

**Book review:**  
**Power imbalance, bullying and harassment in academia and glocal (local and global) workplace, edited by Fay Patel, New York, Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 2021, 272 pp, £172.99 (hardcover), ISBN: 9781536197037**

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Abstract:	The book -- Power imbalance, bullying and harassment in academia and glocal (local and global) workplace, by Fay Patel (Nova Science Publishers) -- provides a much needed perspective and voice for those targeted victims of bullying and harassment in academia and the global and local workplace through literature review and real-life case studies situated in a specific geopolitical and cultural context. Power imbalance, systemic and structural racism nurture the unethical organisational context and shape the experience and life of those working in the organization. It is important to break the "code of silence" to tackle this universal reality, protect vulnerable employees from harms, and call out perpetrators who demonstrate incivility in their leadership roles.

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***Power imbalance, bullying and harassment in academia and glocal (local and global) workplace***, edited by Fay Patel, New York, Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 2021, 272 pp, £172.99 (hardcover), ISBN: 9781536197037

The focus of book, *Power Imbalance, Bullying and Harassment in Academia and the Glocal (Local and Global) Workplace* is to break the “code of silence” on systemic incivility in the form of bullying, harassment, camouflaged aggression, underhanded activities, and academic mobbing in academia and glocal workplaces. Andersson and Pearson (1999) offer the following definition of workplace incivility:

*Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others (p. 457).*

Incivility is a kind of violence, physical and psychological, directed against a vulnerable individual, with an intent to hurt, threaten, disgrace, frighten, and humiliate (Thompson et al., 2002). Workplace incivility is becoming increasingly common. There are many reasons for the uncivil behaviour: social, political, personal, psychological, and organizational.

The book is a real-life account of those who experienced and witnessed workplace bullying and harassment. The perpetrators are those in power, such as executive leadership teams in higher education institutions and corporate organisations, and the victims are under-represented employees, lower ranks of employees, new and junior staff members, and minority ethnic groups, and those who may be perceived as a challenge to those with higher status and power. The source of incivility is attributed to power imbalance, as the title of the book suggests. The author agrees that due to the nature of covert and sophisticated practice of incivility, with the approval of executive leadership teams, it is difficult for victims to seek recourse and report problems of bullying and harassment and thus the unethical practices remain unchallenged. The book explores the real-life scenarios of the covert operations of perpetrators in the glocal workplace and gives valuable insights into the understanding of incivility and covert practices among senior executive leadership in academia and organisations. The author also conducted in-depth reviews of literature on power imbalance, bullying, and harassment to anchor her argument on a strong theoretical framework.

The real-life account of workplace bullying and harassment is interspersed throughout the book. The book contains two parts. Part One examines the international perspectives and literature on the “code of silence”, bullying and harassment, and covert and overt practices among leadership teams in academia and the glocal workplace. There are seven chapters in this part.

Chapter 1 contextualizes the author’s key argument that power imbalance is the major cause of incivility, bullying and harassment among senior leaders in academia and the workplace. The author calls for action to protect vulnerable employees from harms, sanitize the culture of the workplace, redress injustice, and call out bullies and harassers who demonstrate incivility in their leadership roles.

In Chapter 2, the author questions the politics of the EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion) agenda advocated in the glocal workplace that perceivably serves the interests of the racialized groups. The chapter promotes an organizational partnership model that requires a

deep level of engagement, dialogue, harmony, respect, inclusion, and mutual understanding to build a sustainable organizational culture with a vision and mission rather than tokenism.

Chapter 3 explores desirable leadership qualities and traits of women leadership figures in academia and the glocal workplace, with a particular focus on the Queen Bee syndrome and its impact on organizational culture. The Queen Bee notion refers to successful, aspiring, strong and dominant women who are bossy, aggressive, and prone to sabotage other women, keep them at bay, treat colleagues “in a demoralizing, undermining, or bullying manner”, prevent other talented women from career advancing through socially aggressive behaviour, such as gossiping, social exclusion, social isolation and social alienation (Harvey, 2018, pp. 1-2). According to the author, the syndrome is associated with the female leaders’ lack of insecurity, and fear of challenge from female colleagues. The Queen Bee syndrome that nurtures a toxic culture in the workplace can have a tremendously negative impact on organizational performance and ethical standards. Queen Bee leadership displays abusive, discriminatory, and aggressive behaviour towards colleagues, especially female workers.

Chapter 4 reviews the international labour law that protects the human rights of vulnerable employees in the glocal workplace in the context of complexity, uncertainties, challenges, and dilemmas during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers are expected to promote high ethical standards, enforce responsibility and accountability in the workplace, demonstrate a high standard of humanized approach, respect, fairness, integrity, and equity, and protect employees from bullying, harassment, exploitation, oppression, discrimination, and victimization.

