workplace incivility were reported to be relatively high in this sector (Holm et al., 2015), compared to reports from a sample representing the Swedish working population as a whole (Torkelson et al., 2016a). Previous studies have also discussed the concept of 'kitchen culture', described as a particularly harsh social environment with a large presence of negative behaviors (Bloisi & Hoel, 2008; Johns & Menzel, 1999; Robinson, 2008). It was therefore considered a suitable sector to show examples of how uncivil incidents can be expressed, and which appraisals and coping responses that result from such situations. Specifically, study III investigated participants' accounts of how workplace incivility was expressed within the context of kitchen and restaurant-work, together with their reports of how they appraise and cope with uncivil workplace behaviors.

Methods

Study III is a qualitative study based on group interviews with individuals employed in the kitchen and restaurant-sector. The group interviews were carried out between the fall of 2018 and summer 2019. The reason for conducting group interviews rather than individual interviews was to access the shared social experiences of employees in the kitchen and restaurant sector that may emerge in a group setting. Group interviews have previously been recommended for studying shared social phenomena (Steyaert & Bouwen, 2004). The group interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews, in order to guide the conversation towards workplace incivility, but allowing free interaction between participants during all sessions. Due to the group interview design, participation in study III was restricted to individuals working in the province of Scania in the south of Sweden. In study III, a total of five group interviews were conducted. Two of the groups consisted of three individuals, whereas three of the groups had two participants each, resulting in a total of $N = 12$ individuals participating in the interviews.

In study III participants were recruited via purposive sampling (Malterud, 2001), with the assistance of the southern regional branch of two Swedish unions, one organizing hotel- and restaurant workers, the other organizing municipal employees. The unions were contacted and asked to disseminate an e-mail to their members working in kitchens and restaurants. The e-mail contained information about the study, described workplace incivility and the group format for the interviews. The inclusion criteria in this case was at least 18 years of age, and work experience in kitchen and restaurant work. Individuals with experience of kitchen and restaurant work were then subsequently booked for group interviews upon having made contact. All interviews, with the exception of one that was carried out at the participants' workplace, were conducted on Lund University campus. No incentives were offered for participation.

Critical incidence technique

In the group interviews in study III, a critical incidence technique was used. The critical incidence technique is a way of prompting participants' recollection of events by focusing on behavior in specific situations, and then describing and elaborating on what occurred (Flanagan, 1954). Critical incidence techniques have previously been used to identify themes in research on organizational stressors and coping (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 1996; Länsisalmi, Peiró, & Kivimäki, 2000; Torkelson, Muhonen, & Peiró, 2007).

To start the process, items from the WIS were verbally presented to the group, and they were asked if they could recall experiencing or witnessing any such events. In this way, the participants could provide detailed descriptions of an event, as well as their coping responses in relation to a situation of workplace incivility. In a group-setting, this technique also enables participants to draw on each other's experiences

and describe situation similar to that of another participant. All seven items of the WIS were covered at all interview sessions, with the addition of several other experiences provided by the participants. In addition to the WIS-items, the participants were also asked to provide other examples of behaviors they considered to have been uncivil, in order to not limit the scope to the behaviors presented in the WIS. As coping responses have been argued to be specific to particular stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the recommendation provided by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) was to ask individuals about particular stressors, and how they had acted in relation to that situation. This approach integrates well with the critical incidence technique which focuses on specific situations and was subsequently followed in the interviews.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used in study III to identify different themes of workplace incivility, appraisals, and coping responses. Prior to analysis, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Next, they were iteratively coded in Nvivo until a number of major themes were identified. Subthemes were then added to each major theme. Themes were continuously refined throughout the process, in line with the recommendations of Parker (2005). To ensure the accuracy of the coding, two individuals from the research group initially coded independently. The coding was then shared, and any discrepancies were discussed and resolved (Schilling, 2006). In general, there was a high degree of agreement among the coders, as very similar themes had been identified.

Results

The analysis resulted in the identification of several themes concerning types of workplace incivility, stressful appraisals, and coping responses.

Some example themes of workplace incivility were harsh, critical or demeaning behavior; not being adhered or listened to; gossiping; and inappropriate jokes that passed the line. Some example themes of stressful appraisals were that the uncivil sensations generated feelings of irritation and frustration, anger, discomfort and pain. Some examples of coping responses that were identified were to confront the perpetrator; avoid the perpetrator; seek or offer social support; ignore the behavior; report as misconduct; use humor to downplay or deescalate the situation; positively reframe the experience; and to join in with the incivility.

Overall the analysis of the interviews showed that workplace incivility can be conceptualized as a daily stressor. Workplace incivility was described as pervasive in the kitchen and restaurant worker culture by the participants in the study. In terms of appraisal, the various forms of workplace incivility were primarily described as stressful. In relation to coping responses, these included both active, passive and

proactive behaviors. There was a tight connection between the process of coping and the social process of how workplace incivility was manifested in the workplace. This was demonstrated when coping processes could result in the maintenance of an uncivil culture, or in some ways contribute to such a culture. Additionally, coping was not only directed at specific behaviors. Participants also had to cope with the existence of a negative workplace culture, further demonstrating an interconnectedness between incivility and coping. The results therefore indicated that a process-oriented approach is needed in order to understand why and how low intensity behaviors, such as incivility, occur in the workplace and how individuals cope with such behaviors.

Contributions

The contribution of this study is the identification of different types of stressful appraisals and coping responses to workplace incivility. Studies on coping in regard to workplace incivility have been scarce, despite that incivility has been conceptualized as a daily stressor of low intensity (Cortina et al., 2001). The present study therefore increases our understanding of how individuals appraise and cope with this type of behavioral stressor. In addition, a key contribution of the present study is the inclusion of the context in which uncivil behaviors occur. The group interviews allowed for an analysis of the interconnectedness between workplace incivility, workplace culture and forms of coping responses. The accounts provided by the participants therefore demonstrated that workplace incivility can become established in the workplace culture. An account that has been suggested by several authors (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Leiter, Peck, & Gumuchian, 2015; Leiter, 2019), but not previously empirically investigated. In this way, the study demonstrated the complexity of workplace incivility, workplace culture, and coping, calling for a process-oriented approach in understanding the social phenomenon of low-intensive rude behaviors in the workplace.

