

MOBBING WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE:  
HOW WOMEN PERCEIVE, EXPERIENCE AND ARE AFFECTED FROM IT?

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

DECEMBER 2011

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **MOBBING WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE: HOW WOMEN PERCEIVE, EXPERIENCE AND ARE AFFECTED FROM IT?**

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December 2011, 145 pages

This study was carried out with the objective of exploring mobbing with a gender perspective. Studies done so far on mobbing have employed a gender-neutral approach to the phenomenon, suggesting that there was no relationship between gender and mobbing. However, recent feminist studies suggest that, feminist theory, masculinity theory and gendered organizations theory explain how mobbing is in relation with gender. This study analyzed how women perceive, experience and are affected from mobbing in light of explanations offered by these theories. In this context, in-depth interviews were carried out with nine women employees from private sector and eleven women employees from public sector, in total 20 women employees. As a result of this study, depending on the reasons of victimization, types of mobbing is divided in to three categories. They are “political mobbing”, “individual mobbing” and “organizational mobbing”. The mobbing behaviors that these 20 women were exposed to were also identified. According to the findings of the study women move away from the workplace or exit from work life through

transfer, retirement or resignation as a result of mobbing they have lived. Findings of the study show that mobbing has serious effects on psychical and psychological health of the individuals. Although gender was not found to be major factor for being chosen as a target, it intensifies the negative consequences for women through the mobbing process and afterwards, in work life and private life social relations. As a result of this study, it is observed that gender significantly influences women's mobbing experiences.

Keywords: Mobbing, Gender, Feminist Methodology

## ÖZ

### CİNSİYET PERSPEKTİFİ İLE PSİKOLOJİK ŞİDDET (MOBBING): KADINLARIN ALGISI, DENEYİMİ VE NASIL ETKİLENDİKLERİ?

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Aralık 2011, 145 sayfa

Bu çalışma psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) olgusunu toplumsal cinsiyet bakış açısı ile inceleme amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın çıkış noktası, mobbing konusunda günümüze kadar yapılan çalışmaların büyük bir kısmının toplumsal cinsiyete duyarsız bir yaklaşım içermeleri ve toplumsal cinsiyet ile psikolojik şiddet arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmadığını öne sürmeleridir. Bu konuda yakın zamanda yapılan feminist çalışmalar, feminist teori, erkeklik teorisi ve cinsiyete dayalı örgütlenme teorilerinin psikolojik şiddet ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkisini açıklamakta olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, söz konusu teorilerin önerdiği açıklamalar ışığında, kadınların psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) ile ilgili algısını, deneyimlerini ve psikolojik şiddetten (mobbing) nasıl etkilendiklerini araştırmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu kapsamda, onbir tanesi kamu sektöründen, dokuzu özel sektörden olmak üzere, 20 kadın çalışanla derinlemesine mülakat yöntemi kullanılarak görüşme yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda mağduriyetin nedenlerinden yola çıkılarak

psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) üç tipe ayrılmıştır. Bunlar “siyasi mobbing”, “kişisel mobbing” ve “örgütsel mobbing”dir. Ayrıca çalışmada, 20 kadının uğradığı psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) davranışları belirlenmiştir. Araştırmaların bulgularına göre, kadınlar yaşadıkları psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) sonucu çalıştıkları sektöre göre, tayin isteme veya emeklilik talep etme yolu ile iş yerinden uzaklaşmakta veya iş hayatından çıkmaktadırlar. Çalışma bulgularına göre, psikolojik şiddetin (mobbing) bireylerin ruhsal ve fiziksel sağlığı üzerinde ciddi olumsuz etkileri bulunmaktadır. Bu bulgulara göre, toplumsal cinsiyet her ne kadar psikolojik şiddete hedef seçilmede etken olarak görülme de; iş yerinde yaşanan psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) sürecinde ve sonrasında, iş hayatındaki ve özel hayattaki sosyal ilişkilerde psikolojik şiddetin kadınların üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini güçlendirmektedir. Sonuç olarak kadınların toplumsal cinsiyetlerinin, psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) deneyimlerinde etkili olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Psikolojik şiddet (Mobbing), Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Feminist Metodoloji

**To my father Erkin Topkaya**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express that I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Dr.Yıldız Ecevit for her support, guidance and encouragement through my research study. She has been such a mentor for me through my graduate study in Gender and Women's Studies.

I would like to thank to my family for their patience and support while writing this thesis, especially to my mother Gülsen Topkaya who provided all kinds of support for me to accomplish this journey.

I would like to thank to women who have participated in this study and shared their very private experiences with me.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ECWS</b>	European Working Conditions Surveys
<b>PTSD</b>	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
<b>LIPT</b>	Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terrorization
<b>NAQ</b>	Negative Acts Questionnaire
<b>KEFEK</b>	Commission on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

*'Bullying (Mobbing) is the sexual harassment of 20 years ago: everybody knows about it, but nobody wants to admit it'*

*Lewis Maltby*

Work is an important field for feminists to pursue gender equality. Despite many progress and efforts in feminist history, discrimination against women in employment still exists. Women continue to work in low status, in low paying and gender segregated jobs. Feminist theory looked at three important issues while elaborating secondary status of women in labor market. These are level of market participation, occupational segregation and differences in pay. Women and men are not equal in the labor market. They are not equal in terms of wage, status and occupation. Women have low level of labor force participation because they are excluded from labor force. Job segregation by gender lessens the equality between two sexes resulting in superiority of men over women. Patriarchy, as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women, also have effect on gender practices of employment (Walby 1990).

### **1.1. Significance of the study**

Mobbing, which gained recognition since the 1990s, is a form of harassment and violence at work, which is done psychologically through an intimidation process and which has severe consequences for the individual. Until recently the concept has been studied mainly as part of psychological and organizational studies. Awareness in mobbing has started in Scandinavian countries and spread to other countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada, Germany and Japan (Rayner, Hoel & Cooper, 2002).



The interest in the issue follows a similar pattern in most countries. It begins with media attention to court cases when an employee claims to be mistreated at work severely. It takes public attention and it is followed by studies about the importance and consequences of the problem.

The studies demonstrate the existence of mobbing which has serious consequences for the individual, organization and the society. It was found that mobbers are more likely to be men than women and usually these are the superiors and managers that conduct these behaviors. Although, in most of the studies, the results (i.e. EWCS 2007) show that women are exposed to mobbing more than men and mostly men are the mobbers, in definition it is accepted as a gender-neutral process. Most of the researchers do not claim that one's gender is a cause of mobbing. Even some studies argue that higher prevalence of mobbing in female dominated sectors and jobs is a result of female aggression (Björkqvist, Österman, & Lagerspetz 1994). It would not be wrong to state that the conventional approach to mobbing was gender blind when it came to elaborating the lived experience of women. Further research is needed to study why women experience mobbing more than men and mobbing is more prevalent in female dominated sectors and to explore the gender factor in mobbing. This could not be done without seeing the big picture. As feminist research concedes it, women's oppression is universal, and patriarchy continues to control women. Although women seem to be releasing from patriarchy in the private sphere as women take more place in public life, (mainly through employment) patriarchy follows them in the public sphere, too. Job segregation by sex and sexist mechanisms, which take their strength from patriarchy, reinforce obstacles for women in working life and promote women's dependence on the private sphere and secondary status of women in the labor market. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, a lot of empirical studies were done to understand women's work experience.

Mobbing experience is very important for women because it includes two areas in it, which are very important for feminist theory. Mobbing takes place in the workplace, and it is a form of violence. Mobbing, although recently recognized in Turkey, probably is one of the sexist mechanisms, which women will struggle against in employment at the cost of their civil rights. As studies show in the international

literature and in Turkey, the number of women exposed to mobbing is more than men.<sup>1</sup> Whether gender by itself is a reason of this process or not has not been elaborated deliberately, but this should be one of the main areas where feminist studies should investigate further in to it.

Early studies in the literature, which theorize mobbing, did not put sufficient effort on understanding the gendered side of the phenomenon, rather defined mobbing as gender neutral. However, the workplaces, which mobbing occurs, are socially constructed and gendered. Recently some scholars like Simpson and Cohen (2004), and McGinley (2007), put up the argument that mobbing behaviors are gendered, and masculinities theory, feminist theory and organizational theory provide theoretical background to understand this phenomenon better.

The reason that I chose mobbing as the subject of this study is the same reason why I started to graduate study in Gender and Women's Studies. I was a mobbing victim before. Although being a mobbing victim in those days made me have very negative feelings and carry its effects many years afterwards, it has led to a new awareness in my life. It is a fact that feminism sheds a critical light on women's own lives. This study is an attempt of a feminist woman, to keep the light for women victims of mobbing, by looking the subject through gender, which is excluded in mobbing studies.

The main problem that this study aims to explore is how women perceive, experience and are affected by mobbing. Mobbing is approached in a broad manner considering the whole process. Women still constitute a small part in the labor force. "Work" is a male dominated structure for women. Women have to struggle against many situations in the workplace. Mobbing is one of them. The struggle is not limited to work place. Once she has been victimized, she experiences its consequences at work, on herself, at home, in her relations, and she experiences it within the boundaries of her socially constructed gender. She lives the violence at work, and she struggles with it as an employee, as a wife and/or as a mother etc. In this study, I wanted to

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<sup>1</sup> The findings of higher victimization of international studies are given in pp.30-31 and examples from Turkey are presented in pp. 57-58-59-62-63.

analyze the effects of mobbing on women's lives. Besides, I questioned whether their gender has constituted a factor in any part of the mobbing process and how.

The research aims to explore how women employees perceive, experience and are affected by mobbing by analyzing the mobbing experiences of women employees public and private sectors. The research is based on the interviews done with 20 women employees from the public and the private sector that have experienced mobbing. I assumed that people could hesitate to bring up their experiences as they are very personal and it could be difficult to find participants for the study. Therefore, I did not select a specific sector for my research but elaborated the experiences of women in the two main sectors, which are private and public sectors. Besides I was also interested in the comparison of the mobbing experiences of women between these sectors.

## **1.2. Research Procedure**

This study is conducted with two main approaches. Firstly the literature on mobbing is reviewed. In a subject like mobbing which have been introduced by gender lacking research in the literature, it was very difficult to study the concept with a feminist perspective in terms of literature review. As a result, inclusion of researches on mobbing from people who defined themselves as feminists both from Turkey, Scandinavian and European countries had not been very satisfactory. I benefited from the findings of quantitative researches of mostly European and Scandinavian countries to describe mobbing with the knowledge of their weakness, which is gender blindness. On the other hand, it gave me a handful of justification to criticize the early literature on mobbing as they lacked gender perspective.

The second part of the study includes research with feminist methodology. Feminist methodology is important because of the areas that it focuses on and how it uses its findings. Among other criteria, feminist research assumes that "men and women differ in their perceptions of life due to their social status and that the powerful dominate the social life and the ideology" (Sarantakos, 2005:55). Therefore, a crucial part of the feminist research is to put gender at the core of the study and represent women's perspective by making women visible (Harvey, 1990). In a feminist study,

researcher builds a bridge for women to speak about their life from their perspective. Feminist research is different from and critical of conventional social research. Where feminist studies challenge positivist principles such as controlling variables in experimentation, detachment and object subject distinction; openness (Harding, 1991) is a type of objectivity that is accepted by feminist researchers. In feminist methodology, quantitative research is accepted to be dominated by male ideology and incur problems related to reliability, validity and representativeness also feminists criticize the view of objectivity and hierarchy (Oakley 1981). Feminist methodology includes the researcher as a person and the researcher tries to develop a special relationship with the subject of the study. One of the main research tools that feminists use is an in-depth interview because it encourages subjectivity and intensive dialogues between equals, as it is a non-hierarchical process (Sarantakos, 2005).

In this study, I conducted in depth-interviews with 20 women mobbing victims. The interviews were facilitated with pre-organized questions. I applied an emancipatory approach while conducting interviews with the mobbing victims. Although the interview included pre-organized questions, the participants were free to share their experience as detailed as they wished. The fact that I was a mobbing victim helped me to create an emotional bond with the subject and encouraged me to empower these women to speak up about their experience from their perspective. I interviewed with eleven women from the public sector and nine women from the private sector. The profiles of the interviewees are given in Appendix A. The hardest part of the study was to find mobbing victims and to convince them to participate in the research. To overcome this problem, I attended to seminars about mobbing, introduced myself, and the objective of the study. Also, I contacted with the administrators and members of Association for Struggle against Mobbing. I issued a membership to “No to Mobbing” internet platform and made announcements for participation in my study from there time to time. I reached some participants by these ways and used a snowball method for others. Contrary to my expectations, it was easier to reach and take the consent of the public sector women employees. On the other hand, I spent a considerable time and effort to find private sector employees. In five months period, I had reached twenty mobbing victims. Out of 20

interviewees, two of them were from İstanbul, two of them were from Eskişehir, and one interviewee was from Muğla, and the rest of them attended to interviews from Ankara. I traveled for the interviews that are held outside Ankara. I started and finished the interviews in a six-month period. The interviews lasted one hour at least and two and a half hour at most. The interviews were held where the participants felt themselves comfortable. In most of the time, I came together with the participant in a restaurant or cafe of their choice and some of them invited me to their workplace. In interviews, I gave examples from my own experiences and tried to form a friendly and intimate approach in order to build trust between the participants and me and aimed to help the participants to recall as many details as they could and reveal what these women went through. The questions which were prepared according to the phases of mobbing process in a sequential manner, aimed to help participants remember as much as they could do, and this facilitated data gathering. The questions were open ended. The interviews started with the question of perceived definition of mobbing and continued with other questions that helped women to tell their story. The interview questions are given in Appendix B. Sometimes without asking the questions victims included their answers in their story but sometimes I had to ask follow up questions to understand the details of the story. I used tape recording in interviews with the consent of the participants. None of the respondents had any hesitation on giving permission to be recorded. Interviewees do not take place with their real names in the study. In addition, there is not any expression that may decipher the participant or their institution. Summaries of interviews are given in Appendix C.

After finishing the interviews, I transcribed them. Transcription took a considerable amount of time. Following this phase, I analyzed the transcribed material. In the analysis phase, I have identified four themes in relation with each other and where commonalities of findings can be presented. Therefore, the main framework of analysis was organized under four headings, which are; the victim's perception and experience on mobbing, the role of the gender, reactions and strategies of the mobbing victims and effects of mobbing.

The study has its limitations. In this study, I did not seek to reach a geographic diversity while selecting participants. The only criterium for choosing participants was the respondent's claim of being a mobbing victim. Another limitation of the study is the employment status and educational background of the participants. All of the participants are university graduates and work in jobs requiring professional expertise. Mobbing experiences of employees who work in the lower level jobs should be elaborated in another research.

### **1.3. Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of eight chapters. The second chapter following introduction includes the conceptualization of mobbing. It describes how mobbing emerged, which behaviors are classified as mobbing, its consequences and the reasoning behind it. The prevalence of mobbing in other countries, examples from international literature and legal aspects of mobbing are also held in this chapter. The mobbing is approached with a critical perspective to the mainstream positivist literature on mobbing which lacked a gender dimension.

The third chapter describes how mobbing was raised as an important issue in Turkey. The discussion includes problematizing mobbing in the framework of labor force participation of women in Turkey. The chapter includes studies of mobbing in Turkey, which discuss the perception of mobbing, prevalence of mobbing, consequences of and legal aspect of the phenomenon.

The following four chapters present the findings of the research. Chapter 4 presents the victims' perception of mobbing, types of mobbing derived from the interviews, and identified behaviors that are categorized as mobbing. The chapter presents the findings according to the difference between the experience of the private and the public women employees where applicable. Chapter 5 shows the results of the study considering the role of gender in mobbing. In this chapter, findings are categorized in three subheadings. The first sub-heading presents the perception of the respondents about the woman mobbers. Secondly, findings related to women's consideration of gender as a factor is given. Thirdly, research findings on the relationship between mobbing experience and women's gender roles are presented. Chapter 6 describes

the reactions of women towards mobbing, strategies of women inside and outside the organizations and individual ways of coping with the situation. Chapter 7 presents the findings related to effects of mobbing on women. Although its main focus was the effects of mobbing on victims' health, this chapter also presents the results related to the effects of mobbing on women's social relationships and the effects of mobbing on organizations and societies.

## CHAPTER II

### CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MOBBING

Mobbing, bullying, psychological violence, psychological harassment at work, work or employee abuse and emotional abuse are different terms to define the same phenomenon. Bullying is used more in English speaking countries whereas; mobbing is used in other European, especially Scandinavian countries where the term was first introduced. Alternative use of bullying and mobbing terms derives from differences in the cultural and scientific background of the researchers who face the problem (Cassitto et al., 2003). One thing that is accepted is that no single definition exists and has been agreed upon.

#### 2.1. Defining Mobbing

Mobbing gained recognition mainly with the research of Leymann and Gustafsson in 1984. As a word, it was first used in English, by the late Konrad Lorenz in describing animal group behavior (Leymann, *The Mobbing Encyclopaedia* n.d.). In his work, he used “mobbing” to describe the behavior of a group of smaller animals against a single larger animal (Leymann, *The Mobbing Encyclopaedia* n.d.). The term literally means to form a crowd around someone in order to attack him/her (Leymann, 1996). Later the Swedish physician Heinemann borrowed the term from Lorenz and used it to describe children behaviors in school between the class hours especially the behavior of a group of children against a single one (Leymann, 1996).

Leymann borrowed the word mobbing in early 1980s when he found a similar behavior in work places. He did not choose “bullying” to describe the situation because bullying in school has physical, aggressive acts in character (Leymann, 1996). According to Leymann, physical violence is seen rarely in workplace; therefore, he preferred using the word “bullying” for children and teenagers, and using the word of “mobbing” for behavior of adults (Leymann, 1996).



Although Leymann is known and accepted as the introducer of the concept of mobbing, an English researcher Carol Brodsky's book "The harassed worker" (1976) is appreciated as the first study in this field although, at that time, the author did not refer to the concept as mobbing. She gave place to industrial accidents, stress due to workload, and chemical pollution in the workplace and did this with the perspective of worker's stress deriving from his/her own powerlessness (Leymann, *The Mobbing Encyclopedia* n.d.).

Andrea Adams, a journalist in UK published the well-known book "*Bullying at Work: How to confront and overcome it*" with Neil Crawford in 1992. She first presented this phenomenon in two BBC Radio documentaries. As a response to these documentaries, she published her book where she made in-depth interviews with the mobbing victims. After Adams's death in 1995, her followers founded a fund in order to continue her work. The Andrea Adams Trust works to reduce incidents of mobbing by raising awareness and provides consultancy and help.

In U.S, *Mobbing: Emotional Abuse in the American Workplace* is considered as the first book published on this issue in 1996. It was written by Noa Davenport, Ruth Distler Shwartz and Gail Pursell Elliot. The book was mainly based upon Leymann's work, and Leymann wrote a foreword for the book.

Leymann defined mobbing as behavior that:

involves hostile and unethical communication, which is directed in a systematic way by one or few individuals mainly towards one individual who due to mobbing is pushed into a helpless and a defenseless position and being held there by means of continuing mobbing activities (Leymann, 1996:168).

For these behaviors to be considered as mobbing, they should occur frequently (at least once in a week) and continue over a long period of time (at least six months) (Leymann, 1996). It should be separated from single incidents and conflicts that happen sometime during the work life. The difference between conflict and mobbing is the frequency and the duration of what is done. Therefore, basic research carried out in Sweden have medical concepts to lean on and they focus on how mobbing has considerable psychological, psychosomatic and social consequences (Leymann,

1996). Mobbing results in “considerable psychological, psychosomatic and social misery” because of its frequency and duration (Leymann, 1990:120).

Andrea Adams defined mobbing as persistent demeaning and downgrading of humans through vicious words and negative acts that gradually undermine confidence and self-esteem. (Adams, 1992). French Law (2002-73) defines mobbing as “repeated actions of psychological harassment having as object or effect degradation of working conditions, able to cause damage to the rights and dignity, to affect physical and mental health or harm an individual’s professional future” (Cassitto et al., 2003:14).

An important feature of mobbing is the imbalance of power between the mobber and the victim. The victim feels defenseless in the mobbing process because of the imbalance of power. The power can come from different sources, which bring out the division of formal power and informal power. Formal power derives from status and position whereas individuals can gain informal power from certain sources such as strength of character, ability to influence the other people and quickness of tongue (Rayner et al., 2002). In a Portuguese study of the banking sector, Verdasca (2011) aimed at exploring the mobbing behaviors in terms of power, political behaviors in organizations, competition and conflict. The stories she collected showed that mobbing has organizational politics and instrumental dimension and is perceived as an attempt to improve organizational efficiency by driving the workers away, which are considered as threats or burdens (Verdesca, 2011).

Einarsen, Raknes and Mathiesen (1994) defined mobbing as ‘harassment’, ‘badgering’, and ‘niggling’, ‘freezing out’ and ‘offending’ someone. The mobbing has to repeat over a long period of time, and the victim has to be in a defenseless position. Conflicts between people that have equal strength and the incidents that occur as isolated events were not considered as mobbing (Einarsen, Raknes & Matthiesen, 1994). Vartia in 1993, found six main forms of mobbing which are ‘slander’, ‘social isolation’, ‘giving a person too few or overly simple tasks’, ‘threatening or criticizing’, ‘physical violence and threat of violence’ and ‘insinuations about the victim’s mental health’ (Zapf, Knorz & Kulla, 1996).

Niedl (1996) identified seven behaviors, which are attacking to someone's integrity, isolation, direct and indirect critique, sanction by certain tasks, threats, sexual encroachment and attacking someone's private sphere. Varhama and Björkqvist (2004) defined mobbing as insulting and infringing behavior in the workplace towards one or several individuals who can not defend themselves. At last, the victim feels totally isolated and receives suggestions to look for another job. Hoel and Cooper (2000) aimed to identify the mobbing behaviors that their respondents came across with in the workplace. 67% of the respondents answered the question of most observed mobbing behavior as "withholding information which affects your performance" (Hoel & Cooper, 2000). The second most reported mobbing behavior (57%) was "having your opinions and views ignored". The other behaviors stated most were "being given tasks with unreasonable workload" and "being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible deadlines".

In summary, I define mobbing as the term used for negative behaviors systematically perpetrated usually to an individual by a group/individual psychologically in the workplace that result in serious problems, which should be considered as violation of rights of the individual.

Leymann points out that the mobbing activities do not have to have negative characteristics when they are considered individually. When they are used in a negative manner, frequently over a long period of time "their content and meaning change consequently turning into dangerous communicative weapons" (Leymann, 1996:170). Their systematic use triggers the development of mobbing process.

In terms of conceptualization, Leymann developed a typology of 45 different activities and subdivided them into five categories depending on the effects they have on the victim (Leymann, 1996):

1. Effects on the victims' possibilities to communicate adequately:

- Your superior restricts the opportunity for you to express yourself
- You are interrupted constantly.
- Colleagues/co-workers restrict your opportunity to express yourself.

- You are yelled at and loudly scolded.
- Your work is constantly criticized.
- There is constant criticism about your social life.
- You are terrorized on the telephone.
- Oral threats are made.
- Written threats are sent.
- Contact is denied through looks or gestures.
- Contact is denied through innuendoes.

2. Effects on the victims' possibilities to maintain social contacts:

- People do not speak to you anymore.
- You cannot talk to anyone.
- You are put in to a workplace that is isolated from others.
- Colleagues are forbidden to talk with you.
- You are treated as if you are invisible.