Chapter 5 focuses on a contentious issue what the author calls “naked leadership”, “naked emperors/empresses” (p.92) in academia and the glocal workplace. “Naked leadership” refers to incompetent executive leaders without any moral robe on them, surrounded by followers, henchmen and henchwomen who display the behaviour of incivility, bullying, harassment and victimization. These naked leaders have public (external) persona and private (internal) persona. Their public persona is that of high moral standards and ethical behaviour, “disguised as honourable, deserving respect and recognition in public” (p. 92). Their private persona, invisible to the public, but visible and strongly felt by the target of bullying and harassment, is self-centred, self-serving, void of ethical standards, and “morally bankrupt” (p.xxii).

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the author’s survey about bullying, harassment, mobbing, oppression, and victimization in academia and the glocal workplace. The results show that victimizers are from all levels of the organization: “senior executives, management, head of department, vice-chancellor, vice-president, professors, assistant and associate professors” (p.134). The author stressed that within such a toxic organizational culture, where there is a systemic and structural failure, leaders, protected by the line of impunity, can commit criminal activities without being “identified or made accountable for their bullying behaviours” (p. 133).

Chapter 7 reports the anecdotal evidence that demonstrates the sensitive issues of bullying and harassment in academia and the glocal workplace. The author argues that it is important to gather anecdotal evidence and untold stories from vulnerable and traumatized employees who, out of fear of retaliation in various forms, often choose not to report the incidents of covert and overt incivility committed and commissioned by executives and senior leaders.

The author believes that it is these anecdotal stories that can help uncover the dark web of deceit and the overt and covert practice of bullying and harassment.

Part Two presents seven case studies to further explore the impact of power imbalance on interpersonal and organizational communication and how power imbalance creates a toxic work environment that leads to bullying, harassment, and victimization. These case studies, through the voice of traumatized employees, relate the challenges and experience of immigrants, people of colour, indigenous communities, and racialized groups in the workplace, including discrimination, prejudice, White supremacy, mistreatment, and barriers to civil interaction among diverse communities in Western democracies. Non-White immigrants working in White high educational contexts often suffer from racial discrimination and covert aggression within the culture of “the oppressive systemic racism” (pp. xxiv) and struggle for life along their career path. The author presents a case study, illustrating how an executive senior management team at a transnational university used “an insidious plot”, covert operations, underhanded practices to get rid of an employee (p.217). Incivility, bullying and harassment are perpetuated and remain unreported. Women are vulnerable victims of injustice, bullying, violence, sexual harassment, rape, physical and psychological abuse in the family and the workplace. The author presents the scenarios of reverse racism experienced by the Child of Apartheid in South Africa who believes that the previously oppressed Black South Africans feel that they are entitled to positioning themselves as masters of the society with oppressive, dominant, bullying, and exclusionary behaviour, and set barriers to the career path and upward mobility for other racialised non-Black groups. To the author, such reverse racism is “the ultimate outcome of White oppression” (p. 208). The last case study reviews bullying and harassment in academia where senior leadership teams and their “mobbing crew” with their own “insecurity, close-mindedness, and stereotypical, prejudicial and discriminatory behaviours” (p.232) tried all means to bully and harass the targeted employee, and consequently, the employee lost voice and visibility. The author, feeling disillusioned, demoralised, and marginalised, wrote a poem to reclaim the lost voice and visibility.

Research on incivility, bullying and harassment in academia and the glocal workplace is on the rise. Advances have been made in the past decades on the understanding of the complexity of the problems and models and frameworks have been established to conceptualise the remedial processes. However, Crawshaw (2009) argued that to understand the nature of the “workplace elephant” (p.264), it is important to consider different perspectives of diverse researchers and practitioners and share their various views, and only in this way can we formulate effective intervention and prevention strategies to tackle the problems. Mahmoudi (2019) warned that unlike other workplace bullies and harassers, academic bullies and harassers are intelligent enough not to leaving any trace of their unethical behaviour. The merit of Dr Fay Patel’s book is the attempt to uncover the dark side of organizational communication through real-life accounts of under-represented and disadvantaged employees in their fight against workplace bullying, harassment, mobbing, prejudice, and discrimination. The author pinpoints the causes of the workplace problem to power imbalance, systemic and structural racism, and the toxic culture in academia and the glocal workplace that perpetuate and normalise the unethical practices among leadership teams, and eventually shape the policy-making process and the life and experience of all involved in corporate companies and higher education institutions “designed to serve the

White majority” (Museus et al., 2015, p. 49). In this light, the book contributes to the scholarship and study of the workplace problem of power imbalance, bullying and harassment in the fields of organizational communication and intercultural communication.

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