Discussion

The first aim of the thesis was to increase knowledge about the social process of workplace incivility, by investigating the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility, as well as which factors that mediate or moderate the relationship (study I and study II). A second aim was to explore temporal aspects of the social process of workplace incivility, by investigating the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility over time, as well as the relationship between witnessed incivility and well-being over time (study II). A final aim was to investigate how workers appraise experienced and witnessed uncivil situations, and which coping responses that emerge in response to experienced and witnessed incivility in the workplace (study III). The findings indicated that witnessed incivility was related to instigated incivility, both cross-sectionally, and partly over time. In addition, witnessed incivility was related to concurrent reports of lower well-being, but not related to well-being over time. Stress, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational justice did not mediate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. However, control, different forms of social support, and job embeddedness were found to moderate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility cross-sectionally, and partly over time. The relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility was stronger when levels of control, support and job embeddedness were high. Furthermore, the findings showed that experienced and witnessed workplace incivility can be appraised as stressful, and that various coping responses are utilized to handle incivility in the workplace. The social process of workplace incivility was partly interconnected with the transactional process of appraisal and coping, in the way that coping processes at times could contribute to the occurrence of more incivility.

Integrating the principal findings

How does the present thesis project contribute to the field of workplace incivility beyond what was already known? As an answer to that question, I will attempt to integrate the principal findings of the thesis studies with the theoretical perspectives presented in the introduction, to demonstrate how the thesis advances the knowledge about workplace incivility.

The relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility

Andersson and Pearson (1999) suggested that workplace incivility could spread through negative spirals, when uncivil behaviors are exchanged between coworkers in the workplace. They also suggested that secondary spirals of workplace incivility could form as bystanders witnessing incivility in the workplace would model their behavior after the witnessed interactions and engage in incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). In support of this, witnessed incivility was related to instigated incivility in both study I and study II. In study I, where the source of incivility was differentiated, coworker incivility had a stronger relationship to instigated incivility than supervisor incivility, although they both significantly contributed to instigated incivility in the model. Andersson and Pearson (1999) also suggested that witnessed incivility will spread, as norms for civility become eroded in the workplace. In study II, witnessed incivility was strongly related to instigated incivility within each measurement wave, and over time from t1 to t2, but not t2 to t3, lending some support to witnessed incivility predicting change in instigated incivility over time. These findings could generally be interpreted in line with Andersson and Pearson's (1999) propositions concerning secondary spirals influencing bystander behavior in the workplace. As previously specified, this finding could be understood through social learning theory, where bystanders model their behavior after observed behavior in the workplace. The longitudinal effect could also in part be interpreted along the suggestion that incivility spreads over time, as this result pertained to behavioral change, rather than cross-sectional between-subject differences. However, although there appears to be a clear association across the studies between witnessed and instigated incivility in the short term, the support for a potential spreading effect over time is limited. The findings from study II does not fully support Andersson and Pearson's (1999) suggestion that there is an continuous negative spiral leading to an escalation of mistreatment, but it may still be consistent with their suggestion that incivility spirals can occur and disappear in a cyclical way. In line with this, accounts were also left by the participants in study III, suggesting that the 'bad behavior' of colleagues could be contagious. Examples such as, 'if one start, another would follow in line', were provided, and it was described as a negative jargon occurring in the workplace. Such accounts dovetail the notion of incivility spreading to bystanders in the workplace.

Interestingly, the differential effects of witnessed coworker and supervisor incivility in study I would suggest that witnessed coworker incivility is more strongly related to behavior, whereas witnessed supervisor incivility is more strongly related to stress-related outcomes. It is possible that witnessed coworker behavior has a stronger impact on the focal individuals own behavior, as coworkers are seen as role models that are easier to identify with, whereas witnessed incivility from supervisors is seen as more threatening and potentially harmful, relating it stronger to higher levels of stress and lower job satisfaction. Similar effects have been observed in previous studies on experienced incivility, where it was found that

coworker incivility strongly predicted instigated incivility, and supervisor incivility predicted lower job control, lower supervisor support and higher job demands, which in turn related to negative psychological and occupational well-being outcomes (Holm et al., 2015). Another possible interpretation of this result is that the supervisor also is a role model, but that the coworker witnessing a supervisor behave uncivilly is unable to respond in kind, due to not being in a similar power position in the organization. In that case, it suggests that other factors are involved in the modelling process, such as motivation or ability to exhibit behavior that has been witnessed from others (Bandura, 1977). From the viewpoint of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model, it is also possible that it is more difficult to cope with witnessed incivility from a supervisor, than witnessed coworker incivility, which could explain why witnessed supervisor incivility has a more pronounced effect on psychological and occupational well-being. Overall, this may suggest that the two theoretical frameworks applied in the present thesis, social learning and stressor-strain, may have different relevance depending on whether the incivility has been exhibited from a coworker or a supervisor.

Mediators of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility

None of the tested mediators in study I or study II were shown to significantly relate witnessed incivility to instigated incivility. The mediators in study I, perceived stress and job satisfaction, provided no support for the strain-hypothesis leading to increased enacted aggression, as proposed by Robinson et al (2014). Nor was there any support for perceived organizational justice as a mediator, as proposed by both Andersson and Pearson (1999) and Robinson et al (2014). A possible critique of this however, is that overall justice may not fully capture the type of justice Andersson and Pearson (1999) conceived in their model. As they discussed interactional injustice in their model, it is possible that it would be more aligned with their model to measure appraisals of justice of the particular situation, i.e. perceiving an interaction between two parties to be unfair, rather than general justice perceptions of the workplace. On the other hand, Andersson and Pearson also described a general deterioration of workplace norms, and a rise in general distrust, when incivility is observed in the workplace. Therefore, overall justice perceptions should be a reasonable way to operationalize their accounts about perceived injustice. In the present thesis, neither the strain-model nor Andersson and Pearson's (1999) model provide a satisfying explanation for why witnesses tend to instigate relatively more incivility. Researchers attempting to understand mechanisms involved in the relationship could potentially look at other models of workplace mistreatment, such as for instance the stressor-emotion model of counterproductive workplace behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2005), for suggestions of possible mediating factors involved in the spreading process. In the stressor-emotion model, negative emotions

are suggested to result from perceived stressors, leading to the onset of counterproductive workplace behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2005). Interestingly, negative emotions, such as negative affect and anger, were also discussed by Andersson and Pearson (1999), as possible results of perceived injustice, which could lead to instigated incivility. In line with this, Reich and Hershcovis (2015) found negative affect to mediate the relationship between witnessed incivility and some, but not all, of their indicators for punishing the perpetrator. Mainly, the indicators that were supported were work-related (negative evaluations), but not personal (allocation of unpleasantly spicy food to the perpetrator; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). This is consistent with counterproductive workplace behaviors, as the behavior was volitional, and directed at harming the organization or its stakeholders (Spector & Fox, 2005). It may however not apply in the same way to workplace incivility. Future research attention could be directed at the role of emotion in the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility, to test the applicability of the stressor-emotion model for instigated workplace incivility. Another possible mechanism, based on the accounts left by participants in study III, is that witnessing incivility creates a threat to the participants sense of status in the group, causing them to fall in line with the uncivil behavior directed at others, in order to maintain their role in the group hierarchy. Status challenge has previously been described as a reason why targets of incivility respond with aggression (Porath, Overbeck & Pearson, 2008), but this has not been studied concerning instances of witnessed incivility. Hershcovis et al (2018b) suggested that witnessed incivility could be a status threat to powerful observers, but they did not explore whether this was related to instigated incivility. It is possible that status threat extends to the domain of witnessed incivility as well. Currently, the mechanisms behind why bystanders' tendency to engage in incivility is relatively higher, remain unknown.