3. Effects on the victims' possibilities to maintain their social reputation:

- People talk badly behind your back.
- Unfounded rumors are circulated.
- You are ridiculed.
- You are treated as if you are mentally ill.
- You are forced to undergo a psychiatric evaluation/examination.
- A handicap is ridiculed.
- People imitate gestures, walk, and voice to ridicule you.
- Your political or religious beliefs are ridiculed.
- Your nationality is ridiculed.
- You are forced to do a job that affects your self-esteem.
- Your efforts are judged in a wrong and demeaning way.
- Your decisions are always questioned.

- You are called demeaning names.
- Sexual innuendoes.

#### 4. Effects on victims' occupational situation:

- There are no specific tasks for you.
- Supervisors take assignments away, so you cannot even invent new tasks to do.
- You are given meaningless jobs to carry out.
- You are given tasks that are below your qualifications.
- You are continuously given new tasks.
- You are given tasks that affect your self-esteem.
- You are given tasks that are way beyond your qualifications, in order to discredit you.
- Causing general damages that create financial costs to you.
- Damaging your home or workplace.

#### 5. Effects on victims' physical health:

- You are given dangerous work tasks.
- You are forced to do a physically strenuous job.
- Threats of physical violence are made.
- Light violence is used to threaten you.
- Physical abuse.
- Outright sexual harassment.

LIPT-which is Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror has been employed in most of the studies with the exception of some Norwegian studies which used a different method. The analyzed activities, which were identified by Leymann, mainly describe hostile behaviors in Northern European countries meaning further behaviors may be used in other cultures, and some of these activities listed may not be used at all in other countries (Leymann, 1996). Norwegian studies use Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ), which is a research inventory, developed by Einarsen and Raknes in 1997. The questionnaire consists of 22 behaviors and the scale measures

how often the victim has been subjected to negative acts during the last six months (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001).

Vartia (2003) defined the characteristics of mobbing: 1) the behavior has to be systematic and repeated; 2) victim does not have an equal level of power with the mobber and is not able to defend him/herself; 3) mobbing can occur between groups or individuals and can come from others than the co-worker such as client, student or even an organization; 4) mobbing can also be unintentional; 5) there is a wide range of activities from social ones to physical violence.

In this study, Leymann's definition of mobbing was taken as a reference and this study focused on the experiences of women exposed to mobbing in private and public sectors in Turkey, and how they perceive, experience and are affected by mobbing behaviors. Referencing Leymann's definition can be explained by several justifications. Firstly, Leymann is the first scholar to introduce this phenomenon, providing essentials of mobbing which are duration and frequency. Secondly, Leymann identified forty-five mobbing behaviors, which are more than other identifications. Lastly, most of the studies depend on Leymann's work, and there has not been another definition of mobbing that goes beyond Leymann's definition.

## **2.2. Phases and Degrees of Mobbing**

Leymann (1990) identified four phases of mobbing. The first phase begins with a conflict, which triggers the process. At this stage, the conflict has not turned to mobbing yet, and the victim may not feel psychological or physical disturbance (Tınaz, Bayram & Ergin, 2008). The second phase continues with mobbing actions that are used consistently and systematically over a long period of time (Leymann, 1990). Victim feels defenseless and cannot survive from the situation, consequently feels unsuccessful and incapacitated, and this leads to psychosomatic illnesses (Tınaz et al., 2008). At the third phase, human resource management is critical. This is the phase where Leymann thinks that people face with violation of their rights. The mobbing is known now, and the person becomes a "marked individual" (Leymann, 1990). Management shares the prejudice of the co-workers that the incident occurs because of the personality of the victim, which is problematic. The last phase is

expulsion. According to Leymann “the most dangerous situations that give rise to further stigmatizing are long term sick leave, no work provided (but still employed), relocation to degrading work tasks and psychiatric treatment” (Leymann, 1990:122). Other possible outcomes are early retirement, disability and suicide (Tinaz et al., 2008). It has been found that 10-20% of subjected employees seem to have serious illnesses or commit suicides (Leymann, 1996). Leymann (1996) points out that every 6<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> suicides in Sweden may have mobbing factors in the background.

Davenport, Schwartz and Elliot (1999) distinguished three different degrees of mobbing considering the duration, frequency and the intensity of the mobbing as well as the psychology of the victim, their upbringing, past experiences and general circumstances. According to their scale, the first degree of mobbing is a stage where the individual manages to resist, escapes from the process at an early stage and becomes fully rehabilitated, whether in the same workplace or another. At the second degree of mobbing, the individual neither resists nor can escape at a desired stage, is exposed to mobbing a long time, consequently suffers from mental or physical illnesses and has difficulty returning to work force. At the third stage, the individual can not re-enter the work force, suffers from severe physical and mental injuries which needs particular treatment.

The study conducted in 1997 by United Kingdom’s largest public service union UNISON looked at the actions of the victims when they came across with mobbing (Rayner et al., 2002). According to the study, 60% of the victims confronted the mobbers, 46% of them went to the mobber’s boss, 24% of them got help from personnel, 5% of them went to occupational health, 21% of them got support of others to complain, 36% intended to leave the job and 31% of them intended to stay in the job and do nothing (Rayner et al., 2002). An important outcome of the study was the respondents’ statement that situations got worse after the actions such as confronting the mobbers or making a complaint to the mobber’s boss. Hoel and Cooper (2000) in their study showed that victims also took informal actions when they came across with mobbing such as talking to family members and colleagues and it is different between men and women. According to study, two-thirds of women shared their experience with their family and friends whereas one-third of

men seeked the same kind of support (Rayner et al., 2002). The researchers did not provide an explanation for this behavioral difference. Another important outcome of the second UNISON study in 2000 was the fact that victims who took action were able to stop mobbing at the early stage (Rayner et al., 2002). Swedish Salaried Staff Union has found that over half of their members who resigned without finding another job, have done it because they could not stand the behaviors they had been exposed to in the workplace (Leymann, 1990).

As a result, individual leaves the job, is driven away from the job or cannot leave the job and get exposed to mobbing in a considerably long time. It is necessary to state that the victim does not have to go through all of the stages of the process. A victim that came across with a mobbing activity may leave the job at any stage of the process (Tınaz et al., 2008).

### **2.3. Research Findings on Mobbing**

There has been a lot of research about mobbing mainly in European countries since the 1990s. Researchers have different perceptions, definitions and different measures about mobbing. Prevalence of mobbing differs between countries according to their differences in cultural settings, norms, values and historical backgrounds. Regardless of these differences, there are some commonalities concerning the results of the research such as the gender of the victim and the sectors which mobbing is seen most. Most of the studies show that women are more likely to be the victims of mobbing whereas men are more likely to be among the mobbers. Early studies started with the search for the existence and prevalence of mobbing. Later they tried to explain the reasons of mobbing. Nevertheless, early studies on mobbing did not provide a gender-based explanation for the phenomenon. In the last decade, some scholars began to question the gender dimension of mobbing.

Major research on mobbing started in Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Finland and Norway, which support the right of workers to remain physical and mentally healthy at work through their national Work Environment Acts (Leymann, 1990). The reason that research on mobbing came about in 1980s in Sweden, was a “new work environmental law in 1976, and a national fund offering great possibilities to



enter to new research areas regarding workplace psychology” (Leymann, 1996:168). Consequently, there is strong public awareness, government funded research and established anti-mobbing legislation in Scandinavian countries (Quine, 1999).

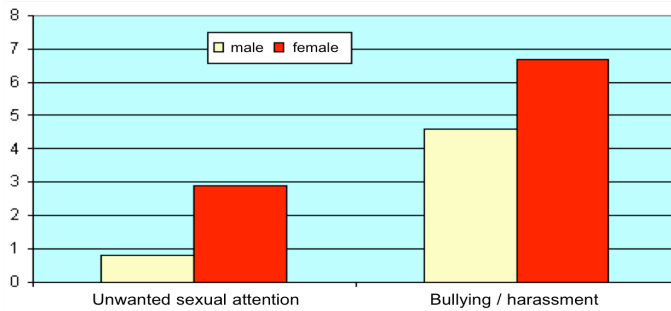
Leymann as the introducer of mobbing started the research about mobbing, and he has more than 60 research articles and several books. He had a degree in Pedagogical Psychology and worked as a psychologist and died in 1999. As a doctor, he treated 1300 patients, 300 of whom were in-patients in a clinic with specially designed treatment programs (Leymann, *The Mobbing Encyclopedia* n.d.).

Following Leymann, research has been conducted particularly in Norway Finland, Austria, Hungary and Australia (Leymann, *The Mobbing Encyclopaedia* n.d.). Later studies have been done in Britain, Portuguese, and Denmark.

In European countries, there are differences in the prevalence of mobbing between member countries. According to the Fourth European Working Conditions Survey nearly one worker in 10 (9%) said she/he has been a victim of mobbing in their workplace (EWCS, 2007). In Finland, the percentage of employees that have been exposed to violence at work is 17% whereas, in Spain, this ratio is 2% (EWCS, 2007). The surveys included comparison of the data of psychological violence and physical forms of violence including sexual harassment in terms of gender of the victim, also provided data about the prevalence of mobbing. The study was based on interviews made with nearly 30,000 workers from 27 European countries. According to the study, women are more exposed to violence at work than men (EWCS, 2007).

Figure 1 shows that mobbing is more prevalent than other forms of violence specifically sexual harassment and in both two types of harassment, women victims are more than men victims.

**Figure 1: Harassment and Sexual Harassment in 27 EU Countries.**

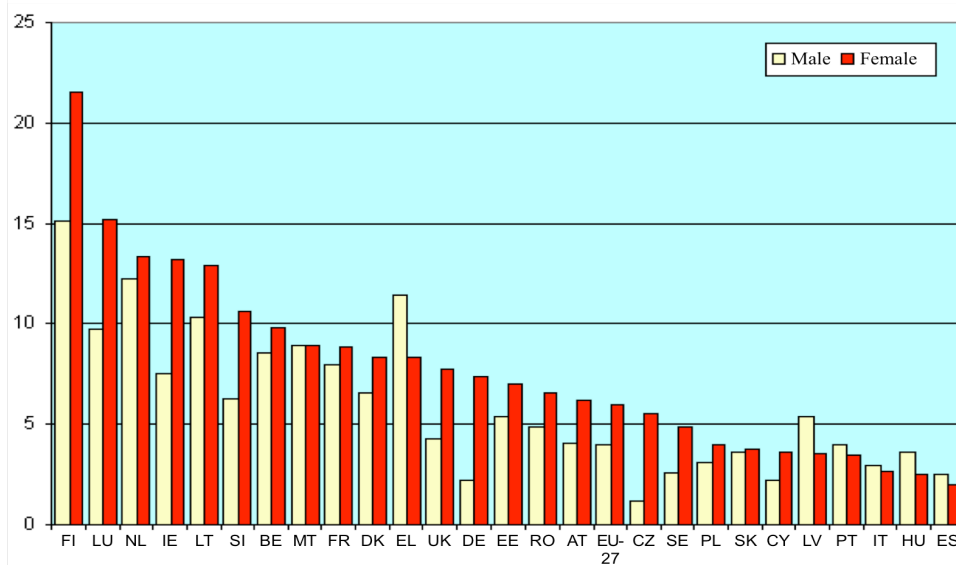


Source: Fourth European Working Conditions Survey

The survey data of Fourth EWCS (2007) showed that one in twenty workers reported exposure to mobbing in the previous twelve months. The proportion was 70-90% in other national surveys done in Austria, Luxembourg and Germany (EWCS, 2007).

As Figure 2 shows, mobbing differs from country to country and between genders. As shown by the graphic, mobbing is mostly prevalent in Finland (17%) and least in Spain (2%). In general, victims are mostly women with the exception of Greece and Latvia significantly. Also at the lower rank of the graphic male proportion is slightly higher than female proportion.

**Figure 2: Prevalence of Mobbing among Countries**



Source: Fourth European Working Conditions Survey

Since Leymann's work, several studies have shown that mobbing is a widespread phenomenon in many countries, and studies in Scandinavia have indicated that approximately 3-4% of the working population is exposed to mobbing (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007).

In Leymann's study, (1992) a sample of 2428 employees was interviewed. The statistics showed that 3.5% of the samples fit in to definition of mobbing. Considering 30 years of work time, the risk of being mobbed is 25%. 45% of the samples that were subjected to mobbing were men and 55% of them were women. Leymann did not provide a gender interpretation to these findings although other studies also showed that the mobbers were generally men. In Leymann's study, about one third of the victims were attacked by only one other person and more than 40% were attacked by two to four people (Leymann, 1992). When looked at the occupations where mobbing was found most, Leymann's study showed that 14.1% (6.5% of the entire workforce) of the people who were subjected to mobbing worked in schools, universities and other educational settings. These are areas where women employment is presumed to be more. Also in another study by Leymann (1995) where he worked with mobbing patients at a mobbing clinic, the study showed an over proportion of patients who worked in schools, universities, hospitals, childcare centers and religious organizations. Most of the patients at the clinic were women. Surprisingly, Leymann stated that it should not be interpreted as gender wise. Rather he linked the reason of over population of women to the fact that these areas mostly employed women, but he did not ask the question further. In Sweden, the public sector showed more frequency of mobbing than the private sector (Leymann, 1996). Although mobbing gained recognition mainly in Sweden, according to some researchers Sweden has relatively low levels of mobbing prevalence. Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001) in their study tried to research the existence of mobbing in Denmark and specifically tried to test the hypothesis that there is a low level of mobbing in Scandinavian countries. According to researchers, it is not surprising to observe low levels of mobbing in Scandinavian countries, as the culture is more feminine and egalitarian. There is high individualism and low power inequalities between superiors and subordinates and people are more concerned about the quality of interpersonal skills (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001).

Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001) found a low level of mobbing (2-4%) in Danish organizations. On the other hand, they came across with a high level of witnesses to mobbing. Because of this, they suggested that real prevalence is higher than shown by the results. Like other research, their study showed that employees who were subject to mobbing declared more psychological and psychosomatic problems.

According to the study of Niedl (1996) in Austria among a patient group, the percentage of people that were affected by mobbing was between 7.8% and 26.6%. This result is higher than the Swedish study, which showed 3 to 4% prevalence.

In a Portuguese study among nurses, 13% reported that they had been victims of mobbing during last six months (Sa & Fleming, 2008). The most common mobbing activities found in the study were degrading work, unmanageable work load, being given unpleasant tasks, receiving pressure not to demand rights, which were already entitled to and excessive monitoring of the work (Sa & Fleming 2008). The victims showed higher levels of burnout compared with the nurses who did not declare such experience. More than one third of the victims had the intention to leave the job; half of them had difficulty in sleeping at nights. 71% had been bad tempered, and 43% felt very down. Almost all of the victims were women.

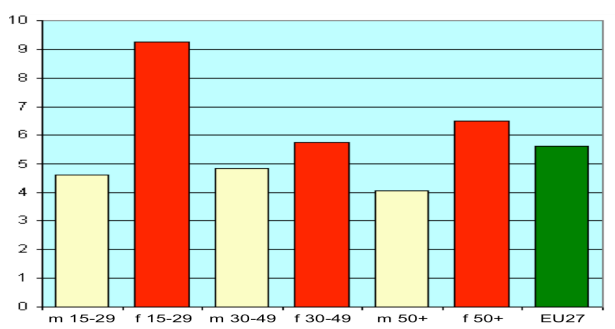
Mobbing has been perceived as an important issue by trade unions in Britain since the 1990's and studies have begun in late 1990s. In a questionnaire survey conducted in National Health Service community trust in England, 38% of employees reported experiencing one or more types of mobbing, and 42% of them have witnessed others being exposed to mobbing (Quine, 1999). In a survey by Stafford University Business School, 53% of participants said that they had been subjected to mobbing, and 78% declared that they had witnessed other's being subject to mobbing (Andrea Adams Trust, 2010).

Hole and Cooper (2000) did the most comprehensive study undertaken in Britain. It was done with more than 5000 employees from 70 organizations. Researchers gave a definition of mobbing and asked respondents if they had been exposed to mobbing in the last six months. When looking at the last six months, they could not find a significant gender differences in results. However, when the research was enlarged to

five years, more women reported that they had been victims of mobbing. The study found that 28% of women and 22% of men reported mobbing in last five years (Hole & Cooper, 2002). The study of Hole and Cooper (2000) also looked at the age discrepancy of victims of mobbing. In the study, younger employees reported the highest level of mobbing whereas; those in the age above 55 years old were least likely to report being mobbed. On the other hand, there are opposite findings in Norway where the incidence of mobbing increase with the age (Hole & Cooper, 2000).

Fourth EWCS (2007) provided data on age discrepancy of women exposed to mobbing (Fig.3). Findings support the study of Hole and Cooper (2000). It is seen that younger women reported higher levels of mobbing compared to older women. Figure 3 indicates that the percentage of women exposed to mobbing who are between 15-29 years old is higher than the percentage of women exposed to mobbing with ages between 30 and 50 and those older than 50.

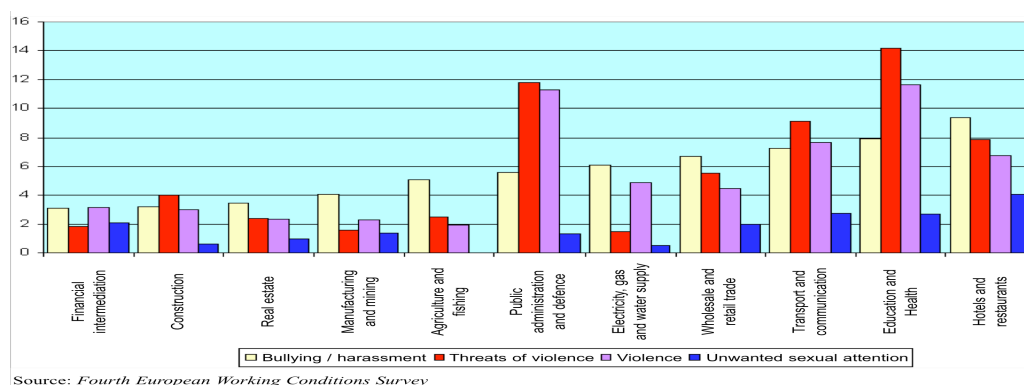
**Figure 3: Age Discrepancy of Women Victims**



Source: *Fourth European Working Conditions Survey*

Fourth ECWS (2007) also showed that exposures to mobbing differ between sectors. As Figure 4 shows, higher levels of mobbing are seen at hotels and restaurants, education and health sectors, transport and communication and wholesale and retail sector.

**Figure 4: Mobbing across Various Sectors**



According to Zapf, Knorz and Kulla (1996), public administration, health services, schools and prison offices are main areas where mobbing is found. Rayner et al. (2002) also compared mobbing between sectors. According to their survey, the sectors that showed a high prevalence of mobbing were post and telecommunications, prison service, teaching, banking and other. The lowest prevalence was seen in manufacturing. Statistics from the United Kingdom national workplace mobbing advice line show that 20% of mobbing cases are from the education sector, 12% are from health care, 10% from social services and 6-8% from voluntary services (Mc Avoy & Murtagh, 2003).

Considering the prevalence of mobbing in other countries, survey done by Di Martino for International Labor Organization, International Council of Nurses, World Health Organization and Public Services International joint program on violence at workplace, showed that the prevalence of mobbing is 30.9% in Bulgaria, 20.6% in South Africa, 10.7% in Thailand, 22.1% in Lebanon, 10.5% in Australia and 15.2% in Brazil (Di Martino, 2002).

Legislation concerning mobbing varies among the countries. Some countries have regulations about all or a certain type of violence at work. For example, Sweden has specific regulations concerning violence and victimization at work. Belgium Law covers a wide range of violence behaviors in the workplace including physical violence, verbal aggression, mobbing and sexual harassment (Di Martino, 2002). Finland (Occupational Safety and Health Act 2002) and Netherlands (Working Conditions Act 1994) have laws about physical and psychological violence under the

term of working conditions (Di Martino, 2002). In French Law, psychological harassment is defined in law numbered 2002-73 and dated 17.01.2002. Along with this law, a section with the heading “Combat with psychological harassment” is added to Business Law of France (Bozbel & Palaz 2007).

The countries that do not have specific regulation concerning violence at work/mobbing, deal with the problem through civil, penal, environmental and safety legislation. Germany, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and Ireland can be listed in this second group (Di Martino, 2002). In Germany, workers are entitled to protection by Employment Protection Act, Work Constitution Act and Penal Code. Also, court decisions play an important role for dealing with the problem (Di Martino, 2002). In Ireland, Health and Safety Authority investigated the issue of mobbing through an in-depth audit of existing legislation and decided not to recommend new legislation for mobbing (Di Martino, 2002). The issue is evaluated within Industrial Relations Act (1990), Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (1989) and Employee Equality Act (1998). In United Kingdom, similar to Ireland, the issue is tackled within existing legislative instruments such as Protection from Harassment Act No: 40 (1997) and Employment Rights Act (1996) (Di Martino, 2002).

Luxembourg and Denmark tackle the situations of violence at work with non-legislative measures such as codes of good practice and collective arrangements. In Denmark, an agreement was signed in 2001 between the Danish Working Environment Authority, Employers Confederation and Trade Union Confederation. According to the agreement, mobbing and harassment are to be dealt with employers and employees using local agreements to handle the issue (Di Martino, 2002).

In United States, workers are protected under civil rights legislation. Although not seen as a separate action, scholars claim that lawmakers should consider new legislation, which specifies the circumstances for mobbing and legislate a better protection for the workers (Davenport, Schwartz & Elliot, 1999). The Department of Environmental Quality for the State of Oregon has established the first anti-mobbing policy in the U.S.

## **2.4. Explaining Mobbing**

What is the reason of mobbing? The literature has different approaches to this question. Early research on mobbing tried to understand mobbing more as a reason of personal characteristics, social interaction in the workplace and organizational factors. Many scholars, especially those who deal with psychology, attribute it to the character of the victim and conflicts that have arisen from it. Others try to see it in a work related context. Also, there is some work on the mobbers to understand the occurrence of mobbing. While many researchers concluded that there is no remarkable evidence that gender is a reason of being exposed to mobbing, recently scholars like Simpson and Cohen (2004) suggest that gender must be the central aspect in the analysis of mobbing.

McGinley analyzed new research on mobbing and claimed that “gender is a salient factor in many mobbing behaviors” (Mc Ginley, 2007:1155). According to McGinley, masculinities theory, feminist theory and organizational theory help to understand that some of these behaviors are gendered in nature and concluded that courts should look at the new research on mobbing and if interpret it accordingly can conclude that mobbing discriminates the target because of sex and eliminating these behaviors will serve to equal employment opportunities of men and women (McGinley, 2007).

It provides a theoretical framework for the conclusion that gender is embedded in the work place, and that harassing behavior at work is often rooted in perceptions of gender differences and inferiority of the feminine and efforts to reinforce the masculinity of the group and the job (McGinley, 2007:7).

### **2.4.1. Personalities of the Victim and the Mobber**

While some scholars claim that personality of the victim is the main cause of mobbing, scholars like Leymann claimed that organizational factors and the quality of leadership are the main causes (Leymann, 1996). On the other hand, others claimed it would not be satisfactory to exclude the personality traits and disregard their contribution to the process (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). Although important studies have been done since the 1990’s, the published studies in which the subject of the research is the mobbers is limited. Mobber behavior and mobber



characteristics have been determined by the expressions of the targets of the mobbing (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). Until recently, the main focus of the European studies has been the victimization process of the people that came across with mobbing (Sa and Fleming, 2008).

