

**DEFINITION, CLASSIFICATION AND
RECOGNITION OF THE MOBBING IN THE
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA¹**

Ms. Biljana Nechovska Stevkovska, MA

Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies
St. Partizanska n.n. (barracks complex), 7000 Bitola
E-mail: necovska_b@yahoo.com

Ed. prof. Dr. Dragan Gruevski

Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies
St. Partizanska n.n. (barracks complex), 7000 Bitola
E-mail: asprebt2@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The mobbing is a phenomenon that is present in our country so much, that in some way makes it part of the normal interpersonal relationships in the workplace, which is absurd by itself. Why is that? It is deviant behaviour, it disrupts the climate in the working environment, the damages are irreplaceable, and it is punishable according to the positive legal regulations.

Namely, the mobbing is psychological pressure at the workplace. In this paper, we will focus precisely on these moments, to set up a good base for defining the mobbing, to classify in which forms it appears, which will facilitate its recognition and in the end, we will present the data related to the issue how much the employees in the public administration recognize the mobbing.

Key words: mobbing, mobber, victim of mobbing, public administration.

¹ review scientific paper

INTRODUCTION

Often during our work, we are faced with unpleasant moments, which, according to a line of least resistance, we intent to think that they are part of one's character, and therefore we do not try to think whether we are victims of behavior, which shouldn't be neglected in any case. If we dedicate more attention to each other's relationships and ask ourselves the questions: "Have we ever found ourselves in a situation to be ridiculed or gossiped by colleagues at the workplace? Have we been given work assignments that are inadequate in our education and working position? Have we been offered indecent suggestions from our superiors? Have we been humiliated because of our gender, certain physical characteristics, age, nationality, faith? Have we felt insecure in the workplace? Do we have permanent headaches? Are we nervous? Do we not recognize ourselves? If the answer is yes, on at least one of these questions, it without a doubt makes us a victim of mobbing.

Mobbing is a frequent phenomenon in R. Macedonia and receives its due to the increasing number of cases of persons who become aware that they are victims of it. Victims are simply not sufficiently educated to safely identify mobbing and which instruments are available to address such a situation. Prevention of such behavior, which, as its own product, does not only result in the disrupted health of the employee, but also inflicts damage on the overall working process within the organization, is questionable. The reason for this is ignorance as to what behavior can be placed in the category of psychological pressure at the workplace. From here, the dilemma of the victims, are they really subjected to mobbing in the workplace or is it just the usual behavior that we experience as an integral part of the character of a particular person or as power in the hands of the superiors.

The aim of this paper will be precisely to clarify these moments and help the victims, as they identify mobbing, to establish that if the psychological pressure they perceive is the consequence of exactly such a range of relationships and help them in relation to the instruments at their disposal, when dealing with it.

THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH

In studying a particular phenomenon the initial challenge is the definition of the phenomenon. But when we try to define it, in conditions when there is no internationally accepted definition, as a source we are referring to several authors who gave their own review and mark of it.

Although the roots of mobbing are difficult to pinpoint, since behavior was analyzed by a large number of scientists around the world, the Swedish psychologist, of German origin, Prof. Dr. Heinz Leymann 1932-1999, is considered a pioneer in this field, because in 1984 he gave the first definition of mobbing, at the time calling it hostile behavior at the workplace.

Leymann in his "The Mobbing Encyclopaedia" defines mobbing through the following definition:

"Psychic terror or mobbing in the work environment involves hostile or unethical communication that is systematically targeted by one or more persons, mostly to one person, who as a result is brought into a position of helplessness or inability to defend and which in that position is retained and continues with continuous mobbing activities. These procedures are performed quite often (statistical definition - at least once a week) and over a longer period of time (statistical definition - at least for six months). Due to the frequent repetition and the long duration of hostile behavior, this harassment results in significant mental, psychosomatic and social consequences. "²

According to the above, the definition does not focus on the activities themselves, but on the consequences.

Prof. Dr. Lyman was mentioned as a pioneer in this field, where other authors also worked who theoretically contributed through their special choices (Noa Davenport, Ruth Distler Shewartz and Gail Pursell Elliot. Stale Einarsen, Helge Hoel, Dieter Zapf and Cary L. Cooper, etc.)