Moderators of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility

Across study I and study II, control, social support, and job embeddedness were found to moderate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. However, the type of social support moderating the relationship varied over the studies. The moderating effect of control and social support is not a novel finding of the present thesis, as these findings were first observed by Holm et al (2015). Rather, it is a replication and an extension of the previous findings into a longitudinal context. However, the addition of job embeddedness demonstrating a moderating effect is a novel result of the present thesis, and was observed both cross-sectionally, and partly over time. The main rationale behind the effect of job embeddedness as a moderator was drawn from Allen et al (2016), who suggested that job embeddedness could have a negative impact in adverse work environments, where it could exacerbate the negative outcomes for individuals 'stuck' in such an

environment. In the case of witnessed incivility, it is possible to interpret the moderating effect in line with the proposition by Andersson and Pearson (1999), and Leiter (2019), that an uncivil culture has been established in the workplace, where the employee is 'stuck' and forced to either conform, or possibly lash out. As for control and social support, it is possible to argue that they are vicarious reinforcements, consistent with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, as the effects imply that there could be a dual presence of both witnessed incivility and social support in the workplace. This could possibly reflect a culture that condones adverse behavior, as previously described by Ramsay, Troth, and Branch (2011). Consequently, if an employee had conformed to perceived behavioral norms by instigating incivility after having witnessed it, they may have been rewarded in kind with job resources such as control and social support, further reinforcing their propensity to act uncivilly, in line with a deteriorating spiral. However, these suggestions are speculative and not fully satisfying, as there are many assumed unmeasured factors involved in this proposed process.

Another possible interpretation of the moderating effects is that it is related to power in the workplace. For instance, it is possible that employees with relatively more perceived control, social support, and job embeddedness, have a higher formal or informal power position in the workplace, which parallels with their allocation of such job resources. This interpretation has been applied to findings where job autonomy strengthened the relationship between stressors and counterproductive workplace behaviors (Fox et al., 2001). However, in extensions on this work, a three-way interaction between job stressors, autonomy and workgroup norms for counterproductive behavior, predicted higher levels of counterproductive workplace behaviors. This suggests that latitude to be able to engage in negative behavior had a moderating effect, but that permissive workgroup norms for mistreatment were an important boundary condition for this process. This gives merit to both a power and culture interpretation of the moderating effects. More specific to the bystander perspective, Hershcovis et al (2018b) explored whether the observer's power influenced their ability to intervene when witnessing incivility in the workplace. They found that observers with higher relative power were more likely to engage in prosocial behavior, such as confronting perpetrators. The prosocial tendency of powerful bystanders therefore does not suggest that instigated incivility is a result of the bystanders' power position, unless confronting perpetrators is considered uncivil by the bystander. In study III, participants sometimes considered their own responses to others' uncivil behavior to have been uncivil. It is therefore possible that power dynamics is a relevant factor in the spreading of incivility, that is interconnected with the workplace norms and culture. However, the confrontation items used by Hershcovis et al (2018b) were not worded to imply instigated incivility. Further research could investigate the role of power in the social process of workplace incivility.

Nevertheless, the findings signify something relevant. Namely, that the role of workplace culture, which has been unmeasured in the discussed studies, needs further exploration. Additionally, in relation to the other theoretical perspective of this thesis, the stressor-strain perspective, it is interesting to find that factors usually associated with buffering effects on job stress such as control and social support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), in study I and II had an opposite effect, enhancing the uncivil behavior of witnesses. At the least, this demonstrates a possible adverse role of job resources, as they appear to be complexly related to the social process of workplace incivility.

Appraisals and coping responses in relation to workplace incivility

In study III it was found that experienced and witnessed workplace incivility elicited reports of stressful appraisals. This is consistent with the transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the conceptualization of workplace incivility as a stressor (Cortina et al., 2001). Additionally, many different kinds of coping responses were used to handle workplace incivility. Interestingly, one of the coping responses that emerged was to join in with the incivility when another person was being targeted, to proactively avoid becoming the target. This behavior may not sound surprising and would even be a recognizable pattern in incidences of bullying. In fact, the possibility that workplace mistreatment may be a result of maladaptive coping processes has previously been discussed in the context of workplace bullying (Nielsen, Mikkelsen, Persson, & Einarsen, 2020). However, as the purpose was to avoid being subjected to incivility, and the negative consequences thereof, it is clearly a type of coping response in relation to a threatening situation. Considering the stressor-strain model, it here appears to be a clear link between being vicariously exposed to incivility, perceiving this as stressful, and engaging in incivility to reduce the tension. However, this contrasts the finding of study I, which explored stress as a mediator in the process between witnessed and instigated incivility. All things considered; it is possible that this process is much more instantaneous than what can be found in a cross-sectional survey study. In addition, it is possible that the coping response, which was exhibited directly in the situation, would lead to an immediate reduction of perceived stress symptoms, thus resolving the stressful interaction for the employee. Such a pattern of results would not be observable in a study that, by design, only has the potential to explore between-person differences. It could also be interpreted in line with behavioral modeling (Bandura, 1977), that one employee initiates a behavior, and others join in to fit in, or because the behavior is perceived to be rewarded. Nevertheless, study III demonstrated an interconnectedness between the social behavioral processes of incivility being transmitted in the workplace, and the process of appraisal and coping. Overall, this pattern was consistent with conceptualizing workplace incivility as a daily stressor, much like daily hassles (Cortina et al., 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Furthermore, the finding that

workplace incivility was perceived as a part of the everyday culture in kitchen and restaurant work could be interpreted in line with theoretical propositions about incivility manifesting in the workplace culture (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Leiter, 2019). Due to the qualitative research design, study III had the possibility to identify novel ways of coping with a low-intensity stressor such as workplace incivility. This resulted in the identification of appraisals and coping responses that were specific to workplace incivility. This advances knowledge about how individuals perceive and cope with this type of everyday stressor in a problem-focused, emotion-focused, and proactive way. Such information can be useful in future studies aimed at exploring the successfulness of various coping strategies in response to incivility in the workplace.