In empirical research, targets of mobbing are described as “conscientious, literal-minded, naive, neurotic, oversensitive, suspicious, angry, and anxious in social settings with a low self esteem” (Eriksen and Einarsen 2004). Leymann and Gustaffson (1996) claim that those kinds of personality traits are likely to be the consequence of the process rather than being a reason.

According to Aquino and Bommer (2003) victim centered variables of mobbing are personality characteristics like aggressiveness and indicators of social status like hierarchal position, race and gender. People use them to defend themselves when mistreated. Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) explored individual differences between the mobbers and victims of mobbing at work. In their study, targets of mobbing, mobbers and provocative victims were compared with others who did not declare any involvement with mobbing as a victim or witness. Provocative victims were defined as individuals who are known with their aggressive behavior and show potential of mobbing others and being mobbed by their superiors. At the end, it was observed that mobbers had higher levels of aggression than the other groups whereas the targets of mobbing showed low levels of self-esteem and social competency. Provocative victims also showed low levels of self-esteem and social competency but with a high level of aggression. The critical thing here is that, as the victim’s personality before mobbing is not known, whether the low self esteem and competency are the reasons or the results of the mobbing process is questionable.

The qualitative and individualistic perspectives identified a role for the individual in terms of vulnerability to mobbing or a tendency to mob (Quine, 1999). The approach of personality of the mobber suggests that this kind of behavior begins at school, continues through adolescence, aggressive behavior at home and then in the workplace (Rayner et al., 2002). Victims claimed that mobbing is mainly caused by psychopathic personality of the mobber (Einarsen et al., 2003:165).

Zapf and Einarsen (2003:180) found that “protection of self-esteem, lack of social competence and micro political behaviors of mobbers, and victim’s being in a salient position, being low on social competence, and self assertiveness, having low self esteem, overachievement and high conscientiousness” are individual traits that may contribute to the process.

On the other hand, a group of research shows that victims have good personal characteristics. They are smart, talented, successful, honest, and trustworthy and work oriented (Yüçetürk, 2003b). They are creative and constitute a threat for the others, so they become the target. Davenport et al. (1999) suggest that victims are exceptional individuals. They have positive qualities such as intelligence, competence, creativity, integrity, accomplishment and dedication (Deniz & Gülen Ertosun, 2010). Victims have high loyalty towards their organizations. They promote new ideas, which may challenge others, and they are seen as a threat to upper positions (Deniz & Gülen Ertosun, 2010).

Although it cannot be explained solely by the victim’s personality, personality effects how the victim experiences and perceives the problem (Einarsen et al., 2003).

#### **2.4.2. Social Interactions in the Workplace**

Organizational psychology theories focused on interaction between the individual and organizations in the workplace (Quine, 1999). Some researchers claimed that mobbing came out from conflicts, and they tried to understand through research on aggression how the conflict(s) developed and became mobbing (Strandmark & Hallberg 2007). In 2007, Strandmark and Hallberg studied how mobbing was initiated at the work places in the public service sector. Their study showed that “a long-standing struggle for power” initiates systematic mobbing in the workplace in the public service sector. They suggested that if conflicts remain unsolved they could escalate and grow into systematic and persistent mobbing. They also declared that workplaces in the public service sector were potential areas for conflicts. Einarsen et al. (1994) found that the victim’s coping and conflict management skills are lower than other employees. Victims of mobbing have shown portrait of a poor self image as well as anxious behaviors in social situations (Einarsen et al., 1994).

Neuman and Baron (2003) gave examples of how social factors, which involve the word or deeds of individual's actions, may contribute to aggressive behavior, and anything that serve as an antecedent of aggression may increase the likelihood of mobbing in the work place. They focused on how people were inclined to show the same kind of treatment they receive. Cumulative effects of norm violations and injustices contribute to aggression and creation of a hostile environment (Neuman & Baron, 2003).

### **2.4.3. Organizational Structure**

Although some researchers see the victim's personality as the cause of mobbing, others disagree with this explanation. According to Leymann "empirical research on adult mobbing, which began in 1982 has not been able to relate the cause of a mobbing process to the victim's personality" (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996:256). Leymann (1996) sees the causes of mobbing as the organizational structure and poor conflict management.

Einarsen et al. (1994) studied the relationship between the social and organizational work conditions and the occurrence of mobbing and harassment at work. They concluded that work conditions were highly correlated with the occurrence of mobbing and harassment at work. They identified that "low satisfaction with leadership, work control, social climate and experience of conflict" were strongly in relation with the experience of mobbing. It was observed that mobbing was related to different aspects of the work environment in different kinds of organizations.

Zapf et al. (1996) also in their study looked at the reasons of mobbing. Contrary to the studies suggesting that the reason of the mobbing was the victim's personality, they searched for the organizational factors such as, bad job content, and poor social environments that may lead to mobbing. The results showed that mobbing led to serious health consequences, and it was related to job content, and social environment at the work place.

According to World Health Organization's report, the risk of being exposed to mobbing depends on the management style, organization of work and work

environment. Disciplinary, intolerant and discriminatory style of management, new management methods, understaffing, heavy work constraints, disorganized work, excessive hierarchy and highly flexible organization increase the risk of mobbing (Cassitto et al., 2003).

Economic globalization, which increased the competition, led organizations to restructure and downsize in order to decrease their costs. With the effects of globalization, part-time and temporary jobs and subcontracting increase, which leads to decreased job security also contributes to unclear power relationships between individuals (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Studies that explore the reasons in the organizational context have found that power relations and conflict, uncertainty and change, organizational norms and cultures are related to mobbing behaviors in the workplace (Simpson & Cohen, 2004).

Vartia (1996) looked for the sources of mobbing in the workplace in Finland. Among 969 municipal workers, 10.1% stated that they had been victims of mobbing. Considering the victim's gender, there was no difference between men and women. The study showed that changes in the work environment promote the occurrence of mobbing. According to Vartia (1996), economic depression and changes at work in the 1990s led to personnel decrease and increased stress at work. Problems at work increase conflicts and the unsolved conflicts lead to systematic mobbing.

In Norwegian study of Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) 8.6% of respondents reported that they had been subject to mobbing in a six-month period. According to the study, organizations, which had many employees, which were male dominated and industrial organizations were the organizations where mobbing was observed the most. Older workers had a higher risk of being subject to mobbing than the younger ones. Although the gender of the victim was not seen as a distinctive cause, mostly men were reported to be the mobbers.

#### **2.4.4. Highlighting the Gender Dimension**

When I look at the conceptual and theoretical framework, what I see are mainly main stream positivist studies which are gender blind. Mobbing is defined as a gender-

neutral process. This means one's gender is not the reason for being exposed to mobbing. The gender dimension is just seen as the number of sexes indicating the statistics of number of women that were exposed to mobbing. In studies on mobbing, it is seen that data are given about the sexes of the mobbers and victims, but theoretically there is not much in-depth study analyzing the gender issue. Few scholars asked why most of the victims were women, and why mobbing was seen more in the female dominated sectors. Especially in Scandinavian countries, the reason of neglecting the gender issue is the conceptualization of the term from the beginning. Mobbing is used for behaviors of non-sexual and non-racial harassment (Einarsen et al., 1994). On the other hand, data show that in most of the studies, one third of the victims are men whereas two thirds of the victims are women (Zapf et al., 2003). Table 1 shows the gender distribution of mobbing victims in European countries. With few exceptions the victims, are mostly women.

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Victims in Mobbing Studies**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Sample</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Austria</b>	Niedl, 1995 (hospital)	37	63	98
	Niedl, 1995 (research institute)	18	82	11
<b>Denmark</b>	Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2002	9	91	118
<b>Finland</b>	Björkqvist <i>et al</i> , 1994	39	61	70
	Salin, 2001	33	67	6
	Vartia, 1993	33	67	95
	Vartia and Hyyti, 2002	86	14	145
	Kivimäki <i>et al</i> , 2000	12	88	302
	Nuutinen <i>et al</i> , 1999	35	65	84

**Table 1:Continued**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Sample</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Germany</b>	Zapf, 1999b (Bielefeld study)	35	65	99
	Zapf, 1999b	32	68	56
	Dick and Dulz	26	74	200
	Zapf, 1999b (	30	70	50
	Halama and Möckel, 1995	25	75	183
	Zapf, 1999b	44	56	86
	Zapf et al, 1996b	38	62	183
<b>Ireland</b>	O'Moore et al, 1998	30	70	30
<b>Italy</b>	Ege, 1998	51	49	51
<b>Norway</b>	Einarsen and Skogstad,	46	54	96
	Matthiesen and Einarsen, 2001	23	77	85
<b>Sweden</b>	Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996	31	69	64
	Leymann and Tallgren, 1990	50	50	24
	Leymann, 1992	45	55	85
<b>Switzerland</b>	Holzen Beusch et al	32	68	28
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Rayner, 1997	53	47	581
	Quine, 1999	18	82	418
	Hoel and Cooper	48	52	553

Source : Zapf et al.(2003)

Einarsen et al. (1994) stated that there had not been an apparent link between mobbing; sexuality and gender conflicts in the workplace, and mobbing had not received the same degree of attention as sexual harassment. Although there have been some individual efforts to explain the reason behind victimization of women in mobbing, a systematic, collective approach to gender perspective can not be seen until the 2000s.

An explanation given to over representation of women were their over representation in the respective population where more studies were conducted in sectors such as the service and the health sector (Leymann, 1996). Unfortunately, studies did not link it to the reason of women being overrepresented in these sectors. Some studies which claimed to investigate gender's relation to prevalence, in fact, did it by disregarding the fact that gender is socially constructed. Björkqvist looked with the perspective of victim's personality and claimed that women were educated to be less aggressive and less assertive and this affected female socialization where women are more obliging than men (Björkqvist, Österman, & Lagerspetz, 1994). Similarly, Salin (2003) suggest that women tend to interpret their experiences differently than men and feel more powerless due to existing gender stereotypes and expectations.

Nearly all of the studies show that there is a power difference between the perpetrator and the victim in mobbing process. Gender and power relations can easily be adapted to mobbing as studies (e.g Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Leymann, 1992) found that men are usually victimized by other men and women are victimized by men and other women and perpetrators are generally superiors (Salin, 2003). It is not surprising that women are exposed to mobbing more than men, given the fact that women occupy less managerial and superior positions in the workplace. It is interesting to see that even nearly all of the researches conducted in the 1990s found that number of women exposed to mobbing was higher than men and men were usually the mobbers; they concluded that there was no relation between one's gender and been subject to mobbing. Later in 2003, some studies showed that women have a higher risk of being subject to mobbing (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003). Researchers claim that it may be explained by the fact that women have less power as a minority group in the workplace. In some cases, they may have been seen as a threat to male

dominated organizations. Archer (1999) found that female minority, as well as non-white males, had an increased risk of being exposed to mobbing at work and suggested that belonging to a minority group such as race and gender could be seen as a cause of mobbing. In their study, Keashley and Jagatic (2003) found that mobbing is more prevalent in the public sector where discrimination against women and the level of bureaucracy are intense. Several studies suggest that women are more affected by mobbing than men in terms of health. In Niedl's study (1996) women reported more psychosomatic problems and higher level of anxiety than men. Hoel and Cooper (2000) also support this with their findings. Studies show that men and women experience different forms of mobbing. For example, women are often subjected to behaviors like "public disparagement and condescension like being called as "honey" or "sweetie", which is described as gender incivility" (Hutchinson & Eveline 2010). Salin (2003) claims that mobbing can be best understood in the context of power imbalances. As nearly all of the research emphasized the role of power differences, the gender dimension of mobbing should be held as a power issue (Salin, 2003). Many scholars were interested in the importance of power in gender analysis like Scott (1986) who theorized gender as a way of signifying relationships of power. Gender and associated perceptions of power may affect exposure to negative behavior. Based on this reasoning, women in a male dominated work environment are likely to report higher victimization rates including mobbing (Salin, 2003).

Later in 2000s other researchers began to criticize the gender-neutral approach of the former researches. Simpson and Cohen (2004) stated that the theoretical and conceptual framework of mobbing was underdeveloped and not constructed as gendered, while sexual harassment with the help of feminist theory was defined broadly within the framework of gendered power relations. They also attributed the underdevelopment of mobbing literature to the lack of clear distinction between mobbing and other forms of workplace harassment. McGinley (2007) stated two reasons for former denial of the gender dimension of mobbing. Firstly, she pointed out that early scholars on mobbing, especially the Scandinavian and German scholars defined sexual harassment narrowly. They looked for unwanted sexual advances and ignored the fact that organizations are gendered. The second reason she pointed out



is what she calls political palatability. While sexual and racial harassment claims are taken with hostility and held delicately, mobbing as a gender-neutral phenomenon does not ask for a privileged status because it applies to all abuses of power (McGinley, 2007). Hutchinson and Eveline (2010) determined two key factors in denial of the gender dimension of mobbing. They suggest that there is a tendency to individualize the problem and the solutions rather than offering remedies, and they think that once it is accepted that mobbing needs a gender analysis, the support from policy actors until now will dissolve (Hutchinson & Eveline, 2010).

The social structure where the mobbing occurs is gendered by its essence and masculinity plays a significant role in the development of organizational power in hands of men. Like sexual harassment, mobbing should also be perceived as a form of exercising control on women, which reinforces the gender division of labor in organizations and society, as well. In this study, I benefited from these two theories interrelated with each other while exploring the women's mobbing experience.

#### **2.4.4.1. Gendered Organization Theory**

Mobbing takes place in workplaces, which are organizations. These can be public/private, non-governmental, small/large and national/multinational. Organizations are gendered structures both in their external relations and their internal structures. Most organizations are doubly gendered because public organizations are valued over private ones and internally their structures and processes are gendered (Hearn & Parkin, 2001).

Organizations are places of discourse that are also continuously structured through unspoken forces, which are gender, sexuality and violence (Hearn & Parkin, 2001). With the efforts of feminists, the meaning of gender was clarified in the 1960s and the 1970s. Gender is socially, culturally, historically and even politically constructed but is not just natural or biological distinction (Hearn & Parkin, 2001).

Joan Acker who theorized gendered organizations appreciated the efforts of feminist writers on organizations and organizational theory as they began to include women and gender in to the context in the 1980s (Acker, 1990). According to Acker although

feminists contributed to the literature of women and work and organizations, this knowledge has not been developed in a systematic feminist theory of organizations (Acker, 1990).

In sum, some of the best feminist attempts to theorize about gender and organizations have been trapped within the constraints of definitions of the theoretical domain that cast organizations as gender neutral and asexual. .... Individual men and particular groups of men do not always win in these processes, but masculinity always seems to symbolize self-respect for men at the bottom and power for men at the top, while confirming for both their gender's superiority (Acker, 1990:144).

An organization is gendered in the following sense:

that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (Acker, 1990:146).

Acker identified five elements of process through which organizations are gendered:

1. Firstly, the gendered division of labor lead men and women to specialize in different tasks, leading to horizontal and vertical segregation, and it determines the allocation of resources and sources of power. Men generally take place in the highest positions with more power in organizations also control the allocation of resources. Cynthia Cockburn (1983, 1985) showed how gendered division of labor left technology in men's control and defined men's work as skilled and women's work as unskilled (Acker, 1990).
2. Secondly, symbols and images are constructed in a way that explains, expresses and reinforces the division of labor.
3. Thirdly, social interactions between men and women and men and men constitute an environment where men have more power and authority over other men and women. Interactions determine the power relations and social roles of women and men, where men are the active doers and women are the passive supporters (Hearn & Parkin, 2001). Hierarchies are gendered because those who are committed to paid employment are perceived as being more suited to authority and responsibility than those who must divide their commitment like women who carry the burden of childcare, domestic work and elderly care.

4. Fourthly, these processes contribute to production of gendered components of individual identity (Acker, 1990). The distribution of power disadvantages women based on the hegemonic masculinity. Women are marginalized in the front lines, but men function at the center of the organizations where men define the strategies and decisions (Hearn & Parkin, 2001).

5. Gendered hierarchies are maintained through control over women by arguments over women's reproduction, emotionality or sexuality. More openly, exercised controls like sexual harassment reinforce the gendered hierarchies.

Acker's theory has been widely used to understand how organizations are gendered and how they reproduce gender inequalities (Hutchinson & Eveline, 2010).

#### **2.4.4.2. Masculinities Theory**

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was systematically proposed in the article of Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985), which criticized the male sex role and proposed multiple masculinities in power relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (1987) in her book "*Gender and Power*" presents the hierarchical interaction between multiple masculinities and explains how most "honored way of being man" requires men to dominate most women and other men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is culturally dominant masculinity which is "aggressive" "competitive", "hard driving", "entrepreneurial", "authoritarian" and "careerist" (McGinley, 2007). There are varieties of masculinities, but the hegemonic type is the white, middle class heterosexual man who excludes women from power because they lack masculinity. They also exclude other men if they do not fit in these masculine definitions and live according to its norms. Therefore, dominance of men as perpetrators of mobbing would not surprise masculinities theorists as men use different means of harassment including sexual and gendered in order to express their masculinity (McGinley, 2007).

Simpson and Cohen's conclusion in their study offers a significant approach to gender perspective on mobbing:

While some aspects of bullying may cut across gender, we locate these common factors within the masculine discourses of

management. This throws light on the possible interconnections between sexual harassment and bullying behavior. While sexual harassment is 'overtly' gendered, bullying also needs to be seen as a gendered activity-although at a different, and perhaps more deep-seated, level. Bullying, therefore, needs to be put in a gendered context in order to further our understanding of this behavior (Simpson and Cohen, 2004:34).

Simpson and Cohen (2004) criticized that while sexual harassment theory relied on feminist theory in the framework of gendered power relations, mobbing is not theorized as gendered. They suggest that there is a distinction between sexual harassment and mobbing, as sexual harassment will be oriented towards the gender of the target, but mobbing is likely to be work oriented (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Researches show that gender harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment, which includes unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion (Pryor & Fitzgerald 2003). However, the distinction between them should not lead us to the conclusion that one is constructed in a gendered manner and the other is not. According to Simpson and Cohen, there are overlaps and interrelations between the two. Both of them involve the abuse of power where in sexual harassment power is based on the gender but in mobbing power is organizational (Simpson & Cohen 2004). In other words, sexual harassment is openly gendered, whereas mobbing may be gendered in a hidden way (McGinley, 2007).

Some mobbing behaviors may include sexual harassment or some type of harassment may lead to mobbing behaviors (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Earlier researches included sexual innuendoes, outright sexual harassment (Leymann, 1996) and sexual encroachment (Niedl, 1996) in mobbing behaviors. Björkqvist et al. (1994), considered sexual harassment as a specific form of mobbing with sexual matters as a means of oppression. Power approach to sexual harassment sees sexual harassment as a mechanism for men to develop economic and political superiority over women and an attempt of men to show their masculine identity and strong power at work (Simpson & Cohen 2004). It would not be wrong to presume that mobbing like sexual harassment is a way that men reinforce their masculine identity and exercise power over women over work related issues. As McGinley states:

However, masculinities theory demonstrates the gendered structures in the workplace and the gendered nature of much

workplace behavior, even behavior in which gender is invisible. The theory demonstrates that many men engage in bullying tactics in an effort to prove their masculinity to their peers and that the behaviors reinforce the gender norms of the workplace (McGinley, 2007:1192).

#### **2.4.5. Research with a Gender Perspective**

Simpson and Cohen's (2004) objective was to search for the nature and experience of mobbing, and differences by gender. They found that women were more likely to experience mobbing compared to men and more likely to report mobbing to their managers, whereas men see mobbing in an organizational context as a management technique. They refer to some discussions, which suggest that although gender differences exist in the experience of mobbing, some aspects can be separated from gender because while targets are usually women, considerable proportions of women are mobbers. Nonetheless, scholars like Simpson and Cohen (2004) do not accept this discussion, and claim that organizational power relations are heavily gendered, and decision making mechanisms like managerial positions have gendered nature of practices, and maintain masculine discourse based on power and control.

Simpson and Cohen (2004) aimed to investigate the nature and experience of mobbing in higher education sectors and to explore gender differences. They criticized the early studies of mobbing as not being constructed as gendered and aimed to contribute to the research gap by investigating the importance of gender in perception and experience of mobbing. They applied a questionnaire survey in a single university, in United Kingdom, and made interviews. They also made interviews in other universities and other higher education institutions. They found that women were more likely to be targets of mobbing than men and their decisions were more likely to be over ruled than men. The perception of mobbing also differed between men and women. Women perceived mobbing behaviors as threatening acts, where men perceived them as a management style. Also, men and women differed in terms of response to mobbing. While women tend to report the mobbing to their managers, men were likely to take action through formal procedures, like applying to personnel department. They also pointed out that although there are gender

differences in the experience and perception of mobbing from the target's perspective, both sexes have the potential to act as a mobber.

Deborah Lee also focused on the gender dynamics of mobbing, as according to her, gender has not been problematized by most of the previous scholars (Lee, 2002). She stated that organizational structures reproduce gender inequalities through recruitment and selection methods; job grading and career ladders and organization of working hours (Lee, 2002). She gave examples from two interviews. One was a woman who came across with mobbing behaviors at work and could not get a promotion because she was neither compliant nor quiet and feminine as a woman should be, and the other was a man who was not a family man like his manager. She concluded that mobbing is not necessarily sex specific as it can be experienced and done by both men and women. However, this should not be taken as, mobbing is unrelated to gender (Lee, 2002).

Hutchinson and Eveline (2010) problematized the neglect of the gender dimension of mobbing in Australian public sector. They criticized the gender-neutral approaches of those studies, which did not examine the power imbalances produced by gendered organizations. They made interviews with policy actors in Australia. According to their study, "deeply gendered premises" of occupational health and safety policies and anti-discrimination policies allow policy actors to present mobbing as gender-neutral (Hutchinson & Eveline, 2010). Anti-mobbing policies are influenced by anti-discrimination and sexual harassment policies, and these policies encompass individualistic premises (Hutchinson & Eveline, 2010). The authors question the reason of excluding gender analysis from mobbing. The policy actors in the study justified excluding gender as such strategy while downplaying gender may promote inclusiveness and backlash (Hutchinson & Eveline, 2010). They proposed reassessment of mobbing by "uncovering unspoken and invisible causes of gender and power" (Hutchinson & Eveline, 2010).

## **2.5. Consequences of Mobbing**

Mobbing is also significant in terms of its consequences. Research demonstrated that victims of mobbing suffer from health problems. Besides, the literature on mobbing has shown that mobbing does not affect only the individuals but also organizations and societies, as well.

### **2.5.1. Consequences for the Individual**

Mobbing is a type of psychological harassment in the workplace, which can lead to serious legal, social, economic and psychological consequences for the individual. As a mobbing victim, the reason that I personally wanted to study mobbing is my strong belief that as in Leymann's words, "this phenomenon despite any other areas of interest should be seen mainly as an encroachment of civil rights" (Leymann, 1996: 252).

