

## Harassment at work

*2008-2009*

Among 29,128,000 workers having worked with employers or colleagues or employees during their work-life (84.7 per cent of actual or in the past workers), 9 per cent (2, 633,000) report to have suffered, in the time reference of the work-life, vexations or reduction or loss of duties with respect to the actual pay-grade. 6.7 per cent suffered such situations in the last 3 years and 4.3 per cent in the last twelve months before the interview. Women reporting suffering at work in course of their work-life are 9.9 per cent.

In particular 2,091,000 workers (7.2 per cent) reported work-vexations during their work-life. 5.2 per cent of workers suffered vexations in the last three years and 3.5 per cent in the last 12 months before the interview. 3.3 per cent of the workers (961,000 people) reported having been victim of reduction or loss of duties with respect to the current pay-grade in their work-life. In particular, 2.6 per cent (560,000) reported reduction or loss of duties in the last 3 years and 1.5 per cent in the last 12 months (306,000).

The worst situation refers to 420,000 workers (1.4 per cent), victims of both vexations by their employers or colleagues or employee, and reduction or loss of duties. 251,000 such victims (1.2 per cent) in the last 3 years and 129,000 (0.6 per cent) in the last 12 months before the interview.

Also vexations stand-alone frequency is high. Considering victims in the last three years, in 49.8 per cent of cases vexations happened daily, one or more times a week for 34.8 per cent of victims, two or more times a month for 15.4 per cent of victims. As regards duration 55.6 per cent of victims suffered such persecutions for at least one year; in particular, 26.9 per cent for more than three years, 11.4 per cent from two to three years, 10 per cent from one year and a half to two years, 7.7 per cent from one year to one year and a half.

7,948,000 suffered situations of discomfort and uneasiness characterised by relatively small frequency and duration. Nevertheless part of them (198,000) can be defined “highly at risk”, as they were victims more times in a month, but for a total duration of less than six months.

Not particular differences by age and/or gender among victims of vexations or loss of duties at work. Vexations affect more women than men (8.2 per cent versus 6.4 per cent). Gender difference decreases for victims in the last 3 years, and does not emerge for victims in the last 12 months. The reduction or loss of duties with respect to the actual pay-grade does not show any gender difference. The following data regard the last 3 year before the interview

### Who are the authors of vexations and of duties reduction

In 80 per cent of the cases authors are employers, followed by colleagues (29.7 per cent) and by employees (7.5 per cent). In particular, reduction or loss of duties are almost exclusively acted by employers (93.8 per cent), while vexations are acted by employers in 73.8 per cent of cases and by colleagues in 34.5 per cent of cases.

In 52.4 per cent of the cases the author acts alone. In 32.5 per cent of cases the victim is persecuted by a group of other workers composed by two or more persons, having the same

work-role (respectively all of them colleagues, or all of them employers, or all of them employees), while in 15.2 per cent of cases the group of perpetrators can be formed by both upper or lower pay-grade workers and by colleagues.

The authors of actions causing uneasiness for other workers are usually males, mainly when they are employers of the victims (73 per cent) or employee (65.1 per cent). Among colleagues gender differences are less important: in 52.6 per cent of cases authors are all males, in 37.7 per cent all females and in 9.7 per cent the victim is persecuted by both males and females.

An interesting and curious relation between gender and age of the victim and the same characteristics of the author can be underlined: among the employers, younger authors (aged 25-44) persecute more often women with respect to older ones, who instead persecute mainly men.

Considering the gender of authors, among employers men persecute and/or relieve of responsibilities and or duties other men; similarly, women persecute more often other women.

## Among causes

The most frequent causes reported by victims among those regarding specifically the work scenario are the corporate restructuring and the coming of a new management (22.3 per cent), followed by bossy employers (19.3 per cent) and by jealousy for the work by colleagues (15.3 per cent).

Causes related to the area of feelings and emotions are less indicated. Among the main there are envy and antipathy (16.0 per cent), diversities of personality and wickedness for fun (28.9 per cent), and such causes are still more indicated by victims of vexations (32.4 per cent).

## Among consequences

31.1 per cent of victims did not suffer for consequences but those who have got them report anger and nerviness, episodes of high anxiety, depression, economic losses and lack of motivations at work.

The economic individual loss is high and it is reported by 27.4 per cent of victims. More than 40 per cent do not invest energies and motivations at work.

As regards victim's health and their relationship, 52.9 per cent of victims did not report any physical or psychological consequences; nevertheless a complex scenario can be depicted, in which the most common reactions are anger (21.4 per cent) and anxiety (14.4 per cent) and other very serious consequences are depression (8.0 per cent), physical disturbances and gastritis (8.0 per cent).

## Outcomes

Only for one quarter of victims ended without helps or interventions, while 28.3 per cent of workers is still under persecution (31.1 per cent of victims of vexations). In 16.1 per cent of cases the victim resigned (21.5 per cent for reduction or loss of duties), in 5.2 per cent the victim was laid off. In about 8 per cent of cases the victim was relocated or asked for re-location in another office; finally in 6.8 per cent of cases the authors do not work with victims anymore.

Female victims resign more often than males (22.4 per cent versus 10.9 per cent of male colleagues).

## To whom victims speak

72.5 per cent of victims have told somebody actions suffered at work. They mainly spoke with colleagues, but more than 20 per cent involved employers (25.6 per cent in case of vexations). 12 per cent turned to trade unions, 0.6 per cent to the committee to assure the same opportunities.

6.7 per cent turned to a lawyer, 2.8 per cent to his/her family doctor, 2.6 per cent to a private psychologist, 2 per cent to a work psychologist, 1 per cent to a specialist doctor (neurologist, psychiatrist, etc.), 0.5 per cent to a doctor or psychologist of the National Health Service, while 86.5 per cent of victims did not involve any of the previous qualified persons to solve and face their work situation.

Following vexations, persecutions and arbitrary reduction of duties, only for 3.4 per cent of cases there was a proceedings, whose outcome is still hanging in 56.7 per cent of cases. Among ended proceedings, in 72.6 per cent of cases the victim was given right. In particular, 22.1 per cent of victims that won the proceedings were economically compensated for the damages, 9.4 per cent was restored at work.

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