Taking into account all of them, we can notice some key elements that are common to each of these definitions: **Psychological pressure**: expressed through hostile, unethical and pathological communication; **Negative behavior**: gossiping, ridicule, underestimation, isolation by colleagues etc; **As a mobber, appears one or a group** of employees; **One goal**: acting in the largest number of cases is directed at one person in an inferior position; **Repetition**: as a mobbing is considered any negative behavior that is repeated for at least a time period of six months; **Regularity**: isolated cases of psychological pressure can't be part of this category if they do not possess this feature; **Longer period of time**: most often actions must be followed over a longer period of at least six months; **Serious consequences**: Which can be represented in three categories: 1. *Psychological consequences*: depression, impotence in performing work tasks, humiliation, emotional cavity, apathy, panic attacks, fear, absence etc.; 2. *Physical consequences*: frequent headaches, tachycardia, chronic fatigue,

² <http://www.leymann.se/English/frame.html> The Mobbing Encyclopaedia, Bulling ; Whistleblowing, The definition of mobbing at workplaces, Heinz Leymann – 12100e, 1996

changes in weight, pressure variation, impaired immunity, etc. ; 3. *Change in behavior expressed through*: loss of concentration, aggression towards the close, isolation, changes in diet, alcohol consumption, drugs, increased amounts of drugs, frequent arguments with the spouse and other family members, etc. which lead to one that could be taken as a starting point in defining this phenomenon at our country.

Here from, mobbing can be said to be: **psychological pressure at the workplace, followed by a negative behavior of one person or group employed towards one (rarely more) goal, which is repeated regularly in a longer period of time and has serious consequences for the health (physical and psychological) condition, the social status of the victim, and not uncommonly the organization itself.**

In the available literature, various types of mobbing types can be found, but here we list only those types that we can say are most commonly met and that by recognizing them, we are on the step towards identifying mobbing.

From the point of view of the *position* from which the abuse is carried out, mobbing is encountered in two emergent types, such as: **Horizontal mobbing** - takes place between workers at the same level in the hierarchical organization of the organization and **vertical mobbing** - most often the superiors attack and harass one in a single worker until it destroys the whole group. This type of mobbing is also known as "Bossing". But there is also a situation in which a group of workers performs mobbing on the employer or superiors.

From the point of view of the *motive* for performing mobbing we distinguish: **Strategic mobbing** - occurs in organizations in need of structural changes (when new systematization of jobs, rationalization or declaring of redundancies is performed) and there is a need to reduce the number of employees. It is implemented through an agreement between the management team for organizing organized mobbing by making a list of employees that are "undesirable".³ And due to irrational working conditions, they will submit their rejection, which will reduce the number of employees on previously determined positions, and the interest of the employers will be realized.⁴ ; **Effective or emotional mobbing** - takes place on a personal level because it most often reflects the envy, malice or fear of competition

³ Ass.Prof. Dragan Gruevski, MSc Monika Markovska "*Organizational Behavior*" - Center for International Management, p. 343, 2009

⁴ Union of Trade Unions of Macedonia, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation - Office in Macedonia, Macedonian Mobbing Association: "*MOBING - Psychological Pressure at the Workplace*", LAMINA Skopje, p.20, June 2009

on the moon and, therefore, it is directed towards the individual from whom it feels threatened and tries to force it to give up the workflow place.⁵ ; **Another specific type of mobbing is mobbing with elements of sexual harassment** - when at work the procedures that are manifested by giving indecent suggestions, sexual insinuations and additions persist for a continuous period of at least six months.⁶