Mobbing has serious, long term effects for the individual. Leymann points out that a great proportion of the victims seem to suffer from serious illnesses or even commit suicide (Leymann, 1996). The study of Leymann and Gustaffson (1996) concluded that experiences and statistical results indicated that employees who were subjected to mobbing are at the risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). In fact, Leymann and Gustaffson (1996) compared the level of stress of the victims of mobbing and people who have run over and killed suicidal persons on railway lines. In the latter one, stress PTSD reaction was short, acute and could decrease after several days or weeks whereas in the mobbing situation "traumatic situation lasted a long period of time and the level of stress was constantly renewed" (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996). Also, Mathiesen and Einarsen (2004) compared the level of PTSD symptoms of victims of big disasters, refugees from wars with a large group of mobbing victims who have suffered from this in a long period of time. More than three in four mobbing victims showed qualifications of PTSD diagnosis (Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2004). Similarly, Niedl (1996) investigated the relationship between mobbing at work and the well being of the victim. In his study, women reported higher psychosomatic complaints and higher levels of anxiety as a result of mobbing

(Niedl, 1996). Consequences of mobbing for the individual well being showed similar facts like the other studies: “anxiety”, “depression”, “irritation” and “psychosomatic” complaints. The reaction of the victims differed between “reducing commitment” (neglect) or “leaving the firm” (exit). Studies in Norway found that anxiety, aggression and depression were the reported affects of mobbing (Rayner et al., 2002). Adams pointed out that mobbing steals a person’s self esteem; it undermines self-confidence, leads to sleeplessness, to panic attacks and most particularly depression (Adams, 1992). Mobbing not only affects the victims, but their families also suffer from the consequences. Leaving the job does not end the situation. On the other hand, as a person becomes older, his or her ability to find a new job diminishes (Leymann, 1996). Because of this, the person does not leave the job and become exposed to mobbing for a long period of time. In a research, it was found that those who developed PTSD because of mobbing were rarely younger than the age of 40 (Leymann & Gustafsson 1996). This shows that people mostly face extensive consequences of mobbing in case that they cannot find another job. Also, there is a possibility that the individual could be expelled from the labor market, and he or she cannot find any job at all.

Another important fact about mobbing is that people are silent when it comes to complaining about being subject to mobbing (Beasley & Rayner, 1997). Andrea Adams claimed that, consequences of severe psychological problems also emerge from the fact that the victims begin to blame themselves for this situation and lose their self-confidence (Adams, 1992).

Victims of mobbing suffer from psychological symptoms such as depression, sociophobia and anxiety (Varhama & Björkqvist 2004). Quine (1999) in her study among National Health Service community health care trust in Britain, found that mobbing victims were likely to suffer from stress, anxiety and depression more than those who are not. Zapf et al. (1996), confirmed the severe health consequences of mobbing. Especially, results showed that the victim’s health was mostly affected when their private life was attacked. As a result of their findings, organizational measures, social isolation, attacking private life, verbal aggression and spreading rumors were found to be the typical strategies of mobbing whereas attacking

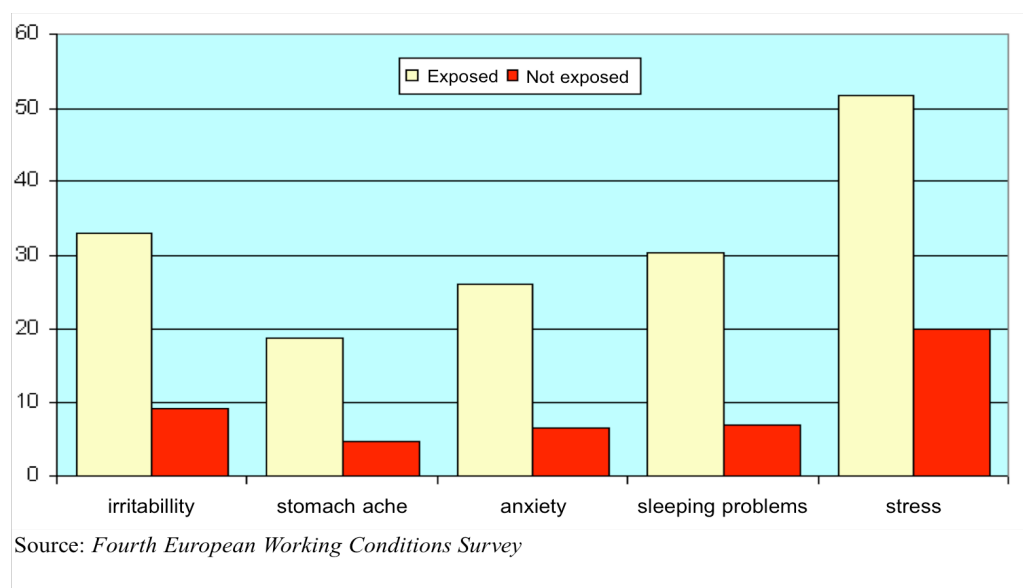


attitudes and physical violence occurred occasionally in the context of mobbing (Zapf et al.,1996).

Mobbing also affects employees who do not directly get exposed to mobbing but witness it. UNISON study survey showed that 22% of the respondents left their job and 70% felt stressed because of mobbing at their workplace (Rayner et al., 2002). The study of Vartia (2001) showed that witnessing mobbing was also a cause of general stress and mental reactions.

The fourth EWCS (2007) showed the impact of mobbing on employees in EU countries and member states. As shown in Figure 5, employees who were exposed to mobbing reported higher levels of psychological complaints such as stress, irritability, sleeping problems, anxiety and stomachache.

**Figure 5: Impact of Mobbing in EU**



There is no doubt that the individuals who are targeted in mobbing pay the biggest costs. Partners, families and friends also the witnesses of mobbing are negatively affected from the situation.

### **2.5.2. Consequence for the Society**

Mobbing has also consequences for the society. The benefit and welfare costs due to early retirements, high costs of disability, high cost of unemployment, loss of human

resources and medical costs are some of the consequences for the society (Cassito et al., 2003). Swedish public statistics show that between 20 and 40% of the yearly number of early retirements are caused by poor psychological working environment. In other words, every third to fifth, retired person in the age group (55 and over) had suffered from extensive mobbing (Leymann, 1996). In order to prevent these financial burdens on their national budget, Swedish government enforced preventive legislation. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act, which came in to act in 1993/1994, states that “employers are obliged to present a vocational rehabilitation plan as soon as an employee has been on sick leave for one month or six times within a 12-month period” (Leymann, 1996:173).

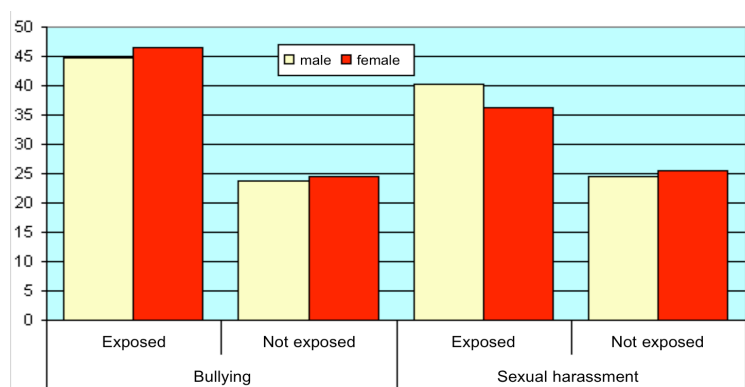
At the end, mobbing has an impact on the society as a whole. The numbers of employees who become unemployed because of mobbing develop serious health problems and will have a burden on the disability benefit budgets (Rayner et al., 2002). As studies show, many of the victims are young and because of the mobbing experience, their education, knowledge, experience and talent are wasted which has wider implications for the economy and society in the long term.

### **2.5.3. Consequences for the Organization**

Mobbing also has consequences for the organizations. Repetitive or long term sick leaves have financial cost for the organizations. According to Leymann (1996) all the related cost estimated per year for the employee exposed to mobbing is between 30,000 and 100,000 USD. According to National Workplace Safety Institute in USA, total cost of mobbing in 1992 was more than 4 billion dollar (KEFEK, 2011). Consequences of mobbing for the organizations are also identified by Adams as “high sickness rates and absenteeism, low morale, reduced productivity, rapid staff turnover, potential litigation and poor corporate image” which lead to high financial costs (Beasley & Rayner, 1997:178).

Figure 6 shows the percentage of employees that took leave of absence due to a health problem according to fourth ECWS (2007) surveys.

**Figure 6: Leave of Absence between Genders**



Source: Fourth European Working Conditions Survey

As Figure 6 shows, those employees who were exposed to mobbing took more leaves of absence than the employees who were exposed to sexual harassment and more than the ones who were not exposed to either. Female employees took more leaves of absence in mobbing situations whereas male employees took more in sexual harassment. On the other hand, while several studies tried to link mobbing and absenteeism as the cost for the organizations, few studies found a relation and in all cases the relationship was weak (Rayner et al., 2002). In 1997, UNISON Study showed that less than one third of the mobbing victims took time off (not more than a few days) because of mobbing (Rayner et al., 2002). Victims stated that to take leave of absence was another cause for anxiety, because of this they hesitated for taking time off. Researchers interpreted this as the effort for not escalating the situation, because of the fear of losing the job. Either way this shows the link between absenteeism and mobbing, because while the employee tries to avoid further conflicts that could turn out to be mobbing and avoid taking time off, they come across with long term consequences individually in the future.

The UNISON (1997) survey showed that a quarter of respondents, who experienced mobbing before, left their job (Rayner et al., 2002). Also, over 20% of the respondents of the survey done by Quinn in 1999, showed similar results. In these surveys, 3% of the respondents stated that they chose to do nothing and a similar proportion stated that they intended to exit from the organization (Rayner et al., 2002). Researchers mention that employees' intention of leaving the job does not

necessarily mean that they do it. This may even worsen the situation. Some of the victims seek an explanation for their experience and choose to stay in the organization and struggle. As a result, they face with mobbing for a long time and consequently the impact will be worse. Studies show that productivity decreases as a result of mobbing. 27% of the employees who took part in the Einarsen's survey, in Norway, stated that mobbing had a negative effect on productivity in their organization (Einarsen et al., 1994). Approximately 20% of the respondents of University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology study in Britain stated that mobbing led to a decline in efficiency, motivation and satisfaction (Rayner et al., 2002).

As a result, employers are negatively affected from mobbing with the costs related to absenteeism, declined productivity, low efficiency, low satisfaction and motivation, high costs of exit, replacement costs such as recruitment and training of new employees (Rayner et al., 2002). There are also notable costs if actual litigation claims occur such as court costs, pay-offs, early retirement deals and another important cost related to the issue of bad publicity and declined organization image (Rayner et al., 2002).

This chapter presented the conceptualization of mobbing and findings of the researches in the international literature. According to the literature review, mobbing is a form of violence and harassment at work defined with a list of behaviors, which may vary among countries. Although the identified behaviors may vary, durations and frequency are the two factors, which distinguish mobbing from other incidents at work. Studies show that there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. Although, by definition, mobbing may come from superior, co-workers or subordinates in workplaces, it comes mostly from superiors. In the works cited and other resources that were reviewed, it was seen that women were exposed to mobbing more than men and men were usually the perpetrators. In the late 1980s and 1990s, most of the research did not see the gendered side of the phenomenon. It is defined as nonsexual, non-racial but as a general harassment at work. However, it is not surprising to see women as victims of mobbing, because workplaces are male dominant structures where women are marginalized.

Mobbing usually starts with a conflict at work and continues with systematic negative behaviors towards the victim. Organizational change may also prepare the ground for mobbing. The mobber starts to show negative behaviors towards victim. When repeated over, a long time and shown frequently, the victim feels defenseless and vulnerable. Some of them manage to resist these behaviors and may survive from the process. Usually, victims feel defenseless; lose their self-confidence and face with psychological consequences. The ones that escape from it by leaving the job continue to suffer from the psychological consequences together with the economic burden. On the contrary, the employee who resists and tries to survive becomes a threat for the organization and may be driven from the workplace. Mobbing has consequences for the individuals, organization and society as a whole.

Prevalence of mobbing differs among countries. Surprisingly the lowest prevalence of mobbing is observed in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark, where it was first dealt with as a distinct phenomenon. Scholars attribute this to the egalitarian and individualistic characteristics of the countries where there are comparatively lower power inequalities in their society.

## CHAPTER III

### MOBBING IN TURKEY

The aim of this study is to analyze the mobbing perceptions and experiences of women victims of mobbing and how they are affected by it. The question why women are chosen as the basis of this study has numerous answers. The first one is my own victimization of mobbing as a woman and the awareness process that I have been through. The moment I realized that I've been a mobbing victim and that there were others who experienced the same, I accepted that this was not a fault of mine, but I faced a systematic, intentional violence, which made me feel that way. Secondly, when I started to do research about the phenomenon, I saw that most of the employees who experienced it were women. Even in Scandinavian countries where mobbing is not seen as a gender issue, as equality between men and women are at the desired levels, the number of women who experienced mobbing is more than men. This is not different in Turkey. Women, even though they are marginal in the labor force, experience mobbing more than men. Although some empirical studies cannot find a relationship between gender and mobbing, they cannot provide an explanation to higher victimization of women either. Especially in a country like Turkey where women's labor force participation is too low, it is worth to question if women are facing a sexist discriminative tool against them in the workplace or not. In light of these, I approach to mobbing in the framework of gender and women's employment. This chapter presents the development process of awareness of mobbing in Turkey and overviews the results of the studies made in this field.

#### **3.1. Recognizing Mobbing in Turkey**

Mobbing does not have a direct translation in Turkish. Researchers prefer to define the term with more than one word like "psychological harassment at work", "psychological terror at work", "emotional abuse at work", "bullying at work" and "psychological violence". Although it is defined with more than one word, "one variable that does not change in mobbing is the fact that it occurs in the workplace"

(Tınaz 2008:17). Tınaz suggests that the most suitable definition of mobbing in Turkish is “psychological harassment at work”. Also, other researchers like Demirel (2009), Bozbel and Palaz (2007), in their articles used “psychological harassment at work” as a translation of mobbing. Tınaz (2008) suggests using “yıldırkacı” in Turkish as equivalent of mobbing but also states that it should be scientifically discussed before used. Yüçetürk (2003a) suggests using “yıldırma (intimidation)” for mobbing behaviors. According to the author, psychological harassment or psychological terror is not enough for defining mobbing as sometimes according to the researcher mobbing may reach a level that include physical activities. She states that “yıldırma” term includes all aspects of mobbing also makes a reference to effects and results of the behavior (Yüçetürk, 2003b). Şenturan and Mankan (2009), Tepeci and Çalışkan (2008) and Kök (2006) used “yıldırma” in Turkish to define mobbing in their articles. Recently Mobbing Commission, which is a sub-commission under Commission on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (KEFEK), declared that they asked Turkish translation of the term from Turkish Language Association. Turkish Language Association suggested “bezdiri” for translation of mobbing and defined the term as:

Taking a particular person as a target in school, workplace or communities like these, disturbing that person by blocking his/her work in a systematic manner and leading to intimidation, exclusion and disgrace (KEFEK, 2011).

The related parties did not appreciate the translation. Writers and Association for Struggle against Mobbing stated that the word “bezdiri” was not enough to describe the subject deeply and demanded another suggestion from the association.

Awareness on mobbing started with media attention to legal cases. Şaban Tokat<sup>2</sup> is the first public employee who started legal struggle because of his victimization and sued a public institution with the complaint of mobbing. He worked in Turkish Grain Board for 25 years. When the new government came in to effect, management asked him to resign from work. When he did not accept he was lowered by rank. Before the problems started, he had been working as a head of department. First, he was made a

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<sup>2</sup> The stories of mobbing victims are taken from the news of Burcu Çelik at Hürriyet Gazette on 29 January 2007 which is accessed by the website of sendika.org. [http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi\\_no9505](http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no9505).

consultant then he was lowered to a specialist position. At last, pressures came to such a degree that he was hospitalized with the suspicion of heart attack. It turned out that he was going through major depression. He received 1.5-month medical treatment in hospital and further treatment for 10 months. During this stage, his son and wife also went through depression treatment. His doctor prepared a report showing that Tokat did not have any psychological problem before 2004 and went through posttraumatic stress disorder because of problems at work. He was not allowed to issue a criminal complaint about the managers of Turkish Grain Board. Therefore, he went to court and sued for indemnity of 15.000 TL.

Şaban Tokat was the first public employee who started a struggle against mobbing, but it is the Tülin Yıldırım's case, which made mobbing publicly known and recognized in Turkey. Yıldırım worked as a department chief at the Chamber of Geological Engineers for seven years. Things had changed when the new general secretariat came to the duty. She continuously came across with mobbing for two years. Her authorization was decreased; she was declared to be incompetent for the job requirements, had been given tasks, which were under her capabilities or responsibilities, and was entitled to reprobation when she did not undertake these tasks. At first she could not understand the meaning of these, and she felt lonely, neglected and lost self-confidence. Consequently she suffered from depression and received medical treatment by a psychiatrist. At that time, she was on sick leave and rumors started about her non-existence. Finally, she was fired. Before being fired, Tülin Yıldırım sued the chamber with the relevant items of Occupational Safety, Labor Law, Civil Law, Code of Obligations and European Social Charter "The right to dignity at work"<sup>3</sup>. The case lasted for two years. On 20 December 2003, for the first time mobbing was legally recognized in the law of Turkey with reference to the court decision of Ankara 8th Labor Court, which was the Tülin Yıldırım's case. The decision included the statement below:

Mobbing includes all kind of systematic behaviors that include bad treatment, threat, violence, humiliation and etc towards an individual from a superior, co-worker or lower ranked personnel (Ankara 8<sup>th</sup> Labor Court Decision no: 2006/19E and 2006/625K).

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<sup>3</sup> Feminist Web Magazine accessed on 02 January 2010.



Supreme Court of Appeals approved the decision of Labor Court and Tlin Yıldırım won 1000TL indemnity.

Prof. Dr. Dehen Altiner's case is the first publicly known lawsuit from academia. The academician stated that she was exposed to mobbing perpetrated by the dean of the university for 17 years. Her students were expelled from the laboratories. Her research was not funded. Her room was set to an isolated place near the kitchen and her assistants were prevented from being permanent staff. After 14 years, last occasion made her take action. The dean shouted at her at a meeting and dismissed her from the room in front of co-workers. Dehen Altiner sued the dean for her damages and won the case. The Court of Appeals approved the decision. On the other hand, Dehen Altiner could not get an answer to her complaints, which she made to presidency office of the university and the related prosecutor's office<sup>4</sup>.

One of the early examples of publicly known mobbing in the private sector is Handan Arpacıođlu's case. She worked in a big bank in Turkey and had been exposed to mobbing for six months. Everything started with the new superior who came to work in her department. She was disabled from doing her job. She had been given tasks with little importance, excluded from meetings that required her attendance, been entitled to other department's tasks and been prevented from attending international seminars, which she was invited to, and had been yelled in front of other employees and etc. She was transferred to another department when she did not approve a document, which was out of her responsibility. As a consequence, she was both lowered by rank and income. One day she went to work and realized that her entrance card did not work and learned that she was transferred to another branch. She refused it and sued the bank. Court decided that she could return to the job, but bank refused it and paid partial indemnities to her.

Above are the mobbing experiences, which are publicly known as a result of court cases. One victim is a man and the other three victims are women. Mobbing towards women cannot be evaluated without seeing the big picture.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dzceyerelhaber.com> accessed on 13 November 2006

Women's labor force participation in Turkey has been decreasing steadily since the 1980s and has reached a level defined as the lowest rates in the history of Turkish republic. According to Global Gender Gap Index 2010, Turkey is 126<sup>th</sup> among 134 countries. Turkey was 129<sup>th</sup> in 2009, 123<sup>rd</sup> in 2008, 121<sup>st</sup> in 2007 and 105<sup>th</sup> in 2006 (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2010). Labor force participation of women is %26 (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2010). Among 134 countries when we look at the main measurement topics, the situation of Turkey is worst on economic participation and opportunity. Out of 134 countries Turkey is the 131<sup>st</sup> on the scale (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2010). The comment of the authors of the report is as follows:

With a labor force participation rate of 26%, with women's wages only about a quarter of men's wages and with only 10% women in legislative, senior official and managerial positions, Turkey will need to consider better integration of its female human capital, particularly as women begin to make up almost 80% of university level students (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2010:25).

According to recent household labor force research of Turkish Statistical Institution (TUIK), labor force participation in Turkey in 2011 is 51.2%, and employment rate is 46.5%<sup>5</sup>. Men constitute the 70.3% of employed population and women employment rate is 29.7%. Women are increasingly taking place in the activities of the informal sector. Since the 1980's, the successive economic crises in Turkey have accelerated the informalization process of the economy, specifically in the labor market, resulting in the very slow expansion of formal sector and generating an increase in the informal sector employment (Ecevit, 1998a). By 2011 figures of TUIK, 60.5% of employed women are in unregistered employment. 95% of women in unregistered employment are unpaid family worker. Some of the common features of the informal sector employment defined are lack of protection, limited provision or absence of social security benefits and insufficient income (Çakır, 2008). Combined with the economic crises in recent years, taking up paid employment became difficult particularly for women with all aspects.

Yüçetürk (2003a) underlined the causes and effects of mobbing process in the framework of Turkish economy. She pointed out to the fact that at the current

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<sup>5</sup> Household Labor Force research 2011 June Period Results 15. Eylül.2011 Issue: 192

economic situation in Turkey, mobbing behaviors towards employees intentionally increases (Yüçetürk, 2003a). Research on victims who were exposed to severe pressure in the workplace concluded that mobbing increase at the time of crisis and the victims are mostly women (Yüçetürk, 2003a). Mobbing events in Turkey, at the time of economic downturns, make one think that these behaviors are shown to terrorize employees in order to make them leave the job with their own will instead of employer's taking responsibilities of dismissals in the workplace. I assume that women as they are marginal to the labor force are the ones who may at first and at most experience this process.

In 25 December 2010, Chamber of Electric Engineer Ankara Branch Women Commission organized a symposium about Mobbing-Psychological Harassment at Workplace<sup>6</sup>. In the symposium, the focus was on the relationship between capitalist system and mobbing. Especially in time of crises, as a result of economic down turn employers use mobbing as a tool to get the employee resignations from work. By this way, they do not face the burden of dismissing employees from their jobs. For this reason, the attendants focused on systematic and organizational characteristics of mobbing behaviors. A striking example came from Haber-Sen Ankara Department Head, Fatih Eroğlu. He gave the example of an employee from Turkish Radio Television Corporation (TRT) who committed a suicide as a result of systematic mobbing behaviors and banishments.

In the Turkish parliament, Commission on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (KEFEK) is formed with the official letter dated 24 March 2009. The Commission works to protect and develop women's rights, monitor the developments on equality between men and women at national and international level and submit draft bills to parliament. There is a sub committee under KEFEK about mobbing. It is noteworthy to see that mobbing is held up as an issue which concerns gender equality in Turkey. The sub commission made a hearing on mobbing with the attendance of academicians, non-governmental organizations and victims, and then published a report on March 2011. According to Commission's

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<sup>6</sup> This is the summary of the content of the symposium attended on 25 December 2010.

report (KEFEK, 2011), mobbing is the way of pressure of “powerful” on the subordinates, especially, in organizations which are hierarchically structured and do not have strong control mechanisms. The report states that mobbing is more prevalent in female dominated sectors and women have higher victimization rates than men. Unskilled superior generally does mobbing to skilled subordinates, and it is prevalent more in the service sector such as health and high education. As a result, of the commission’s works, The Ministry of Works and Social Security recognized the problem and laid the groundwork of Prime Ministry circular on mobbing which was published on the official gazette on 19 March 2011. The circular defines mobbing as negative behaviors, which destroy a person’s honor and reputation, decrease efficiency and cause health problems. Among other things, circular includes clauses about forming a mobbing line (170) and formation of “Board of Struggle Against Psychological Harassment” within Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

Mobbing has been gaining recognition during the last decade in Turkey as a result of above-mentioned developments. The interest in mobbing has started with the narrative studies of Yüçetürk at the beginning of 2000 (Seçkin Halaç & Bulut, 2010). Studies, research, workshops and media news about mobbing have been increasing recently.