Integrating the theoretical perspectives: Future applications in workplace incivility research

The present thesis applied social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and a stressor-strain perspective (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), to interpret and understand the effects of witnessed workplace incivility on behavioral and psychological outcomes, as well as appraisals and coping responses resulting from experienced and witnessed workplace incivility. The two perspectives differ in how they focus on behavioral outcomes as a result of modeling, or as the outcome of a stress response. However, it is possible that they both elicit the same result (i.e. instigated incivility) in the context of witnessed workplace incivility. In social learning theory, witnessed behavior from a role model reinforces the behavior vicariously in the witness, prompting them to act similarly (Bandura, 1977). From a coping-perspective, a successful act of coping with a stressor would reinforce that coping behavior in the individual. If an individual witness a coworker or supervisor engage in incivility towards another coworker, and this causes stress, it is possible that they – to alleviate this strenuous emotion – also engage in incivility towards others. If this reduces tension, the coping will be perceived as successful and subsequently reinforced. If mirroring the behavior witnessed from a coworker or supervisor results in proactive coping, where the individual avoids being the victim and future strain by conforming to workplace norms, the behavior would again be reinforced. Taken together, the social process of instigating incivility after having witnessed it could be the result of both social learning and coping responses. Specifically, social learning through modelling could be a way to understand the coping process when demands are high. There is perhaps not a need to differentiate these two perspectives in future work attempting to understand the incivility process. Rather, the shared features that combine them could be considered. This could provide a theoretical development, similar to how the stressor-emotion model of counterproductive workplace behaviors was a result of integrating occupational stress theories with human aggression research (Spector & Fox, 2005). In the case of witnessed

incivility, one suggestion is to consider the role of reinforcements, direct or vicarious, for bystanders. A reinforcement model that takes into account social (perceived norms, role models), cognitive (appraisals, attributions, attention, self-efficacy), and emotional (negative affect, anger), factors could perhaps better explain the social process of incivility spirals among bystanders. This would also allow for an exploration of possible additive reinforcement effects. Such as when a coworker that is an influential role model exhibits incivility, and copying this behavior would result in reinforcements from proactive coping, reinforcements from coping with current stress, as well as reinforcements from conforming to workplace norms, and if this in turn is related to an increased onset of instigated incivility for the observer.

In summary, the present thesis contributes with research focusing on the bystander to uncivil experiences in the workplace, as well as mediators and moderators that influence the relationship between bystander observation and enacted aggression. The thesis project also contributes with an investigation of long-term consequences to employee's well-being after having witnessed incivility. In addition, the present thesis contributes to the understanding of how incidences of workplace incivility are appraised, and which type of coping responses that emerge in relation to a low-intensity stressor such as workplace incivility. Figure 4 shows a model that integrates the findings concerning witnessed incivility from the three studies of the present thesis in a more general framework. This model contains both observed associations from the thesis studies, as well as hypothesized effects based on the findings from the studies. I present this conceptual model as a way of summarizing, understanding, and interpreting the effects of witnessed incivility based on the findings of the three studies of the present thesis. In figure 4, the bold arrows represent relationships that were either observed in study I and study II, or processes described in study III. Therefore, the model illustrates a direct link from witnessed incivility to the behavioral outcome of instigated incivility, and strain-related outcomes such as higher levels of stress, lower levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of perceived overall justice, and lower levels of psychological well-being. The thinner arrow from perceived overall justice to instigated incivility demonstrates that there was an observed effect from perceived justice to instigated incivility over time, although this was not robust enough to support a mediation effect between witnessed incivility and instigated incivility. The findings suggested that rather than being mediators between witnessed and instigated incivility, strain-related outcomes appeared to be primarily short-term consequences of witnessed incivility. The direct bold arrows below witnessed incivility also display how incivility was described as leading to stressful appraisals, which through the transactional model of stress and coping are interconnected with coping responses. Coping responses were in turn interconnected with instigated incivility. The dashed arrows represent hypothesized associations that remain to be tested in future research. For instance, it is possible that coping responses buffer the relationship between witnessed incivility and strain-related outcomes, but strengthen the

relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. Lastly, the dashed box represents the notion that coping responses, control, social support, and job embeddedness are possible reinforcements of the incivility process, as described in the previous paragraph. Taken together, this model can be used as an overview of (a) the findings concerning witnessed incivility, (b) which associations that could be interesting to explore further, and (c) how the findings can be interpreted in a more general framework.
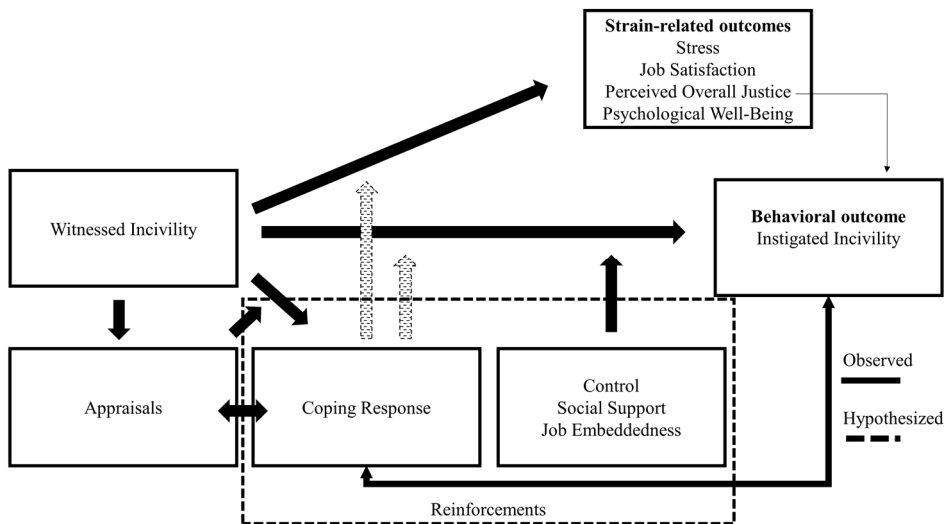
Figure 4. An integrated conceptual model of witnessed incivility.

Practical implications

The findings of the present thesis can be useful in the development of a healthy psychosocial work environment for employees. Firstly, the findings from study I and study II, that incivility in part may spread to witnesses, suggest that it is important for organizations to consider that uncivil exchanges do not stop at the targets and instigators. As shown by the direct arrow from witnessed to instigated incivility in the center of figure 4, observers may also be affected by the uncivil incident that they witness, which can have implications for their own behavior. Hence, it may not be sufficient to address incivility by taking action towards those that were directly involved in an uncivil encounter. It may also be important to address incivility on a workgroup, or even organizational level, in order to reduce the risk of a potential spreading effect throughout the organization. In previous intervention projects aimed at reducing incivility, a system level intervention has

been used, which targets the entire workgroup and workgroup norms (e.g. the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce-intervention; Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth, & Belton, 2009). This type of organizational-level intervention may be particularly warranted when considering the potential secondary impact of incivility on witnesses.