The analysis is also interesting in terms of the character traits and the personality of the boats. So Ivica Kihalic (Ivica Kihalic) can identify with the following characteristics: **Eager for attention** - with excessive kindness, they want to keep the authorities to themselves, they are emotionally immature. They are selectively courteous towards their co-workers, especially at the beginning towards their victim, and on the other hand they use the co-workers. They invent and blame the others, always want to be in the spotlight. Often they feel sorry, if discovered that they are doing that they claim that they are the victims; **Imitators** - are not professionally qualified, but they claim the opposite because they are close to professionals. They often play a profession they want to deal with and look for merits that „belong“to them. Manipulating others can easily be provoked. They often threaten the co-workers, they cast loyalty to the superiors, but reject them after they have used them; **Gurus** - they are successful in a low field of their expertise, the collaborators are recognized as such, they are selfish, they abuse everyone they feel threatened. They are emotionally cold, mostly male, sometimes excessively tidy, their own mistakes to others; **Psychopaths or sociopaths** - are intrusive and arrogant to the victims, and to others they are dear and kind, cold and calculating, actors, laws and moral norms are not valid for them, they are difficult to discover in the illegal activities, they do not show feelings, pity and guilt. Those who will discover them immediately become their victims and transfer them all the inappropriate acts.⁷

Of course, the theory has deepened the analysis of mobbing and other aspects that we will not mention here. Because of their practical and functional significance, here we highlight the main indicators of the

⁵ Ass.Prof. Dragan Gruevski, MSc Monika Markovska "Organizational Behavior" - Center for International Management, p. 343, 2009

⁶ PPC - Shtip: "MOBING - Inform and Recognize!", Building a First Generation Network for Advocacy for the Rights of the Victims of Mobbing, a project funded by the European Union, December 2008

⁷ Ass.Prof. Dragan Gruevski, MSc Monika Markovska "Organizational Behavior" - Center for International Management, p.345-346, 2009

existence of mobbing as an indispensable aspect in its theoretical analysis, with the notation that if one of those activities and situations is constantly going on, then it should without a doubt involve the alarm and urgently we take measures for self-protection and dealing.

In this context, the most indicative are:

- When you work, and the credit for it is stolen or used as a source for someone's plagiarism;
- When your responsibility is increased, but authority is taken away;
- When your vacation and sick leave are rejected;
- You have been denied training / training necessary to be able to fulfil your responsibilities further;
- Setting up unrealistic demands that change as well as to approach them;
- Changing the deadlines in a short interval or without notice and without being informed until it is too late;
- You discover that everything you say or do is tortured, distorted, and misrepresented;
- Subjected to disciplinary measures with verbal or written warnings for minor or fictitious reasons and without proper investigation;
- You are forced to leave your job without your guilt, constructive dismissal, premature or retirement for health reasons.⁸

Although we can not unify the recognition of mobbing symptoms, we can still say that a common epilogue of the consequences of mobbing is that it: **disturbs health** - the occurrence of organic or psychiatric illness, memory impediments, nightmares, concentration problems, pain in the stomach, malaise, depression, lack of initiative, vomiting, lameness, irritability, impatience, aggressive feeling, insecurity, sweating, arrhythmia, lack of air, difficulty with blood pressure, insomnia, nausea, loss of and appetite, crying, loneliness, isolation, fever; **Affecting the professional performance of work** (due to physical, emotional and mental worsening) there is a sense of failure, fatigue and exhaustion due to excessive requirements that do not correlate with the individual's abilities, therefore require great physical and mental input, in spite of small fees in terms of financial gain, status or career advancement.⁹

⁸ Within the framework of the Daphne program, *Mobbing - Recognizing and tackling violence and harassment at the workplace*, financed by the European Commission, CRAS, p.9, September 2004

⁹ Union of Trade Unions of Macedonia, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation - Office in Macedonia, Macedonian Mobbing Association: "*MOBING - Psychological Pressure at the Workplace*", LAMINA Skopje, June 2009, стр. 35

Preventive protection against mobbing is organized as: primary, secondary and tertiary. Or, in other words, starting from the lowest, moving to the highest level, we can ask for help within the workplace: colleagues, line manager (immediate superior), human resource department (department), social care officer, through a complaint procedure (most complaints have written rules and procedures on how to make up), harassment advisers; health and safety officers; representative of the union.¹⁰

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

According to the type, it is an operational research, with a descriptive approach focused on the present. It does not aim to find out what reasons have led public sector employees to understand mobbing the same or differently from their colleagues in some other countries where mobbing has been regulated long ago.¹¹

The general aim of the research was to prove that in R. Macedonia faces difficulties in identifying what psychological pressure is and that the specific legal determination will remove the vagueness regarding this problem. The following tasks came out: to separate the key indicators for its definition; to determine the use value of the methodological approach envisaged and the instrumental of the research; to obtain unambiguous indicators of the serious consequences of mobbing that will have practical value for its detection in everyday work.