In 2008, Human Resources Management<sup>7</sup> has organized a survey over 100 people to investigate the mobbing incidents in Turkey. Among the participants, men constitute 56% and women constituted 44%. The percentage of respondents who declared that they came across with mobbing in their work life was 80%. 2% has not seen mobbing in their work life. 70% declared that they were exposed to mobbing of their managers, whereas 25% were exposed to mobbing of their colleagues. According to survey results, the situation ended 27% with resignation and 25% with dismissal. 18% of victims ignored the situation and continued to work, while 17% of the victims made a complaint to senior management or human resources. Another survey was done by Mobbing Informing Research and Support Center Project<sup>8</sup> and

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.insankaynaklari.com.tr/basindahrm1.asp>,2006

<sup>8</sup> The findings of the project are taken from KEFEK’s report.

conducted between 2008-2009. Out of 135 respondents, 67% of them were women. 35% of them were between 21-30 years old and 36% of them were between 31- 40 years old. This shows that the majority was younger employees, and this supports the general findings about the average age of mobbing victims. 57% of respondents were university graduate, and 32% of them had a master's degree. 70% of applicants were from the private sector, and 28% were from public sector. 61% were exposed to mobbing by their superiors, and their colleagues constituted 30% of the mobbers. This was also confirmed by the status of the victims. 60% were civil servants and 36% were chief and middle level managers and only 4% were high-level managers.

Day by day, number of the legal cases, media news, and awareness on mobbing increases. Mobbing is usually put forward by courageous people who find the strength to struggle with the phenomenon, by all means (Yüçetürk, 2003a). Otherwise, it is kept hidden as the victims lose their health and find themselves defenseless to confront their situation. One of the factors of silence about the issue in Turkey is that seeking psychological help is not a common thing in Turkey and people go through it with the help of strong family bounds (Yüçetürk, 2003a).

As stated before, mobbing is recently recognized in Turkey. With the recognition, it has also taken its place in the legal debates. Related parties discuss whether existing legislation is sufficient to struggle with mobbing or does Turkey need specific legislation considering mobbing.

The common part of the first legal cases is that the victims started the legal struggles suggesting that they had been victims of mobbing. As mobbing did not have legal sanction, they opened the cases in different ways such as indemnity case, demand to return to work and other relevant legislation. Approaches related to legal and criminal consequences of mobbing/psychological harassment are done in the framework of general provisions of law and the framework of labor law, in Turkey. According to Bozbel and Palaz (2007) perpetrators of mobbing can be found responsible according to Turkish Penal Code Item 86 "Malicious Injury", Turkish Penal Code Item 89 "Involuntary Injury", Turkish Penal Code Item 125 "Insult" (Criminal Libel) and if the behavior results in suicide Turkish Penal Code Item 89 "Lead to Suicide". If the employer does not implement mobbing him/herself but

encourage others to do, he/she can be found responsible according to Turkish Penal Code Item 39 f/2 “Providing Assistance to Crimes” (Bozbel & Palaz, 2007).

Apart from these, other approaches in the framework of “Employer’s Obligation of Protection and Supervision” could be considered to protect the rights of the victims of mobbing. Bozbel and Palaz (2007) indicate that, “to do a job is a personal and individual act”. The employee by starting to work in a job not only grants his/her labor to the employer’s legal supremacy, but also his/her personality (Bozbel & Palaz, 2007).

General norms about protection of the individual rights are arranged in the constitutions. The items that can be related to mobbing in this scope, in Turkey, are Item 10 that governs principle of equity and Item 12 that guarantees the individual’s fundamental rights and freedoms (Bozbel & Palaz, 2007). Regulations concerning the protection of personality are organized in Code of Obligations. According to Code of Obligations Item 41, an employee that is subject to mobbing can demand compensation in this manner in case that he/she can prove the act is done on purpose and with the intention of causing harm (Bozbel & Palaz, 2007). Besides, mobbing at work can be undertaken within the scope of employer’s supervision obligation to employee (Bozbel & Palaz, 2007)<sup>9</sup>.

Mobbing claims can also be evaluated in the scope of Labor Law, in Turkey. Amended Labor Law numbered 4857 came in to effect in 2003, but it does not include satisfactory provisions that concern worker’s psychological health (Bozbel & Palaz, 2007). Regulations concerning occupational health and occupational safety do exist, but they do not include occupational psychological health problems, prevention and responsibilities of employers about the related issue (Laçiner, 2006). Additionally, Labor Law Item 83 states that employers are responsible to ensure employee’s health and safety. According to Bozbel and Palaz, the notion of occupational health should be considered in a broadly, so it could cover the employer’s psychological health. In this perspective, an employee that is subjected to mobbing should be able to apply to Occupational Health and Safety Board (Bozbel

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<sup>9</sup> The Code of Obligations is recently amended and New Code of Obligations will enter in to force 01.07.2012

& Palaz, 2007). Bozbel and Palaz (2007) suggest that Constitution, Civil Code, Code of Obligations and Labor Law have enough regulations to enable struggle with mobbing within the legal basis and do not suggest a necessity of separate regulation for mobbing. This issue will certainly be debated in the future, as the awareness about mobbing would increase in Turkey. Recently, mobbing is included as psychological harassment in the workplace in the Law No. 6098, which will enter into force on 1 July 2012 as part of the New Code of Obligations:

The employer is responsible to ensure a workplace that is compliant with the principles of honesty and protect and show respect to worker's personality in their service relation, especially shall take the necessary measures to prevent the psychological and sexual harassment of workers, and avoid further damage against those who have suffered harassment (New Code of Obligations Item 417).

Elibol et al. (2008) perceives mobbing as a treatment incompatible with human dignity. Mobbing is characterized as a demotivating and degrading factor in the workplace with regard to European Convention on Human Rights and Codes of Turkish Law. With mobbing behaviors, employers bring employees to a point that they resign voluntarily, and employer avoids paying benefits or notices (Elibol, Gökdeniz & Güngör, 2008). According to authors, mobbing, which is an emotional abuse, could be evaluated under Article 3 of European Convention of Human Rights which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Also, Turkish Constitution Article 18 states. "No one shall be subjected to torture or maltreatment; no one shall be subjected to punishments or treatments incompatible with human dignity" (Elibol et al., 2008). Besides other things, mobbing is a type of violence directed to one's personality.

### **3.2. Review of Research on Mobbing in Turkey**

Because mobbing is a new issue in Turkey, the literature on the issue is also limited. Survey based studies introduced the issue of mobbing in a descriptive way (Seçkin Halaç & Bulut, 2010). Similar to the international literature, mobbing towards women has not been held up as a separate issue with a feminist perspective in Turkish literature. Besides, studies done so far show that mobbing exists in Turkey and women are exposed to mobbing more than men (Asunakutlu & Safran, 2006;

Özler, Atalay & Şahin, 2008; Aydın & Özkul, 2007; Kök, 2006; Çoban & Nakip, 2007). Among the reviewed Turkish studies, with the exception of few sentences on the sexes of the victims or statistical distribution of the sexes, no interpretation or methodology was found to consider the gender dimension of mobbing. Because of this, this thesis is an attempt to look in to the phenomenon from women's perspective and a hope for future recognition of the problem within gender equality framework.

The findings of reviewed studies are categorized under topics such as prevalence of mobbing, identification of the mobbing behaviors, reasons of mobbing, and consequences of mobbing and reactions of the victims. Gender is pursued as a cross cutting issue. Although samplings may not be sufficient to represent the working population in Turkey, the findings give us insights about the phenomenon.

Asunakutlu and Safran (2006) investigated the relationship between mobbing, conflict and coping strategies. In the study, they made interviews with 182 public health sector employees. 40% declared that they came across with mobbing frequently in their workplace. Most of the victims were women. Özler, Atalay and Şahin, (2008) made a study on public hospital employees in Kütahya and found that 29.8% of the respondents experienced mobbing. 66.7% of victims were women. The authors related the high victimization of women to vulnerable characteristics of women and the patriarchal characteristics of Turkey, where managers are mostly men and women are more in subordinate positions. Even if, the researchers put some effort to understand the high victimization of women in relation with the gender, they could not free themselves from gender prejudices and defined women as vulnerable. According to the results of the survey study of Ünal and Karaahmet (2008) on 192 employees from three different companies operating in textile, machine and automotive sectors, 88.7% of the respondents reported they had been victims of mobbing. Aydın and Özkul (2007) investigated mobbing at four and five star hotels in Antalya. Out of 427 surveys 117 (27.4%) employees reported that they had experienced mobbing. Women victims were more than men victims. The authors attributed the higher victimization of women in the workplace to the fact that women experience violence based on their gender. Yeşiltaş and Demirçivi (2010) made another study in hotels, in Antalya. 47% of the respondents had been exposed to



mobbing. Tengilimoğlu, Mansur and Dziegielewski (2010), looked for the relationship of organizational commitment and mobbing. Among 320 administrative staff in a university hospital, in Ankara, 78% declared that they experienced mobbing. 32% of the victims reported that mobbing lasted between 2 to 5 years. Elibol, Gökdeniz and Güngör, (2008) made 400 face-to-face interviews by employees from defense, banking and cleaning sectors and applied questionnaires on demographic variables. 45.4% of the employees reported that they had been subject to mobbing. The highest exposure rate was in the cleaning sector. Bilgel, Aytaç and Bayram (2006) conducted a questionnaire survey among 1200 government employees in health, education and security sectors and 877 questionnaires were analyzed. 55% of the respondents reported experiencing one or more types of mobbing in one-year time, and 47% of them witnessed the mobbing towards others. Yıldırım, Yıldırım and Timuçin (2007), conducted a descriptive study to explore the mobbing behaviors experienced by nursing teaching staff in Turkey. 91% of the participants reported that they experienced mobbing behaviors in their work (Yıldırım, Yıldırım & Timuçin, 2007). 17% of them declared that they had been directly exposed to mobbing at work, and 9% stated that they thought about suicide occasionally (Yıldırım, Yıldırım & Timuçin, 2007). Çoban and Nakip (2007) conducted survey study on 10 banks' employees in Nevsehir. The results showed that 22% of the employees had been exposed to mobbing. Çalışkan and Tepeci (2008) investigated the rate and levels of mobbing in hotels in order to explore the effects of these behaviors on employee job satisfaction and on their intention to stay on the job. Their study included 328 employees working at hotels. 99 out of 328 (30.2%) employees stated that they were exposed to mobbing. Demirel (2009) conducted a study with the aim of exploring whether mobbing behaviors differ between different public institutions. The target segment of the study included 150 employees in three hospitals in two city, 64 General Directorate of Turkish Post (PTT) employees in a city, and 106 teachers. According to results of the study, PTT employees were exposed to mobbing more than health employees and teachers, also the frequency of mobbing behaviors towards PTT employees were higher than the other (Demirel, 2009). Ünal and Karahmet (2008) assessed the frequency of mobbing and relation of mobbing with socio demographic variables and working

environment factors in Bursa. In the study, 6% of the victims were from managerial positions, 19% of them were white-collar employees and 67% were blue-collar employees. These also support the general findings, which suggest that mobbers are usually the superiors. According to results of the study, mobbing towards targets did not vary by job status, educational status, marital status, occupational status gender or age (Ünal and Karaahmet, 2008).

Looking at the reviewed studies, prevalence of mobbing is between 17% and 88.7%, which is remarkably high compared to European countries. The general distinction between research fields is private versus public sector. In the public sector, studies are conducted generally in the health sector like international research. Banking, tourism and education sectors dominate the research field in the private sector. In other words, most of the studies looked at service sector. In the reviewed studies, two of them pointed out the higher victimization of women and found a relationship between the gender of the victim and mobbing, also questioned the higher victimization of women not theoretically but at least in a descriptive manner. Others either just gave a number of men and women in terms of sexes or did not seek or find a gender factor at all (Bulutlar & Ünler Öz, 2009; Çoban & Nakip 2007; Asunakutlu & Safran, 2006; Tengilimoğlu, Mansur & Dziegielewski, 2010; Çalışkan & Tepeci, 2008; Deniz & Güler Ertosun, 2010).

The studies were reviewed to find examples of identified mobbing behaviors in Turkey. The mobbing behaviors found in Turkish literature vary depending on the sectors. In the study of Asunakutlu and Safran (2006), most seen mobbing behaviors were, “being restricted in terms of expressing one’s self” (43%), “encroachment of promotion”, “being shouted at”, “being gossiped about”, “having been entitled to degrading jobs” (16%-20%) and “exclusion”, “ridicule”, “having been attacked because of beliefs and views” and “criticism” (10%-12%). In Ünal and Karaahmet’s (2008) study, in Bursa, most observed mobbing behaviors in the private sector were “intimidating behavior such as finger pointing”, “invasion of personal space”, “shoving”, “blocking/barring the way” (84.5%), “excessive teasing and sarcasm” (80.3%) and “pressure not to claim something which employees are entitled to” (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses) (79.6%), “insulting or offensive

remarks” (76.1%), “allegations against employees” (76.1%), “being exposed to an unmanageable workload” (71.8%), “practical jokes”(71.6%) and “hints or signals from others that employees should quit their job” (70.4%) (Ünal & Karaahmet, 2008:148). Elibol et al. (2008), aimed to investigate the extent of mobbing behaviors experienced by the private sector employees in banking, cleaning and defense sectors, in Ankara. In banking and defense sector, “false accusation”, “spreading ungrounded rumors” and “alluding” were most observed behaviors. In the cleaning sector, most observed behaviors were “entitlement to meaningless tasks”, “violation of individual rights” “excessive workloads” “false accusation” and “spreading ungrounded rumors”. Common mobbing behaviors in Aydın and Özkul’s Study (2007) were “continuous criticism of the work”, “restriction of expressing one’s self” and “continuous interruption of the words” and these behaviors came from superiors mostly. Palaz et al. (2008) searched for mobbing behaviors among public employees in education and health sector in Balıkesir and found that “continuous criticism” (33.62%), “continuous interruption of words” (33%) and “the restriction of the possibilities of self-realization” (31%) were the most encountered mobbing behaviors.

It is necessary to state that there are not enough measurement instruments specific to mobbing in Turkey. Almost all of the studies conducted in Turkey used LIPT or NAQ to identify mobbing behaviors. Deniz and Güler Ertosun (2010) used Workplace Bullying Questionnaire, which was developed, by Dikmen and Sinangil who also derived the measure from LIPT. Yıldırım and Yıldırım (2007) aimed to develop an instrument that would reach a perception of mobbing in Turkey, which would be beneficial for further research. The study was conducted on 476 nurses. The findings showed that the instrument is valid and reliable within the acceptable limits (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007). Authors state that this is an instrument that will encourage more studies on the subject. More studies should be done to reflect the cultural difference of Turkey in identification of mobbing behaviors.

Research in Turkey, like in other countries were interested in finding the reasons of mobbing and studies were made based on different factors such as demographic variables (age and sex mostly), personality traits and organizational factors. Yüçetürk

(2003a) suggest that mobbing process has four factors: the organization, mobbers, social system in the work environment and victims. According to Kirel (2007), mobbing is an emotional assault and it aims to make the unwanted person leave the job by putting pressure on him/her and leaving him/her in a defenseless position. Aydın and Özkul (2007) looked for the relationship between mobbing and eight demographic factors which are; gender, age, marital status, education level, wage level, position, department, and reason of leaving the last workplace. Significant relationship was found between mobbing and seven factors except gender. Cemaloğlu and Ertürk (2007) questioned whether gender was a factor in being a perpetrator or victim in terms of mobbing. The study was conducted on 26383 teachers. 66% were women and 33% were men. According to this study men have a tendency to show mobbing behaviors more than women. 85% of men were exposed to mobbing by men, and 65% of women were exposed to mobbing by women, which is parallel to Leymann's (1996) findings. Şenturan and Mankan (2009) conducted a research about the effect of wage level on mobbing. According to the researchers certain factors such as workplace conditions, gender, marital status, education level and wage level have a considerable effect on mobbing and these effects change between sectors (Şenturan & Mankan, 2009). In their study, they tried to explore the relationship between wage level and mobbing in health and tourism sectors, but found that the relationship level was low in the tourism sector, whereas wage level may affect mobbing in the health sector. Aydın and Özkul (2007) found that the hierarchical structure and gender are important factors in mobbing. Bulutlar and Ünler Öz (2008) found that organizational climate affects the level of commitment, and a caring positive climate is the one affects most. According to authors, culture and climate of organizations are decisive factors that can enable or prevent mobbing. Koç and Urasoğlu Bulut (2009) studied on organizational factors. In Turkey, especially in the public sector, government changes come with dismissal of senior managers and staffing and this speed up the process of mobbing and this comes up as organizational politics (Koç & Urasoğlu Bulut, 2009). Unfortunately, their study included gender biased observations. According to researchers, among secondary school teachers men had a higher share of victimization rate than women and they explain it with the fact that women being more compliant and have a tendency to

solve problems by less aggressive ways like talking through it. Also, they state that women are not competitive as they are more devoted to their family life.

Tengilimoğlu et al. (2010) stated that the reasons for mobbing were job stress, poor management and jealousy of the victim's work performance. Kök (2006) aimed to explore the reasons of mobbing with an empirical study. The research was done on 300 bank employee from 2 public bank and 13 private banks. 52.9% of the respondents were men. According to the results, organizational factors and social factors, victim's personality and mobbers's personality were found to be the most effective factors of mobbing. The organizational factors were listed as job stress, intense pressure for efficiency, departure from moral values, poor management and leadership, role conflict and social climate in the work environment (Kök, 2006). According to Kök (2006), women bank employees and lower ranked personnel were more exposed to mobbing than male bank employees. She points out that society (organizations) with the tendency towards to social sovereignty theory supports the inequalities based on class and gender (Kök, 2006). Accordingly, Kök suggests that the prevention mechanism for mobbing should focus on social and organizational structures rather than individual solutions.

The reasons of mobbing in the study of Çoban and Nakip (2010) were %36 mobbers, %33 management and %31 victim it self. This result indicates that victims at a certain level blame themselves for exposition to mobbing which is a part of mobbing process (Çoban & Nakip, 2007). Statistically, no meaningful relationship was found between gender and likelihood of being exposed to mobbing. On the other hand, the percentage of women (43.5%) which were exposed to mobbing were higher than men (32%).

Research studies suggest that people who are exposed to mobbing have high emotional intelligence and incur admirable characteristics such as honesty, creativity, and success in their lives. Özler, Atalay and Şahin (2008), suggest that the victims of mobbing are successful, idealist, social and committed to their organizations. Therefore in a long period they do not give reaction to the pressures against them. However, after a long time, their organizational commitment diminishes and they finally intent to leave the job. At last, the organization loses the trained personnel,

turnover increases, expenditures for training new personnel increases and organization image diminishes. According to Yıldırım and Yıldırım (2007) there is a positive relation between personality traits and exposition to mobbing.

Whatever the reasons of mobbing are, mobbing has serious consequences firstly for the individual's health. According to its intensity, duration, frequency and how it resulted, it causes various damages on the victim's health. It also affects the job performance and productivity, which affects the organization. In Yıldırım, Yıldırım and Timuçin's (2007) research, 75% of the respondents stated that they felt tired and stressed, 69% of them had headaches and 67% of the respondents were negatively affected in their personal lives because of mobbing. In another study of Yıldırım (2009), the results showed that mobbing led to depression, lowered motivation at work, caused poor concentration, and poor productivity, created a lack of commitment to work and poor relationships in the workplace. Asunakutlu and Safran (2006) approached the issue in the framework of conflicts in the workplace in public health sector. 80% of the samples of their study were women. The study concluded that besides resulting in the loss of trained employee, mobbing with the effects on the employees left behind reduces motivation and organizational commitment. 70% of the employees who attended the study thought that there was a relationship between resignations and demand of transfers and existing mobbing in the organizations. The study suggests that social interaction in the workplace contributes to the situation. As the severity of the mobbing increases, the related parties enter in a negative mood and show behaviors at each other that worsen the situation (Asunakutlu & Safran, 2006). Çoban and Nakip (2007) found a relationship between being exposed to mobbing and job satisfaction. 82% of the employees who responded to their survey study indicated that they were negatively affected by mobbing although they did not experience it personally (Çoban & Nakip, 2007). This result is also paralleling to other studies, which show that, witnesses of mobbing are also negatively affected from the situation. Karcıoğlu and Akbaş (2010) made a study in four hospitals on 395 health personnel to explore the relation between mobbing and job satisfaction and found a reverse relation between the two. According to Tengilimoğlu et al. (2010) mobbing affects and disturbs the workplace by late attendance, absenteeism, requesting transfers and unproductivity. The results show that mobbing behaviors

have a negative impact on the employee's intention to stay on the job and negatively affect the job satisfaction (Yıldırım, Yıldırım & Timuçin, 2007).

There is a relation between mobbing, reactions against it and continuance of employment. In some cases, we see that the victim feels very defenseless could not stand it anymore and resigns from the job. In some cases, victim resists a long time, but employer ends the relationship, and the victim is dismissed from the job. Reactions and strategies of the victims are important in mobbing process. In a study among 320 administrative staff of a university hospital in Ankara (Tengilimoğlu et al., 2010), majority of the victims (64%) stated that they did nothing in response to initiate or accelerate mobbing behavior. 23.8% made some type of informal complaint. 17.5% confronted the mobber and reacted in a similar way. 9.1% made a formal complaint and 1.2% left the position and looked for another job. Those who left the job stated that they did not have any energy left to respond back, and they simply gave up. Participants stated that it made them so angry and frustrated that they did not want to deal with it anymore. With this level of frustration, victims withdrew themselves, and the rate of the personnel who wanted to leave increased. In Bilgel, Aytaç and Bayram's study (2006), 60% of victims declared that they had tried to take action against mobbing, but the outcomes were not satisfactory. The 45.5% of the employers in Çalışkan and Tepeci's (2008) study stated that they intended to work somewhere else that would give them the same working conditions. The remaining did not have an idea of leaving the job because they thought they would face with similar problems in other organizations and because of the difficulty of finding another job.

Although it is difficult to make a generalization out of reviewed Turkish literature as the studies differ in terms of sampling, sectors and methodology; it provides us an indication about mobbing in Turkey and findings are similar to international research. Studies on mobbing in Turkey show us that mobbing exists in Turkey and prevalence is much higher than the prevalence in other, especially European, countries. Women's victimization is higher than men, but it is difficult to generalize as it depends on the sampling. Especially in health and education sectors, victims are mostly women, and this is expectable as these are female dominated sectors.