Another important finding of the present study was that the spreading effect may persist over time. It is therefore important for managers and organizations to address cases of incivility at an early stage, in order to prevent future incidents from occurring. The cross-over effect from witness to instigator also suggests that incivility is not necessarily a problem of a few 'bad apples' acting discourteously. Rather, incivility appears to have a self-perpetuating quality, where incivility begets incivility (Leiter, 2019). It is therefore important to stifle incivility as soon as it occurs, in order to prevent incivility from developing in the workplace. Moreover, as seen on the lower right-hand side of figure 4, job resources such as control and social support could have a possibly enhancing, rather than buffering, effect on the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. This demonstrates that the problem cannot be remedied solely by increasing the employees perceived job resources in the workplace. Specific focus must also be placed on reducing incivility. Possibly by developing workplace codes of conduct, or initiating dialogue around interpersonal behavior in the workplace with coworkers.

As seen on the lower left-hand side of figure 4, the findings from study III show that incivility can engender stressful appraisals, and that individuals cope with incivility in many different ways. The stressful appraisals suggest that incivility is important, despite its low intensity. Several studies have now demonstrated that workplace incivility is a tangible stressor, with negative consequences for employees (Cortina et al., 2017). Organizations could be attentive to employees' coping responses (represented at the bottom of figure 4), and provide clear ways for initiating a dialogue around low intensity negative behaviors. One way of doing this is by attempting to enhance the psychosocial safety climate of the organization, by giving employees opportunities to engage in discussions about the psychosocial environment, and their psychological well-being at work. A prospective study has shown psychosocial safety climate to be a successful factor in reducing workplace bullying (Dollard, Dormann, Tuckey, & Escartín, 2017). This may have bearing for workplace incivility as well. Lastly, as shown by the direct arrow from witnessed incivility to strain-related outcomes in the upper right part of figure 4, the most important thing is for organizations to consider workplace incivility as a serious work environment hazard. Although it consists of behavior of a low intensity and ambiguous nature, incivility is a potentially harmful phenomenon, that can affect both individuals and organizations.

Strengths and limitations

The three studies included in the present thesis have several methodological strengths. For instance, study I and study II had large samples, representing different sectors of the labor market. Similarly, study III, which also represented a different section of the labor market, included individuals from several different workplaces to explore a wealth of perspectives. As the questionnaires in study I and study II were administered via union contacts, this also facilitated the involvement of employees from various workplaces. These samples were drawn at random, to reduce selection biases. Additionally, the thesis has a mixed method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, which enables a nuanced understanding of the social processes under study. Although study III addressed a different research question than study I and study II, the findings from study III assist in the understanding of the quantitative results in study I and II, which provides a methodological triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012), of the social process of workplace incivility. In a more specific sense, a strength of the thesis was to replicate and extend the cross-sectional study I findings over time, which creates a robustness check of observed associations in study II. Additionally, the repeated measurements of study II is a strength that allows for exploration of change over time. Moreover, several steps were taken to ensure the validity of the findings in the three studies. In study I, the source of incivility was differentiated to create a more precise understanding of underlying associations. In study II, the temporal invariance of measures was established before exploring change in relationships. A dropout analysis was conducted, and control measures were taken for participants that had changed workplace during the course of the study, in order to reduce the risk of biased parameter estimates. In both study I and study II, structural equation models were estimated to reduce the influence of measurement error on the studied relationships. In study III, appraisals and coping were assessed in relation to actual events, rather than assessed on a more general plane (i.e., general coping style of a person). This approach has been recommended in the literature (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Nevertheless, the studies are also limited in several ways, which calls for a deeper discussion. A few of these themes will be discussed in depth below.

Causality

Study I and study II investigated relationships between factors cross-sectionally and over time. It is not possible to support causality in either of these studies. As there is always the possibility of unmeasured factors and measurement error influencing the relationships under study, field studies of these designs are limited to the exploration of associations, rather than causal paths. This is particularly relevant to cross-sectional designs, where the predictive paths are specified according to ex-

ante hypotheses. This is also the case in longitudinal studies, but here the time gap can assure that one event unfolded before the other. There are three conditions for causal inference (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). That (a) there is a relationship between X and Y, (b) that X precedes Y in time, and (c) that all other potential causal factors have been ruled out (Shadish et al., 2002). A cross-sectional study can only establish (a), whereas a longitudinal design can address both (a) and (b), but not (c). On the other hand, as establishing a relationship between X and Y, as well as establishing that X precedes Y in time, are two prerequisites for causality, it is important to conduct studies with cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. If no relationships are found, or if two factors are unrelated with the specified temporal order that is hypothesized, this would provide important information about the lack of a causal path between the studied factors. In this case, even though study I and study II only approached condition (a) and (b), but not (c), they are nevertheless an important first step for identifying relationships that could be indicative of causality, and provide guidance for future research.

Possible confounding factors

In relation to condition (c) of causality, it should also be noted that there are several unmeasured factors that could be of relevance to the relationships in the present studies, that cannot be ruled out. For instance, as traits such as perpetrator power (Cortina et al., 2001; Torkelson et al., 2016a), and trait anger (Meier & Semmer, 2013), have been shown to be associated with instigated incivility, it is possible that dispositional characteristics such as these have an influence on the studied associations. As trait anger also has been associated with perceiving hypothetical ambiguous situations as more uncivil (Sliter et al., 2015), this may be an important factor in how individuals differ in their perception and enactment of incivility. Additionally, individual differences in how ambiguous situations are appraised could be a result of individual differences in coping strategies. As it is currently unknown to what extent the degree of witnessed incivility vary dependent on dispositional characteristics, the person-situation interaction remains an important question to consider in future research on the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility.

Another possible confounding factor is that the role of a bystander sometimes can be conflated with the role of a target. For instance, it is possible that the reason that some individuals have witnessed a lot of incivility is because they have also been targeted by it. Previous studies have shown a quite high correlation between experienced and witnessed incivility (e.g. Holm et al., 2015; Torkelson et al., 2016a). If this is the case, it is possible that experienced incivility as an unmeasured factor is underlying a part of the associations that were observed in the present thesis. However, despite the high inter-correlation, previous studies have also shown that witnessed incivility has a unique, and stronger, contribution to instigated incivility when included in the same model (Holm et al., 2015). The relationship

between witnessed and instigated incivility therefore appear to be robust when controlling for experienced incivility. The support for a relationship between witnessed incivility and well-being when controlling for experienced incivility has been mixed (Holm et al., 2015; Torkelson et al., 2016a). Nevertheless, this suggests that the effects of witnessed incivility cannot be explained by the witnesses' own degree of victimization, particularly when considering instigated incivility. Future studies could further attempt to delineate the unique effects of experienced and witnessed incivility on different indicators of well-being.