We set our initial assumption affirmatively and said: **The employees in the public administration in the Republic of Macedonia, regardless of their age, educational and gender structure, understand the concept of mobbing in its general use meaning, as defined and described in contemporary professional literature, and feel the need for its more complete legal regulation.**

It resulted in three separate and seven individual hypotheses that led to the key indicators for testing the variables in question. The specification

¹⁰ Within the framework of the Daphne program, *Mobbing - Recognizing and tackling violence and harassment at the workplace*, financed by the European Commission, CRAS, , p.12, September 2004

¹¹ Law on Protection from Harassment at the Workplace, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 79 from 31.05. 2013

of the main assumption in special was in terms of age, level of education and gender.

The research was carried out in three parts that resulted from the three methodological approaches: **Survey** of 232 employees in the public administration from eight municipalities, in the southwest part of the Republic of Macedonia (Bitola, Demir Hisar, Mogila, Ohrid, Resen, Struga, Novaci and Dolneni); **Analysis of documentation and factography related to the subject phenomenon**, and published in daily newspapers (Dnevnik, Nova Makedonija, Utrinski vesnik, Vecer, Vest), in the period from 17.01.2008 until 03.02.2012. and the **Case Study** of a textile worker from Bitola and an **interview** with the professional persons involved in the case, the representative of SSM from the regional office in Bitola, Simon Siljanovski and specialist neuropsychiatry, Dr. Romeo K. Ikonovski, who works with such cases.

In the following, the data obtained from the survey are briefly presented:

An analysis of data from the aspect of age and the perception of the surveyed phenomenon by the involved persons in the research was done by applying the nonparametric assessment of the relationship of variables (HI - square test) to the results presented in tabular form (see tab. 1), on the basis of which we conclude that: the age at which public administration employees influence the understanding of mobbing in its general meaning, and the way it is defined in contemporary professional literature.

Table no. 1 Table 2x2 for the calculation of the Hi 2 test in relation to the data on the age variables - degree of mobility recognition

Recognition Age	Recognizing	Not recognizing	Total
To 35	31 (20,8)	15 (25,2)	46
36 – 54	55 (62)	82 (75)	137
Above 55	19 (22,2)	30 (26,8)	49
Total	105	127	232

$x^2 = 11,418$ s.s = 2 0,05 = 5,992 11,418 > 5,992 0,01 = 9,210 11,418 > 9,210

Analysis from the aspect of the level of education and the recognition of mobbing was also done by applying the nonparametric assessment of the relationship of variables (HI - square test) which gave the results presented tabular (see Table 2), and on whose we conclude that: The degree of education acquired by public administration employees affects the understanding of mobbing in its general use of meaning and in the way it is defined in contemporary professional literature

Table 2. Table 2x2 for the calculation of the Hi 2 test in relation to the data on the variables of the degree of education - degree of recognition of mobbing

Recognition Degree of education	Recognizing	Not recognizing	Total
SSS	23 (36,2)	57 (43,8)	80
VSS/M-r/D-r	82 (68,8)	70 (83,2)	152
Total	105	127	232

$x^2 = 13,418$ s.s = 1 0,05 = 3,843 13,418 > 3,843 0,01 = 6,637 13,418 > 6,637

Analysis from the point of view of gender and the recognition of the mobbing gave the results presented in a tabular manner (see Table 3), on the basis of which we concluded that the employees in the public administration, regardless of gender, understand mobbing in its general use meaning, which is defined in contemporary professional literature.