However, the studies, which questioned the higher victimization of women, are few, and are not supported with methodologies or approaches accordingly. No feminist study was found about mobbing. Identified mobbing behaviors differs among studies but most common behaviors that victims face with, were behaviors related to exclusion, encroachment of self realization, criticism, excessive workload or degrading works and spreading rumors. Perpetrators were usually superiors. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that Turkish researchers need a specific scale to measure mobbing behaviors in Turkey. Most of the studies use LIPT and/or NAQ scales to measure mobbing in Turkey, which are developed in Scandinavian countries. As mentioned before, mobbing differs according to cultural differences, and it is not the most accurate way to measure mobbing with a Scandinavian scale, as these are the countries where individual rights in terms of employment and gender equality are well developed. As the reviewed studies reveal, victims are constrained in their reactions against mobbing. Victims either stay with or without struggling or leave the job. Considering current employment rates and economic condition in Turkey, it is difficult to find another job. Either way, mobbing has serious consequences for the individuals. Like international literature, Turkish studies show that mobbing causes psychological health problems for victims. Sleeplessness, depression and anxiety are most common health problems. Some studies show that victims suffer from PTSD and even think of committing suicide. Mobbing also affects organizations by reduced commitment and productivity and increases staff turnover and costs.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PERCEPTION OF MOBBING AND EXPERIENCES**

This chapter presents the analyses of women's perception of mobbing and behaviors that they were exposed to, during mobbing. In order to explore their perception of mobbing, I asked what they knew about mobbing, and if they were familiar with the existing definitions, and what was mobbing according to them. Firstly, all the participants knew the word "mobbing". This is expectable as I reached them through e-mails or personally and described that I have been working on mobbing. Some were familiar with the literature definition. It is understood that some of them searched about mobbing and had knowledge about it before coming to the interview. Few was not familiar with the term, knew that it was a concept about workplace disturbance and defined it according to their experiences. Before presenting the findings of the research, the main characteristics of the women's experiences are summarized. Out of twenty women, twelve were exposed to mobbing by their superiors. Two of them were mobbed by their superiors and co-workers, and six of them faced with mobbing of their superior and organization. In the eleven cases, the perpetrator was the man only. Six of women were exposed to mobbing of their woman superiors. In three cases, the mobbers were man and woman together. When we look at the ages of the victims we see that three women are between 26-29 years old, seven women are between the ages of 33-39 years old. Six of them are between 40-46, and four of them are between 50-55 years old. All of the women employees are university graduates, eight of them have master degree and two of them have Ph.D. When we look at the status of the women at the time of mobbing, we see that two of them were senior managers in the private sector and the others are middle level managers, specialists, civil servants, teachers, academicians and chiefs. So far, the demographic characteristics of the victims in this study are parallel to the findings of international literature. Accordingly the majority of women in this study were between the age of 33 and 46. The majority of women in this study are in their thirties or forties and in the middle of their careers in terms of status. The

perpetrators were mostly male superiors. These women were victimized regardless of their status, age, their devotion to working or their good characteristics such as creativity and hard working. It is observed that the women employees in this study seemed to be hard working, responsible, creative, and they were loyal to their organizations, and mostly were identified by their work.

#### **4.1. Women's Perception of Mobbing**

Among all women, the shared perception was mobbing being a psychological violence and harassment. Zeynep, Sanem, Sinem, Nihal and Nilüfer defined mobbing with two words as psychological violence and/or psychological harassment. Selma defined mobbing as workplace syndrome and workplace disturbance. Nermin once assumed that it was sexual harassment but now states that it could be any coercion in the workplace. Bade was one of the respondents who defined it as harassment over work.

*Bade:*

It is, being harassed in the workplace. It can be in oral. The harassment I faced was over work related issues. I had continuous coercion about fear of losing my job.

Also mobbing is perceived as a form of violence such as Nursen stated:

What I understand from mobbing is violence, not in terms of psychical but psychological violence. You do not have to insult or say unpleasant things necessarily. You can easily conduct mobbing by your looks, actions, by excluding someone and by making someone useless. Because of that, the meaning is very broad, according to me. It is pressure, violence, and harassment. [It is] all of them.

Didem stated that mobbing is a maltreatment to dismiss people from the workplace. Nalan also has perceived mobbing as a way of pressure with maltreatment. She expressed that:

Mobbing is maltreatment, causing psychological decline at people through psychological coercion and disturbance in the workplace.

Eda also thought that it was an emotional coercion in order to drive someone to resign:

I do not know scientifically, but know that it is a type of harassment not physically, but psychologically, towards a human

being by means of harassment and exclusion from work. It is an emotional coercion for resignation.

The literature underlines the imbalance of power in mobbing. Power can come from many sources, but in the workplace, it comes mainly from status. Power is another characteristic of mobbing, which women in this study also agreed upon. Ahsen defined it as such:

It is a system of behaviors which a person with higher position often does this to a person with lower position, because sees his/her self insufficient compared with the other and want to block the other in the workplace. In my opinion, the person who has power does it. It is called psychological harassment. Yes, the person is very badly affected from this but I find it insufficient as a definition. It should be workplace harassment or rape. It should be tyranny in the workplace. I think gland does not correspond to mobbing. When you call it gland you define it from the victim. Why it is defined by taking the victim reference? I think it should be defined from the perpetrator and it should be named by degrading words.

Songül provided an original definition for mobbing especially about how people get together around the powerful.

*Songül:*

According to me mobbing is a social lynch. It is the experience in which the people who have authority in their hands direct the events as they wish. Who ever is the powerful, a superior, a manager or a boss, manage social orientation, [social relations in the workplace] as they want.

In mobbing after long-term repetitive behaviors, victims feel themselves defenseless and may lose their self-confidence. Berrin described the phases very clearly and defined mobbing over self-confidence.

*Berrin:*

I heard mobbing before. I have read it on Hürriyet Human Resource Gazette. I have thought about my friends who have lived it. It always got my attention. I used to read about it when ever I came across. I did not know its name, but I learned later. According to my thinking, it is psychological harassment. It is ignoring someone's personality. It is to be seen as if you do not exist, as if you are a worthless creature. After sometime as, a result of psychological depression, you actually believe it. They put you in a jar and make you believe it. What is a person's most valuable

asset? In my opinion, it is self-confidence. Mobbing is taking away your self- confidence.

Elif stated that mobbing includes movements of eliminating and underestimating someone and destroys their values at work. According to most women, main aim of mobbing is making someone leave the workplace. Aydan described what she lived in her company briefly:

I know it from the literature. What they did to me was ignoring and behaving as if I did not exist. Mobbing is, intimidate, disgust and dismiss or make someone give up.

The first part of the analyzing mobbing behaviors was to learn what the women knew about mobbing. It is seen that although there is an effort to find a specific Turkish term to define the phenomenon, “mobbing” is widely used in Turkey. I see that in newspapers, internet and media. People shortly call this, mobbing. In this research, the respondents were familiar with the term and mostly translated it as psychological violence and/or psychological harassment. I suggest that welcoming a foreign term, so easily could be the fact that it is an imported term referring to certain identified behaviors. Leymann identified 45 behaviors that should be perceived as mobbing. The need of measurement instruments specific to Turkey considering mobbing was already mentioned. An important part of this study was to categorize mobbing behaviors that the respondents were exposed to and search for commonalities if existed.

#### **4.2. Types of Mobbing**

After analyzing the women’s perception, I aimed to identify mobbing behaviors that women in this study were exposed. According to the experiences of these women, I categorized the types of mobbing into three. The experiences of women show that there is “political mobbing”, “personal mobbing” and “organizational mobbing”. In political mobbing, the behaviors emerged from the political climate effecting the organization. It did not have anything to do with the victim and the perpetrator personally or with the social interaction between the two. It did not emerge from personal conflict. In the individual mobbing, situation emerged from the personal conflict between the victim and the perpetrator and highly affected from the characteristics of the perpetrator and social interaction between them. The

organizational mobbing is different from the others. In this one, the organizations conducted mobbing as a way of management style or as a result of organizational defect.

Aydan is an example of political mobbing in the private sector. She thinks that the reason for her to be the target of mobbing is to be the “other”, and the mobbing in her organization accelerated with the current government.

*Aydan:*

There have been always people belonging to religious communities in our institution and a way of structuring of them. But, it accelerated with an unbelievable speed with this government. Privatization made things happen easier. Because, the rules are flexible in the private sector. They have the opportunity to give as much salary as they want to the people they choose. They can give the titles as they want. They can support the people who are from them, and they can isolate the people who are the “other”. This is a highly structured organized systematic policy.

She summarized the process as:

After privatization, instead of benefiting from experienced personnel, they perceived us as an economic burden. They think of us as: They are not from us; they are not from our ideology or belief system. Then isolate, exclude, do not give responsibility, do not give any job, do not call to meetings. Let them sit aside. Let their psychology break down so that they will ask for retirement. What I came across to was certainly not personal. They did this to woman or man to people who are not from them.

Last action of the institution made her enter a very difficult situation psychologically. She was temporarily transferred to Şırnak for three months. The fact that Aydan is a disabled person made everything difficult for her. Her case shows the extent of intimidation that could be done to an employee. She does not have any hope as a disabled woman in terms of practices that should include positivist discrimination towards people like her.

Another example of political mobbing in public sector is Nihal’s case.

*Nihal:*

I have been constantly moved between places since 2007. I am working as center manager in a public institution. Law does not permit the transfer of center managers to provinces. Despite this, they sent me to province. I opened a lawsuit and won it. Then they

took me from my active duty, put me in a room of eight employees like me. They did not give me a desk, telephone or computer. I was like a prisoner. Then I opened another lawsuit. They transferred me to another city in spite of the court decision. This ordeal still continues. I did not have any workplace centered problem before. My employee record is very clean. The reason is only staffing.

Songül described how political mobbing has been internalized in the public sector and how mobbing is done from the government level.

*Songül:*

I had seen how people had been framed, what kind of games can be done by the general management when I was chief physician. The rules change and become harder as you climb to a higher position. Some things are more ruthless. You can be dismissed from your position depending you are from one of them or not. Nobody is interested in the value you add to job. It is classic. Now, government also does it. At past bureaucrats were doing, now it is done from the government level. It starts with a fake compliant. When it is issued, they send an inspector who is a “hitman”. The inspector searches in every nook and cranny. Anyhow, he will pull out a mistake and drown you in investigations and dismiss you from your duty. Then you strive. You are dismissed either because of a minor issue or it is a false complaint, does not matter. Once you are dismissed, even if you turn back with court decision, you will be framed, and you will be exhausted. It is a well-known scenario, happens all the time.

The second type of mobbing derived from the experiences of women is “personal mobbing”. In this type, mobbing usually starts with a conflict and continues with the perpetrator’s show of strength. It usually comes from the superior. One example from the private sector to the personal mobbing is Zeynep’s case. Zeynep objected an illegitimate demand of her superior and faced with mobbing behaviors for eight months on a daily basis. She resigned from her job, which she loved very much. She defined her manager as an incompetent person with psychopath personality.

*Zeynep:*

In addition, I think that this guy had a personality disorder remembering the inconsistency between his actions and speech. He was a psychopath. When he was entitled to a job that normally he could not get, he was puzzled, and his ego could not handle it. If we did not resign at that time, I was sure that behaviors would continue growing in an intense way. Because, he saw us as an obstacle. He made obvious that we were not wanted there. He started nonsense rumors, like we were going out for lunch. I still

do not know what he tried to mean. The reason of this is the fact that the guy was sick.

In Berrin's case, the reason for mobbing was solely the superior's hatred towards Berrin's friend. It was personal but not relevant.

*Berrin:*

The reason is totally his hostility toward my friend who gave reference for me to this job. Everybody at the firm confirms this. He took revenge of the event between him and my friend, which lasted for three years, at past. My friend also accepted this when I told her what happened. Everybody knows that the revenge ended on me.

Another example to personal mobbing can be given from the public sector. Nursen has been a mobbing victim for three years. Everything started in a meeting.

*Nursen:*

This woman when she came to duty as the superior started to talk with an insulting and humiliating style. She started talking in a tone of command. I see my self as a person with sufficient communication skills. I am a lecturer, and I was trained on communication skills at numerous times. In a meeting of broad attendance with high academicians, I said very delicately that I felt very bad and humiliated. I felt like batman. I would feel better about myself if I were treated according to my status. She got terribly mad and asked me how dare I was speaking like that. She told me that she could do whatever she liked and however she liked. This was the way she would work, and she told me to object it if I could do. Then mobbing started. Illegitimate records about me, investigations. Exclusion and many other actions you cannot imagine. I sued the institution four times, and I won two of the cases. I am waiting for the result of the third.

The last type of mobbing category observed in the study is "organizational mobbing". In this type, the observed reason is neither personal nor political. It is rather a part of organizational behavior. There are some types of organizations, which perceive these behaviors as legitimate and conduct them as a management style. But, the style sometimes goes beyond the acceptable limits and behaviors come up as an overt encroachment of civil rights. This type of mobbing was usually observed in the private sector. Deniz is a victim of organizational mobbing. She worked in a private firm as regional sales manager. Some of the examples of behaviors, which Deniz came across, repetitively, were; correspondence without

manners, humiliating notes, yelling, calling to meeting on weekends and on vacation, and continuous pressure on the work. She could not get the incentives, which she deserved although she was the second among eight regions in sales figures. Even firm's auditors followed her and took pictures of her. She thinks although it was primarily the superior who had done these; these behaviors had approval in other levels of management in organizational structure. Accordingly, the upper management did not have an intention to prevent these behaviors.

*Deniz:*

These guys believe that they get extraordinary results with this system, which they named as "stress based management system" but they actually try to destroy people in this structure. As a result, of the actions of these bizarre managers who are deeply attached to this system, out of eight regions' managers reporting to my manager, six managers either resigned or got fired with scandals and false accusations. Lastly, as the manager of the seventh region, I preferred to resign to remain mentally healthy after all those mobbing behaviors, false and unfair exercises.

Another example of the organizational mobbing was Nalan's case. Nalan went to a branch of her school's in eastern Turkey for two years voluntarily. The school was in construction and they started working in extremely hard circumstances. The mobbing she saw was the result of an organizational behavior style.

*Nalan:*

In the first staff meeting, the manager and the deputy delivered very strange speeches. They forbid teachers to have male guest in their flats other than their first-degree relatives. The manager was a foreign person. We were working in very difficult conditions. The only place in the city was a five star hotel. We were going there and having some food and drinks to relax. Manager told us not to drink alcohol. They forbid us to have communication with the parents of the students. There was constant intervention to our personal lives, which is indeed after school hours. It was like a Nazi camp. Fifteen teachers out of seventeen made complaints to headquarters and an investigation started. Then unbelievable things happened. We were accused of forming a gang. At last, out of 14 teachers 10 of them were fired and four of them were transferred back to headquarters including me.

Besides these examples, it is seen that organizational changes like new establishments (i.e. Nalan's case), restructuring and changes in the organization due



to mergers (i.e. Berrin's case) in the private sector and political changes (i.e. Songül's case) in the public sector, increases the risk of mobbing. Nevertheless, in all the three types of mobbing the consequences were devastating for the victims, which will be explored in the next chapters.

### **4.3. Identified Mobbing Behaviors**

Looking at the mobbing behaviors derived from the interviews, the research shows that mobbing behaviors differ between private and public sectors. All of the behaviors could be seen in either sector, but certain behaviors have more significance in one of them. Besides, there are behaviors which are seen only in one sector and which occurred occasionally.

Looking at the general "taking the job and/or the authority at hand, and delegating them to people who are less competent" were the most expressed behavior in the interviews, and it was more seen in the public sector.

The second most expressed behaviors against respondents were "not sending/inviting to (registered) training and/or meeting" and "yelling, nagging". Not sending to training or meeting was mostly seen in the public sector. It is understood that to have the authority to send someone to a meeting or training is used as a show of strength in the public sector.

*Nermin:*

I was registered to a training meeting by another department because it was related to the previous works I have done abroad. Another department did this. The letter came to me. I was about to apply, but I thought that I should ask it before to my superior. He told me to hand in the letter to him. Then he called me. He told me that it was not appropriate. He asked why I was registered for this meeting. He told me that he would ask this to that department. How can they register me without asking to him? I told him that I was at the commission about the issue, so they might have found me suitable for this training. He said that nobody could choose which of his personnel would attend this training. He went to his superior and told that they should decide to send who they want. His superior called the head of that department and told this. My superior called me and declared me that I would not go to that training. "We chose another person", he said. I reacted. "Why do not you think that one of your personnel is honored", I said. I went out and wandered around the streets.

Only one woman mentioned this in the private sector. It could be because, in profit-oriented private sector, training affects the organizations more, in a positive way. Yelling and nagging is seen in both sectors with similar significance.

“To deprive of information or training related to job” and “illegitimate use of investigations and methods of warning, reprimand” were the third most mentioned behaviors. In the interviews, two women from the private sector and five women from the public sector stated these behaviors.

*Hülya:*

For example, there were courses. Computer courses, language courses these kinds of trainings, which each personnel are entitled to go. I was never sent to these courses. I have applied to some temporary duties, which I was competent. They never evaluated my applications.

*Ahsen:*

People like me who are very competent in their job if do not have high status would be envied, and people would want to stamp out them. They tried to intimidate me with unfair course distribution. Foreign academicians came to our department, I did not have any information. They tried hard for us not to come across. I do not have any information about what is going on in the department.

Especially “illegitimate use of investigations and methods of warning, reprimand” were seen as a part of mobbing process. A striking example of this was Nursen’s case.

*Nursen:*

After that, ungrounded proceedings started and followed by investigations. They formed a trivet in administration of the investigations. Some people prepared the proceedings and some people run the investigations. After investigations, the penalties came. They swept the documents, which included their approvals under the rug; for example, official letter of leave of absence. Then they accused me of taking leave of absence without approval. Even there were official written approvals; they accused me going to abroad without the approval of the management. By this way, I got penalties of warning, reprimand and cut from the salary.

“Prevention and obstructiveness” were also one of the most seen behaviors in the public sector. Five women from the public sector mentioned this behavior, whereas

one interviewee from the private sector expressed it. It is assumed that in the private sector, behaviors mostly target the person but not the job at hand directly because to prevent a task at hand may jeopardize the work. However, in the public sector, interviewees express that public work continues somehow. Ahsen, gave examples of “prevention and obstructiveness”.

*Ahsen:*

She did not send my article to reviewer for two years, and nobody did anything. I found a sponsor for our conference; she did not use it. However, we could have used it and finished the book immediately. Many events like this. I have made a hugely influential theoretician come to our university. She did not take care of him. He just came with my word, and she did not show any hospitality towards him. He was frustrated and left the organization after the keynote speech. They wanted me from foreign countries. She did not send me. She tries to suppress me. Another university wanted me as a lecturer. They gave plane tickets; they were about to incur every expense. She said things about me and prevented this opportunity.

The next observed common behaviors were seen more intense in the private sector. They are “to create a problem for vested rights such as leave of absence, health report, salary, and premium” and “to threaten with the job or threaten to transfer”. In the private sector, leave of absence was not approached, as it was a vested right.

*Deniz:*

I used to be called to meetings in another city on weekends with a call from Ankara at the last minute.... These examples used to happen one or two times in a month. In all of them, I met the expenditures of the travels myself. They also did not give any allowance. I was called to these meetings disregarding if I was on vacation, sick or have a medical report. If I declared that I might not attend with one of these reasons, I was exposed to threats of loosing of my job.

In public institutions, superiors mostly could not have an ultimate initiative on the employees’ vested rights as law strictly protects them, but they show their power in daily management like creating trouble in giving leave of absence.

*Nermin:*

I always had problems in taking leave of absence. For example if was about to go abroad he was questioning my leave of absences. Why was I going? Was I going to take leaves of absence again

later, for example, in the summer? Yes, I could. I have enough days. Why would not I? He was satisfying his ego by doing this. He was giving the leaves by bending me. But he does not have right to do this. I have right to use my leaves. When I came to this unit I was so anxious while taking leave of absence. When our manager told me “Of course, you could take”, I was tongue-tied.

*Sanem:*

Taking leave of absence is always a problem for me. When the time comes, I ask for leave of absence. He waits until 17:15, to give the permission or just do not give permission with no reason.

“To create problems and/or preventing enjoyment of vested rights” such as premium or salary was used as a mobbing behavior to put pressure on the employee in the private sector.

*Deniz:*

In 2010, the manager suddenly changed the premium system and put us in a situation that we [my team] could not take any premium, although according to the former system we had reached the sales figures to earn premium. When I asked about the reason, the answer was: “You shameless! How can you ask this? Are we stealing your money or what?” I was exposed to such kind of utterances. At last, we could not get any premium. I could never get an answer to any question about my rights or about the actions of the managers. I asked another manager in September why did they not pay our earned premiums. Another manager told me that I was right, and I should be patient. But also in February and March, they did not pay the premiums and they did not even bother to answer my request.

Another major difference between the private and public sector mobbing behavior was “to threaten with the job or threaten to transfer”. No one in the public sector expressed any kind of threat related to job security.

“Humiliation, insult”, “not to provide desk, chair, telephone, computer etc” and “(continuous) change of workplace and/or unit, reassignment, banishment” was other behaviors, which were perceived as mobbing. Especially “not to provide desk, chair, telephone, computer etc” and “(continuous) change of workplace and/or unit, reassignment, banishment” were more seen in the public sector. Hülya’s case is an example of “(continuous) change of workplace and/or unit, reassignment, banishment” and “not to provide desk, chair, telephone, computer etc”. Through out the mobbing process, she had to work at different places of the institution.

Everything started with the bribe offer of the general manager and when she refused the offer, first place where Hülya was sent among many other places was the basement of the institution.

*Hülya:*

When this offer first came from the general manager and when I refused, the first thing this general manager did was to send me away to a room in the basement with a few people. They cannot take title, as it is a title that is earned by examination. But, even I have the manager title they put me in the basement and have someone do my job upstairs by proxy. I did not have any job not even saw a letter. He did not content with this. Because, as I was suppressed, I was talking about it, and it was heard. How could I not talk? The room they put us was in the basement. It was the place of driver's before. There were a lot of rats!

“Unmanageable deadlines, unmanageable workload” was another mobbing behavior seen in the cases of this study, and it was more expressed by respondents from the private sector. Unmanageable deadlines put a pressure on the employee. When the employee cannot manage to accomplish the task, she is accused of being unsuccessful. When the employee objects and suggests that she needs more time for the task, it is perceived as opposition. This puts a considerable pressure on the employee. Zeynep's example is a striking one.

*Zeynep:*

When the conflicting issues between us increased, he began to disturb my nerves in a systematic way. He began to give me tasks with impossible deadlines. For example once he gave me a document of 40 pages to translate in half working day. I told him that I might need more time. He told me not to give any answers to him in such an imperative mood. He said exactly: “If I say you to do it, it will be done”. In the daytime, there were also other tasks. So I went home and did whatever I can whole night. In the morning, I went to his room, and I told him that I did most of it but still need time to finish. He tore the document and told me that he wanted all of it not a part of it and threw it to the garbage. At that time, I felt so humiliated and desperate.

“To ignore”, “to leave idle” and “delegating degrading works” were also perceived as mobbing behaviors by women employee and they were also more seen public sector. It is necessary to state that, in all of the interviews, it is seen that there is more than one identified behavior in the mobbing process and these may happen

simultaneously. Hilal has been exposed to continuous transfer in the public sector also left idle since December 2007.

*Hilal:*

In 2007, I was dismissed from active duty, and I was subjected to change of places. I was put in prison in a room with eight people sitting together around a table and doing nothing. They did not give telephone, computer etc. You are just going to sit. But, they strictly control your entrance card. Did you come on time? Have you ever been late?

Didem also stated that she was left idle at work. No task was given to her. She also mentioned that although she worked in the private sector, the organization she worked was highly dependent on government bodies and the organization structure somehow operated as if it was a government institution.

*Didem:*

The mobbing towards me was to keep idle my labor force, not to give any job. If I were not writing my thesis now, I had nothing to do. Even if some time they did give some tasks, they did not allow me to prove my self.

Accordingly “to leave idle” can be considered as specific to the public sector. On the other hand, to leave an employee idle in the private sector would be costly. “Delegating degrading works” was also seen as frequent as leaving the employee idle and it occurs in the private sector.