Generalizability

It is important to consider the limitations related to generalizability of the findings of the study. As study III was a qualitative interview study with only a few participants, no generalizations to the population can be made from this study. Nor was the aim of the study to explore associations that were to be generalized to the population. Rather, it attempted to identify themes of importance pertaining to appraisals and coping, which instead emphasizes theoretical transferability of the findings (Malterud, 2001). However, for study I and II, generalization is a more pertinent matter. Considering the sample characteristics and the response rates of ca 20 % in both studies, there are several steps hindering a generalization of the findings to other populations of workers. Notably, in study I, the occupations were quite diverse but still limited to welfare occupations. The sample also had quite a large female majority (76 %). Conversely, in study II, there was a majority of male participants (62 %). As the participants in study II were all graduate engineers, they had completed a higher education degree. Study I and study II were also comprised of participants most likely working in white-collar professions, with less of an emphasis on blue-collar employments. In neither of the studies, we had any data on employment form or whether the participants were working full-time or part time. Lastly, the participants were sampled from a union, and not randomly sampled from the population of employed workers. However, there is currently nothing that suggests that there is an interaction between the sample characteristics, (gender, level of education, type of profession) and workplace incivility, as it has been described as ubiquitous in working life (Cortina et al., 2017). Unless the relationships under study were moderated by characteristics specific to the sample, the findings should not have been biased due to the sample's composition. In relation to gender, it can for instance be noted that the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility was strong, significant, and in the same direction in both study I and study II. However, the correlation was somewhat stronger in study II than in study I. In this case, the main concern is not type I errors, but under/over-estimation of the true effect size of the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. There is no reason to suspect that the degree of witnessed incivility would vary between women and men. Although it is possible that the amount of witnessed incivility could vary over sectors due to differing base rates,

and that this co-varies with the gender segregation of the Swedish labor market (Statistics Sweden, 2018), the findings from the samples of study I and study II, representing female and male dominated occupations respectively, were quite consistent. In previous studies, no significant difference in instigated incivility has been related to demographic characteristics, with the exception of age and supervisor status (Torkelson et al., 2016a). Thus, little suggests that the sample composition would have a large biasing impact on the investigated relationships, although caution should always be taken when generalizing to other populations. Next, I will discuss how generalizability relates to sampling participants from trade unions.

Unionized labor and its relation to representativeness

As evident from the sampling procedure, a majority of the participants that provided data for this thesis were members of a labor union. This calls for a brief discussion on unionized labor, and to which extent this group is representative of the workforce in general in Sweden. For instance, it is possible that there are certain characteristics specific to individuals that are connected to unions, such as a higher degree of access to collective resources, opportunities for support, and possibly a greater union presence in their workplace, which could influence policies and procedures concerning the organizational and social work environment. As study I and II focused on factors relating to the psychosocial work environment and behavior, it is important to consider that such relationships may be influenced by union representation. However, in Sweden, there is generally a strong union presence on the labor market (Kjellberg, 2019). In the first quarter of 2020 a total of 68 % (66 % when including full time students), of Swedish employees were members of a labor union (Larsson, 2020). Additionally, the Swedish labor provisions, that regulate the need for systematic work to ensure satisfying conditions in the work environment, are mandatory for all workplaces (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2001), not only those with collective agreements with Swedish unions. These regulations are monitored through a government agency, The Swedish Work Environment Authority, and apply to all places of employment (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2001). Lastly, the direction of the relationships for some of the studied associations that were found in the present studies were similar to those found in a study of a representative sample of the Swedish working population (Torkelson et al., 2016a). There is therefore no reason to suspect an interaction between the studied relationships and union affiliation. However, future studies could shed further light on whether union membership moderate associations between workplace incivility and psychosocial work factors, and vice versa. Nevertheless, caution should be taken when attempting to generalize the findings of the thesis to other subpopulations.

Level of analysis and generalization

It should also be noted that data were gathered at the individual level in the present thesis. This prohibits generalizations of the findings from the individual level to the workgroup or organizational level (Diez Roux, 2002). For this reason, it is not possible to make assertions about the presence of an uncivil workplace culture based on the findings of the present thesis. In the present thesis, the ambition is not to generalize the findings from the individual to the organizational level. Incivility manifested in the workplace culture is rather used as a theoretical way of understanding the observed individual level associations. The focus of analysis is still on the individual level, centered on individual's reported behavior, perceptions, well-being, and coping responses. Although it has been argued that reports of witnessed incivility on the individual level could be indicative of an uncivil workplace culture (Leiter et al., 2015), it is necessary to gather data on a workgroup level of measurement in order to further explore how incivility relates to workplace culture. Likewise, the accounts provided by the interviewed participants in study III only apply to their individual perceptions of workplace culture, rather than an assessable shared culture. Nevertheless, their descriptions of incivility as embedded in the workplace culture provides an interesting ground for future research to further explore.

Self-reports, social desirability and recall bias

In study I and II, self-report measures were used to assess workplace incivility, psychosocial work factors, and well-being. Furthermore, self-reported accounts were provided by participants in the group interviews. As for the measures used in the two quantitative studies, self-reports are limited in several ways. For one, it may be problematic to rely on self-reports when measuring a socially sensitive factor such as workplace incivility. It may have influenced the participant's propensity to report their own incivility instigation. However, a meta-analysis has showed self-reports in studies on counter-productive workplace behaviors to be viable (Berry, Carpenter, & Barratt, 2012). Secondly, the use of self-report measures has been criticized for the possibility of introducing common method variance (CMV; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), with the risk of inflating or deflating true effect sizes. Although this to some extent can be remedied by longitudinal designs with temporally spaced measurement occasions (Podsakoff et al., 2003), as study II, it does not fully ameliorate the problems of the report source being the focal individual. This may however be necessary when it comes to perceptions of the psychosocial work environment, such as perceived social support, justice, and job embeddedness, but less precise for measures referring to behavior (i.e. incivility). However, the presence of CMV in organizational research has been heavily debated, and questioned by Spector (2006), Spector and Brannick (2009), and Spector, Rosen, Richardson, Williams, & Johnson, (2019), stating that the

problem is already subsumed under measurement error. Additionally, in relation to interaction effects, which were included in study I and study II, Siemsen, Roth and Oliveira (2010) demonstrated that CMV would not be able to artificially generate significant interaction effects. Rather, it would likely deflate the effect size of interactions, making them further difficult to observe (Siemsen et al., 2010). In other words, the presence of an interaction effect could in fact be stronger evidence of an effect, if CMV were to be present in the model. Nevertheless, self-reports could be complemented with other indicators in future studies of workplace incivility. For instance, Reich and Hershcovis (2015) experimentally manipulated exposure to witnessed workplace incivility, and used negative evaluations about the perpetrator, as well as allocation of spicy food, as a measure of aggression towards the instigator. Other indicators of work-related attitudes, perceived psychosocial work factors, and well-being are more difficult to assess, but including objective measures of work absenteeism and sickness absence could possibly complement self-reports to some degree.