Table 3. Table 2x2 for the calculation of the Hi 2 test in relation to the data on the variables of gender affiliation - degree of recognition of mobbing

Recognition Gender	Recognizing	Not recognizing	Total
Male	49 (48)	57 (58)	106

Female	56 (57)	70 (69)	126
Total	105	127	232

$$x^2 = 0,070$$

$$s.s = 1$$

$$0,05 = 3,843 \quad 0,070 < 3,843$$

$$0,01 = 6,637 \quad 0,070 < 6,637$$

Document Analysis - This method is used to analyze the actuality of the phenomenon in R. Macedonia. For this purpose an analysis was conducted within the coverage of the phenomenon (mobbing as a topic) in the daily newspapers Dnevnik, Nova Makedonija, Utrinski vesnik, Vecer and Vest in the period from 17.01.2008 to 03.02. 2012.

17.01.2008 – 03.02.2012	How many are written by:			How many are:		How many are:		How many are:	
Name of the daily newspapers	Journalists	Experts	Columnists	Original texts	Over taken from other sources	Based on a real story	Over taken from the literature	Positive	Negative
1. Dnevnik	57	0	3	38	22	58	2	22	38
2. Nova Makedonija	4	0	1	4	1	5	0	2	3
3. Utrinski vesnik	54	3	0	49	8	56	1	14	43
4. Vecer	11	0	0	8	3	9	2	5	6
5. Vest	19	0	0	15	4	18	1	5	14

17.01.2008 – 03.02.2012	How many are written by:			How many are:		How many are:		How many are:	
Name of the daily newspapers	Journalists	Experts	Columnists	Original text	Over taken from other sources	Based on a real story	Over taken from the literature	Positive	Negative
1. Dnevnik	95%	0%	5%	63%	37%	97%	3%	37%	63%

2.	Nova Makedonija	80%	0%	20%	80%	20%	100%	0%	40%	60%
3.	Utrinski vesnik	95%	5%	0%	86%	14%	98%	2%	25%	75%
4.	Vecer	100%	0%	0%	73%	27%	82%	18%	45%	55%
5.	Vest	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	95%	5%	26%	74%

According to the data that are part of the previously presented tables, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. 80-100% of the articles processed in this analysis are written by journalists. 5% - 20% are articles written by columnists. What is a worrying moment is the fact that there is only one article, 5%, which is written by an expert in the relevant field;

2. As regards the originality of the texts, the following situation has arisen. Namely, 63% - 86% are original texts, and 14-37% are taken texts, mostly from journalists who write for newspapers from neighbouring countries;

3. Even 82-100% of the articles are based on real cases, and less than 18% are taken from the literature;

4. In terms of what kind of prefix brings each news item, or whether it is written in a positive or negative context, according to the obtained results from the analysis, we can conclude that from 25 to 40% of the analyzed articles are with a positive sign, and up to 75% are in a negative context.

Regarding the **Case Study**, we faced the following development of the case:

March, 2009 - 30 employees in the textile firm in Bitola receive group dismissal of the employment contract. They lodge a complaint with the board of directors of the company, and at the same time submit a request to the State Labour Inspectorate for dismissal. The Inspectorate returns everyone to work, but only a fraction of them remain there. Part goes redundancy, part find new employment. The victim, although she is over 55 years old, is not offered to go for redundancy and she remains at work.

April 2009 - the victim receives a new employment contract, but for a lower position than the previous one (from a controller, the masters turns into an ordinary worker on a machine) to which he lodges an objection and a request to the inspectorate to consider.

Although receiving a positive response from the inspectorate, it again receives a similar agreement, to which it again charges an objection. In the meantime, he uses sick leave immediately after completing his compulsory leave.

May, 2009 - Not being able to reach a compromise, filed a lawsuit at the Basic Court in Bitola.

June, 2009 - the procedure after the lawsuit did not begin, the victim was summoned to work by the director, although in that period he used sick leave. The lawyer dictates an application for termination of employment and gives her to sign a contractual termination of the employment relationship. The victim signs, unaware of the consequences.

September, 2009 - at the scheduled hearing in the court, the management shows the signed decision for a voluntary termination of employment, indicating that there is no basis for the dispute.

September, 2009 - due to the failure of the previous lawsuit, is being converted into a mobbing lawsuit because the purpose of the mop was an indefinite working contract, annulled and signed a new one-year contract, signed at a time of sick leave and without the victim being aware of what will follow him.