*Selma:*

For example at one time, I returned back from semester holiday and learned that they had taken my fourth and fifth grade classes. They told me that I would enter “writing process course”. You took a teacher like me from her main course and gave her to a supplementary course. Yes, it is a course also but I am capable of doing more. This is a way of telling “I do not want you any more and discard you”. I am one of the most experienced teachers in the school, and they tell me that you will do whatever the other teachers tell you to do.

“Blocking communication with others” and “isolation” were other common behaviors that were derived from the interviews. “Blocking communication with others” was more seen in the private sector, and “isolation” was seen more in the public sector interviewees. “Criticism and insinuation about appearance and/or

private life” and “slander, mudslinging, gossip” were other behaviors derived from the interviews and the first one was observed more in public women employees.

*Nermin:*

It is because I am different from them. I give importance to learn new things. They were trying to demoralize and pasivitize me. Me, always working with something discomforted them. They were always gossiping behind my back. My clothes and my look were always an issue of gossip or sarcasm. The moment I enter the room, I had negative looks on me. Indeed, I understood that those were very bad days when I came here. When I worked in a peaceful place, I understood that those were very bad days. Nobody looks at me. No body gossips about my clothes. Nobody bothers if I work a lot or not. No jealousy. Before, they were making fun of me. “Work work, if you could save the public” they used to say. They think that if you are a hard worker in public you are a fool. You are clever if you do not work. I was surprised when I did not hear such kind of things in my new department.

An interesting observed behavior was “translation (unrelated to work)”. Four of the interviewees mentioned this. Especially all of them stated that the translation was given with unmanageable deadlines, and mostly the document was unrelated to employee’s expertise or scope of work. Eda told:

He gave me a document in French to translate. I told him that I did not know French, but I would have it translated. He told me that he wanted to have the translation made within the office. I stated that there was no one that could do it in the office. He said, “I do not care. Have it translated!” What can I do? I scanned it to my friends who know French and asked them to do it for me. But then, he told me that he did not need it.

The manager does it to put Eda in a difficult position.

Four women from the private sector listed behaviors that were categorized in “exclusion in the workplace, exclusion from meeting and/or workgroups, giving wrong information related to meeting hours”.

*Sinem:*

I have been trying to get involved in the new project since from the beginning. I try to learn something. Other wise, why did I come here? I came here to gain experience. Why I came, what I have been doing? I just entered to public to gain experience. The moment this new project started I told them that I wanted to get involved. She just gave me very simple paper job. She took the

other personnel near her, and they did whatever necessary for the job but excluded me. They did not show me anything or gave any information about the project.

*Eda:*

We were going to have a meeting with a big client. They told me that the meeting was at 11 o'clock. I went to the meeting and learnt that the meeting was at 9 o'clock. I still get goose pumps when I remember. I was so upset and angry.

Other observed behaviors were “talking in an imperative mood”, “leading to mistakes by changing the rules and procedures frequently”, “jokes and insinuation with sexual content”, “continuing to behaviors in spite of court decisions”, “continuous criticism about work” “sarcasm” and “intervention to private life”. An example can be given from Sanem’s case for “leading to mistakes by changing the rules and procedures frequently”.

*Sanem:*

For example, there are some standard texts we use for payments. We had updated these texts recently. Few months later, we had to write one of these texts, and he wanted us to revise the format, which had already been updated recently. It is one of the problems. He continuously changes the way the job done. It is so hard to follow. He gets angry when you make mistakes, but he continuously changes the way the job done. This means that every time you start from the beginning and the possibility to make mistake increase. When you make a mistake, or he thinks that you make a mistake, he accuses of you for being clumsy. He offends you with insulting words. He approves a text one time for a payment. Another time he does not approve the exact, same text prepared for another payment. He sends the text back and forth ten times.

Some of the behaviors above were observed in few cases, but they are worth emphasizing. In three of the interviews, there were attributes to behaviors containing sexual jokes and/or insinuations. In one of them, the manager who mobbed the employee after a while approached the woman as if she were a person that needed protection and made insinuation of a relationship.

*Nermin:*

At last times, the color of the picture changed. He began to be nice, very much nice to me. He saw me as a lonely woman. The conversations started to change. He began to call me on Friday afternoons. He made some insinuations like, “I am going to a course around your district on weekends, and I wondered where



your house was”. Another day he called me to his room and said “I saw you in my dream last night”. Every time he was bringing the subject likewise, and I was pretending not to understand. I knew that every Friday he would call me. Fortunately, I had an offer from another unit, and he could not directly say something.

In another one, first the manager approached the woman in a sexual manner. When she refused, mobbing started.

*Sanem:*

I live mobbing at my current workplace. I lived at my past job also, but it was a bit different. My superior had an interest on me. When he could not get a positive response he started to behave negatively towards me in the workplace. We went to a seminar together and when things did not go as he wished, he started mobbing when we returned back. He suppressed me, excluded me and forced me so that I would do a mistake and he could catch it. He tried to fool me in to some wrong things at work. It ended when he left the institution.

Masculinity is determinant in power relations, and mobbing is not an exception. “Intervention on private life” was observed in two cases from the private sector but some of the behaviors that were categorized under this heading were marginal and unacceptable considering human rights. Deniz and Nalan gave examples of this category.

*Deniz:*

He was calling the administrative department and asking the time that I arrived at work. Indeed, I had never been even five minutes late. The employees who are called auditors were following my employers and me covertly and taking our picture and sending them to upper management with false statements.

*Nalan:*

They put security personnel to lodging building. Okay, we may need security, but the duty of the security is to protect us. But in this case the security personnel were working as a watchdog. What time we entered to lodging, what we were doing in the lodging. So we entered in to such a psychology that we thought that we were continuously observed, continuously. The city was already conservative. We worked a lot. We worked in cold under construction including weekends. There was a five star hotel, and we were going there to relieve tiredness. The next day our manager was counting the people that went to the hotel and even telling who did what drank what. This is my private life. After a while, our psychology broke. We happened to be paranoid. Is there a camera in the lodging, do they spy on us?

Another exceptional and interesting behavior observed in two cases in the research was “continuing to behaviors in spite of court decisions”, and it was observed in the public sector. In Nihal’s case, the court found the transfer decision illegitimate and canceled the action. When she started working she was transferred again in the same way. The institution transferred her again knowing that it was a decision found unjustified by the court. To see that the court decision would not stop the process disappointed her deeply.

*Nihal:*

The court says that the regulation is obvious. Center managers cannot be appointed to province. The rule is clear. I returned back to work. At the same day, they told me that they were sending me again as if they were making fun of me. I told them that it was impossible. “The court decision is obvious. If you do it, you will do something against the law”. They did it again. I won another case again. Now I am on leave and wonder if they will give any job when I return or if they will keep me idle. If they don’t give any job or authority, I will sue them again.

Above, two exceptional cases in the study from public and private sector were given. These two cases give clues to the extent of the mobbing that may go further in both sectors. Both actions resulted in encroachment of rights of the employees but in different ways.

Besides analyzing the mobbing behaviors according to private and public sectors distinction, women’s opinion about the level of prevalence of mobbing in these sectors were questioned. For this reason, I asked the interviewees the question of which sector they perceived the mobbing to be more prevalent. The perception differed between women but this has many variables like experience about the other sector and severity of personal experience. But one thing nearly all of the respondents expressed is the existence of job security in the public sector. Out of 20 interviewees, 12 perceived mobbing to be more prevalent in the private sector. The reason according to interviewees is the lack of job security in the private sector. Sinem is a public employee. Despite her mobbing experience in a public institution, she thinks that mobbing is more prevalent in the private sector.

*Sinem:*

It must be more in the private sector. People see their places as guaranteed at public. You can respond back in public, or you can ask for a transfer. But in the private sector, it is hard unless you secure your position. You can have an unimaginable response back in the private sector if you bring up the fact that you have been experiencing mobbing. It would be hard to struggle and defend your rights. On the other hand, private sector seeks profit. In public, there is not much work to do. Even so, if I consider job security, I assume mobbing will be more in the private sector.

Eda states that mobbing is more prevalent in the private sector but because of fear of losing job, people might not come up as mobbing victims considering their work life afterwards.

*Eda:*

I think it is more in the private sector. No matter what you say, people do not have fear of losing their job in the public sector. In the worst-case scenario, you have your salary in the public sector. People struggle, but at least know that they will not be fired, and they will have their salary anyway. In the private sector, it is a life and death situation. If you get fired, you may not find a job again. You may not have a reference for a job application. Rumors may come out about you. Anything can happen in the private sector. Immoral or unethical does not matter. In the private sector, people may do anything for money.

Interviewees think that no matter what happens, employee preserves the job in the public sector and at least does not have income problem. On the other hand, it is observed that the duration of mobbing is more in the public sector. The fact that the employee does not lose the job increases the intensity of the behaviors. The powerful cannot dismiss the person, but actually makes life miserable. Eight women who think that mobbing is less prevalent in the private sector suggest that the private sector seeks profit and would not probably let mobbing be a problem for the organization.

*Bade:*

I think it is more in the public sector. People in public think that they work for something else. In the private sector, efficiency matters. If you work in the private sector efficiently, they will not want to lose you. But in public, if you work efficiently or not, there is no such concern to lose the personnel. Because no matter you are there or not, public work continues any way. It is the understanding. In public, the superiors choose the personnel that

would listen them and do whatever they want. It is not important that the personnel are hardworking or creative. The personnel are expandable. I think it is more in public. I will never work in public again.

*Songül:*

I think it is more organized and settled in the public sector. It is natural. The power games have so much parameter in public work. Because of this, in every change of government, it is lived. If you are lucky, they do not get to you. But you eventually come across with it, as you go to the upper level. They do it more comfortably and pleasantly as they are used to that culture. They use power. I think in the private sector mobbing is personal, and the intensity depends on the people themselves. At last, private sector demands profit, efficiency. These are measured with numbers. I think it is less in the private sector unless you come across to a sick person.

The observed mobbing behaviors mostly comply with the typology of Leymann's mobbing behaviors. On the other hand, "(continuous) change of workplace and/or unit, reassignment, banishment" and "continuing to behaviors in spite of court decisions" are behaviors that are not found in Leymann's typology of mobbing behaviors. In Turkey, political staffing and recruitment is one of the characteristics of organization structure of public institutions. Actions and behaviors in this direction are perceived as normal in public service, in Turkey. But in cases, where such actions or behaviors are done continuously because the individual is "different" to structuring of organization or has a conflict with the people who have the authority, those actions or behaviors may gain the characteristic of mobbing. This finding highlights the importance of forming a mobbing measurement or identifying mobbing behaviors that are specific to Turkish culture.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE ROLE OF GENDER**

In addition to identifying women's experience of mobbing, this study intended to explore the relationship between gender and mobbing. Is gender a reason for mobbing? I asked the women's perceived reasons for mobbing and categorized them. According to women there are several reasons for mobbing. The declared reasons for mobbing were; being different, being hard working, being honest, having strong personality, political views, perpetrator's personality disorder, insufficiency of the perpetrator in terms of qualifications and personality, to be perceived as threat, personal jealousy and hatred, self aggrandizement, show of strength by an incompetent, lack of institutionalization and enabling organizational structure, way of management, organizational behavior, staffing and gender. Eight of the women suggested that they were exposed to mobbing because of the mobber's personality defects. Three of the women stated that their favorable characteristics such as being hard working and being enthusiastic at the work place created jealousy at the perpetrator. Two of them thought that they were perceived as threat by the perpetrator. Two women declared that it was because of staffing efforts of the ruling party, in the public sector. Three of them mentioned organizational structure, organizational behavior, institutionalization and management style. Only one woman perceived gender as the main reason and only one woman mentioned gender and difference in political views together as a reason of being chosen as a target.

On the other hand, when I asked the interviewees whether being a woman was a factor in any part of the process, nearly all of them stated that it did. In this study, only three women expressed that their gender was not relevant with the process. The other 17 of them suggested that their gender was a factor in the process but gave different justifications for this. I categorized the perceived factors of being a woman into three.

### 5.1. Women as the Mobber

In the first category, few interviewees thought that gender was a factor because the perpetrator was from the same sex and they suggested that women mob women more. As mentioned before, six of the respondents were exposed to mobbing of their woman superiors. Two of them actually think that the gender of their superior mattered. Songül described how mobbing by women differed.

*Songül:*

I was exposed to mobbing of a woman manager. I call this co-wife or sister in law relationship. We have a social code like this. Some women act like a co-wife, and there are other women who show oppressive behaviors like men. Some group of women does mobbing just like men. There is another type of mobbing, which is more like, womanish.

In her case, when her co-worker was appointed as the chief of the hospital she started to show power to reinforce her status. She thinks that when a woman becomes a manager she feels a need to be masculine. On the other hand, she saw woman co-workers act in a different way as a community. They expected her to be a part of their woman talk or feminine outlook. When she did not suit up, they started to show mobbing behaviors like exclusion. She called these behaviors as woman type of mobbing.

Bade also thinks that gender is a factor especially when the victim and the perpetrator are both woman. She states that one may think that working with a woman superior would be easier as they might understand each other better, but in reality, it is not like that.

*Bade:*

The reason was me, being a woman and my superior being a woman. I cannot define it clearly, but I would not prefer to work with woman superior again. Maybe the fact that women are emotional makes thing different.

According to her, women enter in to another type of attitude that includes masculine behaviors with hostility towards other women. She suggested that she would hesitate to work with a woman superior again. Research in the literature on mobbing reported that women more often mob other women and men are more mobbed by

other men. On the other hand, it is seldom that women exclusively mob men. Different power levels of men and women in organizations can explain this. The results of the study support this suggestion. Women who were the perpetrators in the cases of this study were also the superiors. It should not be considered as a result of the social interaction between the same sexes. It is about distribution of power.

## **5.2. Gender as a Factor**

The results in the second category show that women in this research mostly do not perceive gender as a reason for being a target of the mobbing, but perceive it as a factor in experiencing mobbing. This means they do not think that they were selected to be the target of mobbing in the first place because of their gender. Nevertheless, the experience of mobbing was intense when the victim was a woman because of the patriarchal attitudes towards women in general, and it was easier for superior to mob women.

Nihal and Eda were the two women that saw gender as a reason for mobbing. In Eda's case, gender and being secular was together the reason of being exposed to mobbing. She mentioned the difficulty of being a woman in a workplace, which intentionally employed men more than women to exclude women from the workplace. Besides, in her workplace people had a certain religious tendency and being a woman and being not religious in the workplace as the others, made difficult for her to resist the negative behaviors. Moreover, she saw how masculinity performs in the disadvantage of women. Culturally dominant masculinity accepts work as an area that an individual should be aggressive, competent and careerist. Unfortunately, because of socially constructed gender, it is men who are "aggressive, competent and careerist". Eventually women come across with negative behaviors while climbing the career ladder.

*Eda:*

Yes, being a woman is a factor. Especially in societies like Turkey; no matter they say it does not exist; the outlook towards woman is different. Turkish society cannot accept strong and successful woman. Men with this primitive, patriarchal thought does not welcome a woman in a senior position. We had 597 men and 3

women working in the company. You are already different because you are a woman. 65 women were dismissed from workplace...you are a woman. You disturb them with your dress with your appearance and they assume that you cannot [must not] survive in the workplace. They think that woman exaggerates. Women are gossipers. It is easier to walk over woman. It is like this in the whole world. It is very difficult for a woman to find a job again. Especially, if she has reached a certain status. What they call glass ceiling is very true. It exists in the whole world.

Nihal is the other interviewee who indicated that gender was the reason of mobbing towards her. She stated that the ultimate purpose was staffing, but she was unable to understand why she had been chosen. She stated that she had never had a problem in the workplace. When staffing with the new government at that time became apparent, she saw hostile behaviors towards her. She believed that it was because she is a single, divorced woman.

*Nihal:*

Everything was good before. I had never had a problem with my superiors or my personnel before. I have been thinking for three years, and I cannot find another reason besides me being a woman and a divorcee. If it would be about my work, I would know. I do not have anything negative in my employment record. These are all in the lawsuit petition. Even personnel with bad employment record cannot be transferred to provinces according to our regulations.

15 women think that gender is a factor but not the reason to be chosen as a target. Aydan was one of the interviewees who did not think that being a woman was a factor for being chosen as a target. On the other hand, she thinks that the chosen behaviors and the intensity of mobbing was pursued considering she was a woman, and it was done with the assumption that certain things would intimidate woman more.

*Aydan:*

If I were a man, they could have sworn at me. They are that kind of rude people. It was more like a cold war to woman. They swore at men, insulted them and applied disciplinary punishment towards them. For example, they made very bad things to a male friend who grew a beard. He is the one who sued the institution first. It was forbidden to cover one's head according to the regulations but their supporters were covering their heads inside the institution. On the other hand, they were degrading a man because of growing a beard. I do not think that I was targeted for



mobbing because I was a woman. It made a difference when you were a woman in the actual act of mobbing. I think that I was sent to Şırnak because I was a woman and a disabled. Indeed, it is contrary to their ideology of nationalist conservativeness, to send a disabled, alone woman to Şırnak. Probably they thought that I would give up, as I would not prefer to go there alone. If it were a duty, nobody would say anything. But the purpose here was to harm me more. They thought that it would intimidate me, and I would withdraw the lawsuit.

According to Songül, masculinity plays a significant role in the workplace. No matter what is the status of woman in the workplace, men expect certain attributed feminine behaviors from women and harass them based on these expected behavioral patterns.

*Songül:*

Yes [gender is a factor] absolutely. Men find you expendable. They have a secret solidarity pact. Either they see you as a feminine object that should try to pick up them, or if you are not that feminine, see you as a tomboy but again don't accept you in to their environment... Before another manager comes to duty, some people see the authority gap as an opportunity to harass you. They sit in your room. They want you to beg to them to ease the situation. I saw the disadvantage of being a woman in those cases. They try to impose you to cry and beg, do things that will flatter their masculinity. In the public sector, there is not working on the weekend. He calls you on the weekend to discuss something, make you wait for an hour. You wait in stress and then tell you that there is no need to have a meeting. Here, he uses the harassing behavior of being a man.

Gözde also experienced the difference of being a woman over the differed reactions of men and women to mobbing behaviors. According to her, men being more aggressive enabled them to react certain negative behaviors more than women. Besides, she observed the masculine male point of view towards women's taking place in the labor force. Her fiancé suggested her not to work after what she had lived through. According to him after all she might not be suitable for working as she was sensitive and fragile.

*Gözde:*

Yes, I think it [gender] is a factor. I also think that women mob women more. I don't know exactly if it is about being a woman, but they did it on me more easily. It can be because women are more sensitive. For example, they made me serve tea, and I did not make it a problem very much. But when they asked it to a male

colleague he resisted it aggressively. Even the dispute turned in to a psychical fight. At last I cannot do that. I may grumble about it, but at last I will do it. Maybe it is about my personality. But being a woman is also significant in other things. For example, your fiancé could tell you not to work or suggest that you might not be suitable for work life. After all, you are a woman. It is okay, if you do not work! I think in the very deep, it is this perspective.

According to Didem, job segregation by sex plays an important role in mobbing towards women in the workplace. She pointed out the difficulty to be a woman engineer in the workplace and mentioned about embedded gender stereotypes in the sector.

*Didem:*

There is such a prejudice. A beautiful and well-groomed lady cannot be smart. She cannot think. Especially the stereotypes towards women in the engineering sector are known. You cannot find woman manager in our sector. Of course, this reflects to attitudes and behavior in the workplace. There is definitely gender discrimination here. My case can be evaluated as such.

Nalan is working in the education sector, which is a female dominated occupation. In her case, the school management warned the teachers not to invite any male guests to the lodgings. In the interview, she stated that it would not be the case for a man.

*Nalan:*

Our job is a female dominated occupation. But yes, I think that gender is a factor. There was a humiliation. They looked at us differently. They told us to go to a hotel and do whatever we want. It was very degrading for me to someone to be a guard of my purity. I think it is both humiliating and degrading. If we were man, nobody would tell us the time to go out or enter to lodging. In my opinion, the fact that we were women, mattered definitely.

Nermin pointed out the difficulty of being a woman in a possible court case related to mobbing where prejudices towards woman in the society may reflect to the court cases, which could be devastating for her.

*Nermin:*

I did not have any knowledge about the law that could have protected me. Even If I knew, I do not know if I would have the courage. You have to be prepared mentally and emotionally to struggle. Especially in our society a struggle between man and woman could end up using certain things against woman. This will wear down the woman. They can easily say: "Why is it [done to]

her only? She is a woman. She must have done something. Even If I learned the law, I am not sure that I will take that way to struggle.

In this study, in some cases, it is seen that male supervisors harassed women using sexual innuendoes jokes and using degrading words about women over work. In Sanem's case, it was apparent. The supervisor covertly have discriminated between men and women and behaved to women as if they were the inferiors. Sanem perceived the reason of being targeted to mobbing behaviors of her manager as personality disorder of her superior and jealousy, but added that the content of the behaviors were fully sexist.

*Sanem:*

Especially our deputy head of the department was sexist. According to him, you are a woman, your capacity is apparent. Of course, he does not say it explicitly, but you perceive it from his behaviors and attitudes. One day he told me: "You know every day how to dress up like this and come to work but, you can not do a single task". It was not true of course. According to him, as you are a woman, you just know how to dress and how to look pretty. Because you are feminine, you are just capable of doing things that the society find proper for you to do. Other wise you don't understand about work. You are a woman. You just know how to fancy up. Besides, this guy does not act to men as he does to me. Alper [a co-worker] is a decent guy, but I am also decent. I never disrespect him. On the other hand, I am a university graduate. I am more competent to articulate what I know and learn than men in my unit. But, Alper never lived what I live. Yes, he is also rude to men, but I never see him treat a man like he treated to me. They did not live what I have been living. It is also like this in other units. He treats differently to man than woman doing the exact job in that unit. Even, his calling on the phone differs between man and woman. For example, he asks Alper to see him in his room but always uses a tone of command to me.

Nilüfer was exposed to mobbing of her superior. She worked in a local government body as the psychologist of women's shelter. She saw the main reason of mobbing as the incompetency of her superior as he was before a driver in the institution but appointed as a deputy head after the last local elections. At the time of the interviews, she stated that the mobbing slowed down with the interference of some people. Unfortunately, couple months after the interview she called and stated that her labor contract was canceled.

*Nilüfer:*

If I were a man would he do it? Yes, probably he would. But, the method and the level of violence would be different. When you are a woman, there is a lot of material. Your hair, your look your appearance. They can put pressure over these. Anyway he is a person who wants to close a women's shelter. You can imagine the standpoint of a guy like this. He has such a patriarchal standpoint. Working! Woman should stay at home.

### **5.3. The Gender Roles of Women**

The third and the last category suggest that women live the process differently than men especially because of their gender roles. In Turkey, like in all patriarchal societies, housework and childcare are perceived as to be the work of the women. No matter the reasons are, when women are exposed to mobbing and even they are severely affected, they still carry this double burden on their shoulders. Below there are two examples from this study, which present the difficulties for women to struggle with mobbing at work and to continue to their gender roles at home.

*Selma:*

You work at home and at work. It does not matter how deep you are in depression. You have to do shopping, prepare food. If you have a child, you do not have a chance to do anything. You do not have right to abandon your duties, as you are a woman. It does not matter if you are educated or not. Whole load of the house is on yours. Working is difficult for Turkish woman. When the house and family work are perceived as woman's job, it is impossible for woman not to wear down.

*Elif:*

I think it [gender] is a factor...As a woman, you experience it differently. For example if my husband had the same kind of problem like this, he would be out of the house dealing with it with lawyers till midnight. But, it is not like this for me. I have to go home until six o'clock because I have a little child and I have to take care of her. It is not just a factor to be a target, but it differs to be a woman in all phases.