Furthermore, the group interview setting also provided the risk of demand characteristics such as social desirability and recall bias. It is possible that the participants during the interview were influenced by either the interviewer or each other, which could have affected their accounts. Similarly, their recollection of the events could have been limited, as they were free to report on behaviors they had experienced in the past. On the other hand, the groups all consisted of different individuals, but the themes were quite consistent over groups. This renders it unlikely that the final themes were affected by demand characteristics among the group members. However, the interviews were all carried out by the same interviewer, which could have entailed an effect of demand characteristics from the interviewer. But this would require all of the participants to be similarly affected by these demand characteristics in order to bias the reports consistently over all interviews. This appears unlikely. As for recall bias, this could be an issue if the accounts provided by the participants were erroneous or faulty. Again, as there was quite a high degree of consistency across the interviews, it is unlikely that several participants would erroneously recall similar events in the wrong way. If the reports were incomplete or limited (i.e., not being able to come up with all examples of a certain behavior during the interview) it is less problematic, as the aim of the study was to identify different types of appraisals and coping responses to workplace incivility. There is always a possibility that there are other appraisals and coping responses not reported, and that the accounts are not exhaustive. But this should not affect the validity of those responses that were provided. Nevertheless, these limitations could perhaps be overcome in future studies gathering qualitative reports via anonymous questionnaires online (reducing demand characteristics), and qualitatively oriented diary studies on incivility (reducing recall bias).

Operationalization and scale validity

In the present thesis, workplace incivility was operationalized through the questions included in the WIS. The WIS is the most frequently used scale to measure workplace incivility (Cortina et al., 2017). Although the scale carries some content overlap with other measures of workplace mistreatment (Cortina et al., 2001), perhaps most notably the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ-R, Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009), the WIS-items focus on low-intensive behavior such as condescending and demeaning comments. Although the scale does not explicitly measure important components of workplace incivility, such as an ambiguous intent of harm, and that the behavior is in breach of norms for mutual respect in the specific workplace (Cortina et al., 2001), it is distinguished from the NAQ-R in the way that the NAQ-R also contains more severe items focused on more explicit mistreatment and bullying (Torkelson et al., 2016a). The WIS items were originally generated from reports based on focus groups about workplace incivility in the US federal court system (Cortina et al., 2001), which strengthens the assumption that the scale measures workplace incivility rather than other mistreatment constructs, although as discussed, workplace mistreatment constructs may overlap to some degree.

Furthermore, a strength of the present thesis is the use of validated instruments to measure workplace incivility, well-being, and psychosocial factors in study I and study II, as well as the use of a validated scale to prompt participants' accounts in study III. The use of validated measures such as the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001), the second version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (Pejtersen et al., 2010), and the WHO-5 Well-Being Index (Bech et al., 2003), give a higher level of confidence to the measurement of the intended constructs, as compared to non-validated scales. In addition, study II tested the temporal invariance of several of these factors, which showed that the scales had satisfying psychometrical properties, suitable for investigations of the kind undertaken in the present thesis.

Taken together, the methodological strengths of the studies should be weighed in light of their limitations when interpreting the findings of the present thesis.

Ethical considerations

The present thesis approached the topic of mistreatment at work, a potentially sensitive topic for some participants. Although incivility is characterized by low intensity (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), it is still possible that uncomfortable emotions may arise in individuals when posed with questions about this topic. For others, it might be sensitive to leave information about events they have witnessed in their workplace. In order to reduce any potential harm to participants, several measures were taken. Firstly, the collaboration with the unions entailed that the

union representative drew a random sample of which to disseminate the invitation to participate in a study. These individuals were at no point known to the research group. Similarly, the unions never gained access to the raw data that participants provided. As the unions organize a very large amount of members, it would be very difficult to identify any individual, and subsequent workplace, on the basis of the demographic information that was provided. In study II, the participants provided a self-generated ID-code, which facilitated their participation over time, without having to reveal any clear identifying information. It was also specified that participation in the surveys was voluntary, and active consent was gathered for all participants. In study III, the interviews were carried out in small groups, face to face. In this study, it was also specified that participation was voluntary, and the individuals had to initiate contact with the research group explicitly in order to participate in the study. The topic for the group interviews was clearly described beforehand, so that the participants knew what to expect from the discussion, and that they would meet other individuals. The participants were briefed, before and during the interviews that they at any point could withdraw from the study. As stated in study III, the group discussions did not appear to render any strong negative emotions. Mostly, the mood was light and upbeat, in line with the low intensity nature of workplace incivility. It is therefore unlikely that participation in any of the studies would have caused harm to the individuals involved. In light of this, the potential benefits that the findings of present thesis studies may have are considered to outweigh the potential risk of harm. Ethical approval was granted for the studies by the Regional Ethical Review Board in Lund (dnr 2016/926; 2017/1038).

Directions for future research

The empirical findings presented in the present thesis provides several interesting avenues for future research. For instance, in study I and study II, the investigated mediators failed to explain the association between witnessed and instigated incivility. Future studies could further explore the possible mechanisms involved in the relationship. Possibly, the role of emotions such as negative affect and anger (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), could be investigated, as well as more specific facets of justice, or perceived status challenges. Additionally, it would be of interest to extend the semantic associations found to be of importance in the spread of incivility by Foulk et al (2016), and whether similar cognitive mechanisms may be involved in the process for bystanders as well.

Related to the possible mediating mechanisms, it would be of importance to study workplace culture, and its role in vicarious experiences of incivility. Specifically, Andersson and Pearson's (1999) model of secondary spirals is based on incivility becoming a new organizational norm. It has also been argued by Leiter (2019) that incivility has a tendency to become established in the workplace culture. Taken

together with the findings of study III, which emphasized that incivility could be a part of the culture of the workplace, it would be of importance to further investigate the role of workplace culture in relation to incivility. For such studies, data would need to be gathered on the organizational and/or workgroup level, to account for variance in perceived culture on a meso-level of measurement. Such an approach has in the past been used to some extent by some scholars (e.g. Griffin, 2010), but could be extended to investigate what role organizational culture has in the spread of workplace incivility.