In the course of the court procedure an expert's report is conducted. The doctor-expert does not find indicators that would confirm the disrupted health condition when signing the agreed termination of employment, but concludes that the victim was fully aware of the signing, although she complained that the sunglasses had fallen and the glasses fell when this happened, but instead of asking for medical help, which would document the condition, she went home.

The lawsuit is dismissed as unfounded, and the victim refuses to act further, realizing that there are no more arguments on her side. For the entire period, she uses sick leave and pays the entire amount of the salary (as a form of compensation).

June, 2010 - after the expiration of the contract, it remains out of work.

The questions "Why does not the victim receive the necessary protection? Does the employer (mobber) do not have complete medical documentation of the case or the lack of legal protection? "

CONCLUSION CONSIDERATIONS

The age at which public administration employees are, influences the understanding of mobbing in its commonly used meaning and the way it is defined in contemporary professional literature. The degree of education

acquired by employees in public administration affects the understanding of mobbing in its general meaning, in the way that it is defined in contemporary professional literature. And as the last hypothesis that considers the sexual affiliation of the respondents we have the following results. Public administration employees, regardless of their gender, understand mobbing in its commonly used meaning and the way it is defined in contemporary professional literature.

However, despite the understanding and existence of a separate legal solution, we still come across the following challenges, from which the recommendations arise, which should be given additional attention in the future. The most common problem, which is the subject of every progress report of our country towards EU accession, is the work of the judiciary, its bias, corruption and selective use of law. The problem lies not in passing the law itself, but in its implementation. It must be considered that the proposed solutions correspond to the conditions in R. Macedonia, not to be a transcript of some other legislation or a desire to implement the EU-wide legal standards. A second problem is the "invisible link" between employers or highly positioned officials and holders of legal solutions. Thirdly, the SSM's non-functioning in relation to this issue. Despite the promotion of twenty anti-mobbing advisers in May 2012, however to date, there has not been any solved or raised a case that is associated with them. And most importantly, it is necessary to raise the awareness of the Macedonian citizen that by violation of his rights, which are determined by numerous international conventions, a crime is committed which is punishable by law.

The conclusion is that mobbing in the Republic of Macedonia has taken a serious swing. However, despite the legal solution, there is no suitable instrument for measuring the efficiency in dealing with this behavior. The studies carried out so far show that a large percentage of employees are susceptible to mobbing in the workplace; however, in practice, there are not nearly as many cases as recorded through independent surveys. Whether this is due to the ignorance of the available legal provisions, which appear insufficient to pursue a sound legal procedure, or employees simply do not have the courage to initiate a procedure can not be determined, because there are no specific data to support any claim. However, the definition, precision and more comprehensive regulation of mobbing should be part of the Republic's legal system without delay. Macedonia, as a step towards contributing to the general welfare of the citizens of our country and confirmation of the efforts to increase the rights of the employees, should enforce the law, so it won't remain only a words written on paper.

USED LITERATURE

1. <http://www.leymann.se/English/frame.html> The Mobbing Encyclopaedia, Bulling; Whistleblowing, The definition of mobbing at workplaces, Heinz Leymann - 12100e, 1996
2. Noa Davenport, Ruth Distler Shewartz, Gail Pursell Elliot "Mobbing: Emotional Abuse in the American Workplace", BookMasters Inc. 1999
3. Stale Einarsen, Helge Hoel, Dieter Zapf and Cary L. Cooper: "Bulling and emotional abuse in the workplace: International perspectives in research and practice", Taylor & Francis, 2003
4. Ass.Prof. Dragan Gruevski, MSc Monika Markovska "Organizational Behavior" - Center for International Management, 2009
5. Union of Trade Unions of Macedonia, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation - Office in Macedonia, Macedonian Mobbing Association: "MOBING - Psychological Pressure at the Workplace", LAMINA Skopje, June 2009
6. PPC - Shtip: "MOBING - Inform and Recognize!", Building a First Generation Network for Advocacy for the Rights of the Victims of Mobbing, a project funded by the European Union, December 2008
7. Within the framework of the Daphne program, Mobbing - Recognizing and tackling violence and harassment at the workplace, financed by the European Commission, CRAS, September 2004
8. Law on Protection from Harassment at the Workplace, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 79 from 31.05. 2013