Accordingly, many assumptions of Andersson and Pearson's (1999) model of the incivility spiral remain to be tested. Although the relationships have been tested with different time lags, no study has to date explored the suggested escalating process of incivility. In other words, whether individual's trajectories of incivility continue on a downward spiral after first exposure. This research question could possibly be approached in a quantitative experience sampling study, where questions about uncivil experiences are distributed to individuals with random patterns, and where measures are continuously sent out if a person reports an uncivil incident. If incivility is reported, perceived intensity, intentionality, and frequency of the behavior could be measured for the reported experience and subsequent experiences following the event. This question warrants further research attention, with time lag included as a potential moderator of the relationships, in order to investigate the dynamics of the incivility spiral.

The negative consequences of incivility have garnered much research attention. However, much work is still needed on potential factors that could break negative spirals and reduce the negative ramifications of incivility in the workplace. One such approach could be to, based on the findings from study III, contribute with a quantitative investigation of the identified coping responses. In addition to exploring the frequency of which some of the novel coping responses are used, their effectivity in moderating the relationship between incivility and negative outcomes could also be explored further. As study III emphasized a process-oriented approach in understanding both the social process of incivility and coping, future studies could attempt to integrate this proposition by including temporality and context in the study of incivility. Possibly through the use of experience sampling methodology as a way to both quantitatively and qualitatively investigate how incivility, and coping with incivility, unfolds in the workplace.

Last but not least, future studies could focus more attention on intervention programs aimed at reducing the impact of workplace incivility. One such program is the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce program (CREW; Osatuke et al., 2009). The CREW-program was devised by the US department of veteran affairs in response to the high levels of incivility reported at their veteran's health hospitals. The initiative has since been evaluated and shown successful in a few studies (Leiter, Day, Oore, & Laschinger, 2012; Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Oore, 2011), but little is still known about which factors that contribute to the

success of such programs. Future studies could attempt to refine intervention programs, making them more efficient by identifying key determining factors in program facilitation, and thus suggest ways for practitioners to address, and ultimately prevent future incivility. Such knowledge would be of importance to break a vicious circle of spiraling negative behaviors in the workplace and reduce negative consequences thereof.

Conclusions

Over the past two decades, substantial research efforts have explored the prevalence, antecedents, and consequences of workplace incivility. Although many advances have been made to increase knowledge about workplace incivility, the bystander perspective and how individuals cope with incivility has received far less attention. The present thesis has aimed to contribute to the field by furthering knowledge about how workplace incivility impacts bystanders' behavior and well-being, as well as how individual's appraise and cope with both experienced and witnessed incivility. By doing so, it has been possible to examine mediators and moderators of witnessed incivility in relation to instigated incivility, as well as well-being. The present thesis has also contributed to our understanding of workplace incivility as a social process by applying a coping-perspective to the development and expressions of incivility in the workplace. The findings indicated that witnessed incivility was directly related to instigated incivility cross-sectionally, and partly over time. In addition, witnessed incivility was related to concurrent reports of lower well-being, but not related to well-being over time. Stress, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational justice did not mediate the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. However, control, different forms of social support, and job embeddedness were found to strengthen the relationship between witnessed and instigated incivility. The findings also showed that experienced and witnessed workplace incivility can be appraised as stressful, and that various coping responses are used in response to workplace incivility. Consequently, the present thesis has drawn on two theoretical frameworks, social learning theory and the transactional model of stress and coping, and shown how they both can be integrated with the model first presented by Andersson and Pearson (1999). Thereby, assisting in explaining how incivility can spread to bystanders in the workplace and lead to negative consequences for witnesses. Although many theoretical propositions remain to be tested, a first step has been taken in the present thesis by demonstrating the pervasiveness of workplace incivility as a stressor of importance to bystanders, how behavior can spread from one individual to another, and by exploring which coping responses that are used in such situations. Through these contributions, it is clear that the bystander and coping perspective cannot be neglected when considering the impact of incivility in the workplace. In order to decrease future incidences of workplace

incivility, it is important to adopt a holistic approach, focusing on targets, witnesses and instigators alike, as there are indications that these roles can be highly correlated. By better understanding the complexity of the social process, the actors involved, their incentives, and their shifting roles, a basis can be built on which to reduce future incivility in the workplace, its negative ramifications, as well as associated costs to individuals, organizations, and society.

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Appendix

Table I.
An overview of workplace mistreatment constructs, definitions, and distinguishing features from workplace incivility.

Workplace mistreatment construct	Definition	Distinguishing feature from workplace incivility
Abusive supervision	"Subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact." (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).	Overt hostility, refers to mistreatment from a supervisor.
Counterproductive workplace behaviors	"CWB consists of volitional acts that harm or intend to harm organizations and their stakeholders (e.g., clients, coworkers, customers, and supervisors)." (Spector & Fox, 2005, p. 151-152).	Volitional acts, rather than ambiguous intent to harm. Refer to harm against the organization and stakeholders.
Emotional abuse	"Hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are not explicitly tied to sexual or racial content yet are directed at gaining compliance from others." (Keashley, 1998, p. 85).	Volitional, includes a power differential aspect (Keashley, 1998).
Harassment	"Repeated and persistent attempts by one person to torment, wear down, frustrate or get a reaction from another person." (Brodsky, 1976, p. 2).	Repeated and persistent treatment, clear intentionality.
Interpersonal conflicts	An organizational stressor involving disagreements between employees (Spector & Jex, 1998).	Assumes a conflict perceived by both parties.
Social ostracism	"When an individual or group omits to take actions that engage another organizational member when it is socially appropriate to do so." (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013, p. 206).	Only focuses on acts of omission, rather than active behaviors (Robsinon et al., 2013).
Social undermining	"Behavior intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favorable reputation." (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002, p. 332).	Clear intent and systematic efforts.
Workplace aggression	"A general term encompassing all forms of behavior by which individuals attempt to harm others at work or their organizations" (Neuman & Baron, 1998, p. 393).	Clear intentionality. Actions directed either at the individual or the organization.
Workplace bullying	"Bullying at work means harassing, offending, or socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction, or process, the bullying behavior has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months)." (Einarsen et al., 2011, p. 22).	Clear intentionality, power differential, repeated exposure.
Workplace deviance	"Voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization or its members, or both." (Bennett & Robinson, 2000, p. 349).	Refers to voluntary behaviors.
Workplace violence	"Instances involving direct physical assaults" (Neuman & Baron, 1998, p. 393).	Overt exertions of violence.

Workplace Incivility

Kristoffer Holm has a background in behavioral science (bachelor's degree), and a master's degree in psychology. His main area of research is workplace incivility, which refers to low-intensity discourteous behavior in the workplace. His thesis investigates the impact of workplace incivility on bystanders' behavior and well-being, as well as how individuals appraise and cope with experienced and witnessed workplace incivility.