Linked to this category, Berrin's case shows how motherhood is used as leverage in workplace against women.

*Berrin:*

If I were a man, he would hesitate. Some arguments were done just because I was a woman and a mother. He was telling it explicitly without hesitating. Once he told: “Two of them are having the same salary; one of them working till nine the other is going to home because she has a child”. Indeed I was working until 19.30, but I was finishing my work. He started the rumor that my child was getting sick all the time and that I lost my concentration. It was not true at all, except I had a child. For one thing, if I were a man he could not say such things. When you are a woman it is justifiable. People would believe him if he had made up things, like I was calling home constantly to control my baby. If he says something like this, how you will prove the opposite. Being a woman, gave him leverage.

Zeynep’s case is another example in this category and indeed it reflects the mobbing experience of women clearly. She was exposed to mobbing of her superior because of her honest personality and resistance to illegitimate actions in the work place. The intensity of the behaviors was attributed to the psychopathic personality of the perpetrator. They were two friends, she and a male friend who were exposed to mobbing. They resigned together. She thinks that the behaviors that were shown to her were much more intense from the male friend’s case. Also, she pointed out the difficulty for a woman to stay in the labor market. Besides, her husband’s attitudes changed when she was unemployed. She experienced it differently as a woman.

*Zeynep:*

Yes, I think [gender is a factor]. I do not think I was targeted because I was a woman as we were two employees who were targeted, and the other was a man. But the negative behaviors towards me differed from his case. To begin with, I think because I was a woman and a mother he thought that some behaviors implicitly would affect me. I never said something or made an excuse about my daughter. We were working late. I never made an excuse about my child or private life. I worked late like them. At that time, my mother supported me very much and looked after my baby because she refrained from people’s false accusations about my detachment to my baby. She told me: “I will look after your baby. Do not ever mention anything and work as much as you have to”. For example, we have a meeting at night. He turns to me and says: “I think Zeynep will not prefer to attend to the meeting as she has a baby waiting for her at home” He was sarcastic. He was meaner to me. Not just his mobbing towards me; but I felt the difficulty of being a woman in every phase of the process. My friend with whom, we resigned together, found a new job immediately, but I could not find a job for a certain period of time.

In every interview, they asked if I were married and if I had a child. It is always difficult to be a woman in work life. Also, when I was at home unemployed, attitudes of my husband changed. Before when we were both working, we used to prepare meal together, and take care of the home together. When I was at home unemployed, I was depressed. I was not doing anything. My husband began constantly criticizing me of staying at home and doing nothing. These made me turn into my self more. It was a vicious cycle that I have been in to.

## CHAPTER VI

### STRATEGIES: REACT, COPE WITH OR EXIT?

This chapter presents the analysis of the reactions and strategies of women against mobbing behaviors. Before analyzing the reactions and strategies of women against mobbing behaviors, we should look at how the mobbing ended or did it end at all? As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, Leymann's definition of mobbing is taken as reference. In the definition, the frequency and duration are the two important factors to define mobbing. According to Leymann, duration of behaviors must be at least six months and the frequency must be at least one week to be considered as mobbing. The duration of the mobbing towards the victims in this study is given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Durations of Mobbing Cases**

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Interview</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>1</b>	Private	2 years	<b>11</b>	Private	7 month
<b>2</b>	Public	4 years	<b>12</b>	Private	5 years
<b>3</b>	Public	1 year	<b>13</b>	Public	8 months
<b>4</b>	Public	8 years	<b>14</b>	Public	2.5 years
<b>5</b>	Private	1.5 years	<b>15</b>	Private	1.5 years
<b>6</b>	Private	1 year	<b>16</b>	Private	3 years
<b>7</b>	Public	4 years	<b>17</b>	Public	14 years
<b>8</b>	Public	8 month	<b>18</b>	Private	4 month
<b>9</b>	Public	3 years	<b>19</b>	Public	16 years
<b>10</b>	Private	1 year	<b>20</b>	Public	5 years

Table 2 shows that duration of mobbing was longer in the cases of public sector employees. In the private sector, the duration of mobbing towards the victims of the study differed between four months and five years with frequencies of at least once a week. The case that lasted five years was Aydan's case. It is crucial to state that Aydan's institution was formerly a public institution, which was later privatized and therefore, carries characteristics of public organizations. The duration of mobbing towards public sector employees differ between eight months and 16 years. One of the shortest durations belong to a case which the organization was a public institution, but the employee was contracted personnel, and was subject to labor law which had lower protection in terms of job security. The other eight-month duration was the case of Elif. Elif was exposed to mobbing for eight months but stated that she had been exposed to mobbing of her chief before which lasted longer. Also, there were unusually long durations like 14 years and 16 years. In these cases mobbing was a process, which lasted very long and included different behaviors with different durations and frequencies overtime.

The women in the study had different reactions and strategies towards the behaviors that they faced. These cannot be explored without considering how mobbing resulted. In this research, five of the interviewees stated that they resigned because of mobbing. Four women's labor contract was canceled, four of them ended mobbing with the request of transfer to another unit/workplace, two women demanded their retirement and mobbing towards four women still continues. Mobbing towards one interviewee ended because the superior became a manager of another unit. In other words out of 20 victims, 11 women lost their job one way or the other and four of them still live it. Only five women survived from mobbing without losing their job.

The strategies of women against mobbing behaviors were analyzed in three categories: ways of struggling within the organization, searching for legal support and individual ways of coping with these behaviors and effects of them.

### **6.1. Strategies within the Organization**

In the first category, it is seen that women when they came across to mobbing tried to do something inside the organization. Some confronted the mobber, some of them



applied to human resource management but usually victims perceived seeking support in organization, as a useless effort as they did not believe that they could reach a result that would be in their favor. Most of the interviewees stipulated the same sentence. “Whom do you complain about whom?” In some cases, interviewees did not want to apply for a complaint inside the organization, as they believed that the organization would not be objective and would take the side of the manager. In other cases, it is seen that upper management did not have any idea of the situation and could not interfere. Moreover, in some cases, organizations were the mobber or upper management ignored the situation or even took the side of the mobber. Also, there were cases where the mobbing accelerated when a formal complaint was issued.

Eda was exposed to mobbing of her superior and co-workers. She once tried to make a complaint but faced with an organizational resistance.

*Eda:*

Once, I tried to make a complaint inside the company. Whom to complain about whom? They were already organized. One day, the big boss came. He asked me if I were happy to work in here, in this city. I said that I had different treatment, for example, my salary was delayed on purpose. He was surprised. He told me it was impossible. All the employees were getting their salary at the beginning of the month. I told him that this was not the case for me. I told him that I could prove it. He checked it. The money was coming from the headquarters but at my branch, the finance manager would not write the payment order at the time. He caused it to be delayed on purpose. At that time, I understood that the boss did not know about the situation.

Didem prepared a dossier and applied to human resource management department. At first they listened to her and offered some solutions like changing the department. In the meeting, Didem pointed out the legal consequences of mobbing. According to her, the department perceived this as a threat. They invited her to a second meeting, which lasted two hours with the attendance of the lawyers of the firm. She stated that it was a unusually irritating meeting and actually they intimidated her. After these meetings mobbing slowed down but her manager cut the relationship with her and she was left idle with no job at hand.

*Didem:*

For now, it seems that the behaviors have stopped, but still I cannot see the future clearly. Now I am working for my thesis. If they will continue to keep me idle, after I complete the thesis I will look for another job and leave the company. I have played my entire cards, and they stopped negative behaviors but who knows. They stopped because if I open a lawsuit it will be a bad image for the company. The company is in a growth process, and they will not like a case that will destroy their image. In fact, I am still afraid because they can come down on me. I see my self as the winner now but as a matter of fact I am a bad example for them. They do not behave negatively in direct, but they isolate me now. In my opinion, it is the calm before the storm.

After a while from the interviews Didem was fired. Elif is an example of victims who confronted to mobber. Unfortunately, things have become worse after her action. Elif was exposed to mobbing of her chief, and her chief asked for a defense for a machine defect, which was under her responsibility. She explained what she lived.

*Elif:*

She determined some defects in the laboratory equipments and asked for a written defense. At that time, I was reading about mobbing. Some mails came to me from victim groups. The mails included suggestions on the ways of protection from mobbing behaviors. The first and most given suggestion were to prove the incidents and have all the proofs in written. The second one was to warn the mobber, tell him/her that I was aware of the situation, and this was a mobbing. I wrote a real long defense including the change of her behaviors towards me. I wrote that I was withdrawn from the working group on her will, and she sent another person instead of me. I wrote that she yelled at me and insulted me because I gave permission to personnel as the deputy chief. I summarized all the behaviors done towards me. She got the defense and I heard her screaming and yelling from her room. She made a complaint to chief physician after my defense. Chief physician sent me an official letter requesting justification of my insulting behavior to my chief! I answered to the chief physician, attached the defense letter to it and described the situation once again. I thought that I was applying to the necessary place. Everything would be official. 15 days later, the answer came from the chief physician and I was found guilty. The interesting thing, I was found guilty on three topics. The initial requested defense was for “not informing the defect of the machine”. But, the penalty came on three topics. 1. You did not inform the department about the machine breakdown. 2. You gave permission to your personnel without the knowledge of your chief. 3. The inconveniences in the

procurement issues. The third one was entirely made up. Which procurement? There was no date, no request form, nothing. This time I went to a friend of mine who was a lawyer. We wrote another defense more in a formal way. They again wrote that they did not accept my defense and issued a warning. I wrote to chief physician again but they did not accept my application. This was a dead end.

Elif thought that she could not stand to these behaviors any longer and asked for a temporary transfer to another hospital in Ankara.

The category of seeking support within organization also included relations with the co-workers. Sometimes witnesses kept silent to the mobbing, as they did not want to be a part of the problem and sometimes they contributed to the process with standing next to the powerful which was usually the mobber. Few took action near the victim, but such kind of official support from the co-workers was limited except in the case where the targets were a group. Otherwise, support from co-workers, if existed, was personal, like listening the victim and sharing their feelings. The lack of support and exclusion by co-workers created one of the worst effects on the victims. Some victims perceived this as a justification to blame themselves for mobbing. This contributed to loss of self-confidence. In this study, nine women stated that they could not get any support from the co-workers and in some of the cases co-workers contributed to the process. 11 women stated that they got support from co-workers. Nine out of eleven was emotional support sincerely done from hearts but did not get in to action against the process or the mobber. In one case, co-workers confronted the mobber about the unjustified and inappropriate behaviors against their friend. In another one, support came from the co-workers, but they were victims as a group and supported all each other. It is observed that generally it was difficult for women to seize actual support from co-workers. Elif described the behaviors of her friends at work.

*Elif:*

My friends at work did not support me by staying away from me. They did not declare that they agreed with me, and they were against the victimization. I can understand that. But they could not even come near me. They could not ask me for diagnosis. They disappeared from anyplace that I have been, in case that the chief could see them. They even stopped greetings. So, I closed my self in my room. I was not going near them so that they did not get any

harm. Then I entered in to a bad mood. I thought that I could be wrong, seeing that nobody supported me. It was not like this eight years before. We had this kind of situation but resisted all together. I began to look for the mistake in myself. Before, they were near me. Now, they are not. I thought that the right thing to do was to leave the place.

Many of the interviewees reported this kind of behaviors from their co-workers. In some of them, the interviewee knew that co-workers believed in her but treated in this way because they were afraid. In some cases, like Elif's, the victim interpreted the behaviors of her co-workers as if they have not believed in her or questioned as if she may be mistaken. Leymann suggests that it is "secondary mobbing" (Leymann, 1990). Elif felt that way and demanded transfer to another hospital.

Nursen's friends at work told her that they found her right but they did not want mobber to get involved with them.

*Nursen:*

They told me: "we know you are right, but we do not want to get involved". They told me that they wanted to stand next to me but stated that they were not strong as I was. When we were alone, they told me not to give up. But she was very influential. She placed personnel that would carry words to her, in every room. Just like an informant. Some day a friend from a different department came to visit me. She was superior to me. She asked me how I was handling. I told her that I tried not to give up. My superior's work time would end eventually, and she would leave. Then at the weekend, this friend called me. She told me that my superior called her superior and told everything we spoke to each other word by word. She told me that her superior told her not to see me anymore. She stated that she was with me, but she does not want to be seen with me because she could be the target of harassment her self. They sent people away from me like in this case. In my department, they told me not to follow this issue [mobbing] anymore so that I would not go through the winger. It was a threat. I told them that I did not want stay in this chair and had this title if I did not do my job or use my authority. I am very sad. The friend who called me was also transferred.

Among the negative behaviors, victims encountered isolation and exclusion by co-workers, which negatively affected victims like Hülya:

In the past, I had a lot of friends who came and visited me regularly at my room. After relegated to Gölbaşı and turned back, nobody has stopped by since. They do not even come to celebrate

the religious holidays. They are afraid. They do not want to be seen as a side.

Songül gave an example of attitudes of coworkers who became a part of the process in the workplace in the case of political mobbing.

*Songül:*

It became very severe with the ruling party period. They were truly determined as until then they were the oppressed group. It was very unpleasant. I saw that during this time, old friends changed their behaviors when the powerful side changed. Even their walk in the corridor changed. I was not a chief physician anymore, and they showed their pleasure about this in every occasion. They showed that they were on the powerful side. People divide in to two at that time. Some act near the powerful, some see you defenseless and enter in to strange behaviors. In my opinion, the behaviors of these two are also mobbing.

## **6.2. Looking for Legal Support**

The second category of strategies of women against mobbing was seeking legal help. First of all, seeking legal help was found to be in close relation with the awareness level of the victim and the victims' knowledge concerning ways of application to law for their suffering. Most of the interviewees in this research stated that they have not been aware of mobbing and what they have lived through was a definable phenomenon until recently. Most of them realized that they were not the only ones who suffered from mobbing with the new developments and recognition of mobbing in Turkey. Most reactions included the phrase: "When I looked at the internet for mobbing, I saw that the written things were describing me exactly. Learning that I was not the only one. made a relief on me.

There is a difference between women considering knowledge of legal aspects of mobbing and taking action against it legally. 10 of women in this study did not have any kind of knowledge on possible legal actions against mobbing. The other 10 women know that there is no specific law about mobbing and know other laws to struggle with it, but some of them learnt about it after they have lost their job. Five women applied to the legal system, and they opened cases related to cancellation of administrative affairs, transfer to former public institution and discrimination. All of the interviewees that took action were the public employees. A respondent from the

private sector opened a lawsuit against her institution, not about mobbing, as there is no specific mobbing law but to demand indemnity for former rights, which were not pursued. It is seen that public women employees were more in knowledge of their rights as employees, and they had the opportunity and courage to take action when they are in employment. On the other hand, private sector women employees sought or considered having legal support when their labor contracts were cancelled. The difference of private and public sector in terms of job security plays a significance role in this. Moreover, having legal support means considerable effort in terms of financially and emotionally. Especially women pointed out the difficulty of struggle with something in law in front of Turkish courts where that struggle it self can wear down the individual. Most of the interviewees do not trust the legal system, and they do not have the energy to endure long legal struggle after what they have lived through. Nilüfer is one of them.

*Nilüfer:*

I consulted to a lawyer. He has mentioned that the cases related to mobbing were difficult and resulted in a long time. I do not trust the legal system in Turkey. I have been following the cases of women in the shelter. Because of the cases I saw, I do not trust the legal system in Turkey. Besides, my psychology was not good, and I could not give energy to it. I did not have any hope when I saw those cases in the shelter so closely.

### **6.3. Individual Strategies**

In the study, it is observed that when women did not prefer or could not get a support within the organization or legal system, or they did not want to get psychological help; they tried to do things themselves to get rid of the negative effects of the stressful situation. They found and used different ways to cope with the behaviors and its effects using individual strategies. Otherwise, the ultimate strategy was to leave the workplace/organization.

#### **6.3.1. Coping with the Situation**

Sometimes the victims did things like going to yoga classes and meditation in order to lessen the effects of the mobbing.

*Didem:*

I attended to mediation seminars to get rid of its consequences. Now I am better. It had very damaging effects on me. I was very bad in November and December. After two months, I started meditation. I am curious on things about self-improvement. I tried to cope in this way. Otherwise, I was going to lose my mental health.

Berrin, Nihal and Hülya looked for other ways to relax before actually applying for a psychological help. These women stated that they were in need of psychological help but they tried to overcome it individually first.

*Berrin:*

I was joining to yoga class regularly. I was talking with my yoga teacher. I thought of going to a psychiatrist but thought that if I found a new job, I would leave the firm and those bad days would end immediately. I was taking sleeping pills at night and depression medicines in the daytime.

In some cases, individual strategies were not enough for the victims and the victims applied for professional support eventually.

*Nihal:*

I have been attending to Turkish folk music chorus for five years. This is a therapy for me. I love it very much. It makes me comfortable and relaxed. Also, I do mountain climbing. I was searching for something to hold on. At last I went to a psychiatrist. I was so bad because they did not change their action although I won the lawsuit. The moment the doctor saw me he gave me a report.

*Hülya:*

Before considering taking medicines, I started to chorus of folk music. It was just to cope with it by myself. I was interested in Reiki. It is a kind of therapy. There is nothing worse than being kept idle and isolated.

Some of the victims used frequent leave of absence or took medical reports to overcome the negative behaviors. Nermin stated that she sought every opportunity to stay away from the workplace. If she did not get offer from another unit, she was considering demanding retirement.

*Nermin:*

Every word I spoke, my movements, my clothes were a problem for them. I was left alone. When you came across with such behaviors, you withdraw yourself. When you withdraw yourself, they increase their behaviors. Then you withdraw yourself in to your shell. It is such a vicious circle. When I entered in to the room, I immediately felt the negative electricity against me. I was crying a lot, sleeping a lot. I wanted to use leave of absence in every opportunity. We had hourly leaves. When they sum up they were deducted from my yearly leave. Nearly I spent all my leaves with the summation of hourly leaves. I was following every opportunity to get permission for a leave. I could not stand to be in that building.

In the study, it is seen that when women could not manage to overcome the situation and effected severely they applied for psychological help. Out of 20 interviewees 7 women had actual psychiatric treatment because of mobbing.

Aydan was relegated to Şırnak for three months. She applied for psychiatric treatment after what she had been through. She had started having depression treatment before she was relegated to the east side of Turkey. When she went there, she did her best to survive.

*Aydan:*

I had depression treatment, and I was on medication. Those were very tough times for me. But I thought that I should perceive this as a time off and decide to spend it with as less damage as I could get. I induced my self not to lose my self-control. In fact, I did it a little. I tried to make good connections with the local people. I tried to repair my self and did it with forcing my self because I was depressed. It was very difficult for me to force my self to stand still.

The actual number of women applied to a doctor is eleven. All of them were diagnosed with major stress in the workplace. Seven women had psychiatric treatment but the others did not accept medical treatment because they were against taking medicine.

Besides, a common attitude among the women was hesitation to go to a psychiatrist. Some interviewees stated that they were afraid to go to a doctor and have a report, which would indeed give them some time off. Their common perception was the potential of the mobbers to use the reports against them. According to interviewees



the mobbers could have suggested that mobbing occurred because these women were mentally sick. They were afraid to be in a position where they would have to struggle to prove that their mental health was not a cause of mobbing but was damaged because of mobbing. Nursen did not want to take a report but tried different ways to get rid of the stress.

*Nursen:*

At past, if I was doing 10-kilo work now I could manage to do half of it after these events. At last I have burned out. I had sleep disorders. Before, I got a fine sleep in 4 or 5 hours, later I had started to sleep less and with a lower quality. My family supported me a lot. I started to do sports. I have been going to sports every day. I go to Psychodrama. I take support from these kinds of things. I saw a psychologist. She told me that I was under severe mobbing, and she could have given me a report. Frankly speaking, I did not want to take that report. If I took that report, she would be the winner. She could have said that I was already mentally unbalanced. Look! She already got a report. If I did not get this support from my family and friends, my psychology would probably collapse.

### **6.3.2. Leaving the Organization**

An important finding of the study is the ultimate action of the victims. When women in this study could not overcome the situation after several strategies within the organization or outside the organization, ultimate strategy was to exit from the workplace/organization. Depending on the sector, the age of the victim, occupation and economic conditions of women, possibility of exit varies. Women in this study either resigned from work, demanded transfer and/or demanded retirement depending on the sector.

The ones who could not do any of them were fired or stayed and got exposed to mobbing for a long time. Especially in this case also in other cases whether at work or after exit, victims were negatively affected from mobbing, which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **EFFECTS OF MOBBING ON WOMEN**

In the previous two chapters, mobbing behaviors towards women, the role of gender in mobbing and strategies of women against mobbing were demonstrated in the light of results of this study. This chapter analyzes the effects of mobbing on women. In this study, the effects of mobbing on women are categorized in to three: The effects on women's health, effects on women's social relations and effects on the organization and the society.

In this study, findings show that mobbing has serious consequences for women, and it is victims who pay the highest cost. As mentioned in the previous chapter, out of 20 victims, 11 lost their job one way or the other, and four of them still live it. Although five victims do not live it anymore, they still carry the negative effects of mobbing. Mobbing leads to economic and occupational loss. It results in health problems, social exclusion and even suicide thought. Besides victims, family members are also negatively affected from the situation.

#### **7.1. Effects of Mobbing on Individual's Health and Well-Being**

According to the interviews in this study, women are negatively affected from the process psychologically and physically. In research, women reported lowered job satisfaction, lowered motivation, low self esteem, depression, anger, self-hatred, fatigue, chronic headaches, hair loss, psychosomatic illnesses, sleeping problems, perceptual disorder, gastric problems, continuous crying, blood pressure problems, rhythm disorder and neck stiffness as effects of mobbing concerning health and well being. One of the reasons that mobbing had severe effects on interviewees' health, was the damage it made on victims' self-esteem. Nearly all women stated about the unhappiness and misery that they had experienced. Eda, Elif, Aydan, Deniz, Hülya, Ahsen and Nihal had psychiatric treatment because of mobbing effects. Besides psychological problems, interviewees were also affected physically. Especially in

severe types of mobbing cases, which had long durations, mobbing victims encountered many problems in their health. Eda stated that it took along time for her to realize that mobbing affected her health.

*Eda:*

I had stomach bleeding two times. I have never had blood pressure problems before, but my blood pressure increased to 22. I started to wander as if I was dead, because I could not sleep. Sleeping ended for me. When you cannot sleep, your nervous system collapses, you lose your concentration and your eating order changes. My metabolism stopped. I did not sleep. I did not eat. I was like a corpse. This happened in a long period of time but hit me so badly in last seven months. When I realized what happened to me, I was already fired. I was hiding under blankets at home but did not realize that it was a systematic thing against me. I did not realize it in my daily struggle. If I knew it before, I would take medical support from the first day.

Gözde faced with mobbing in her first job. She thinks that she was harassed because she was young and more competent than her superiors as she was a university graduate. To meet with mobbing at her first job made her very pessimistic about work life. She had problems based on stress.

*Gözde:*

I was crying all the time. I was constantly unhappy. I was like in a depression. Your shoulders are collapsing. You feel like you have burned out. I was thinking life is over, life is a misery. Why do I work? My salary was very low. I had discomforts based on stress. I had a disease on my neck, which made me dizzy. It is because of stress. It increased a lot at that time. My blood pressure was low. I was sick in bed because of stress. I felt like I was sick of living. I thought that everything ended, and I would have a very unhappy life in front of me. I was very pessimistic about work life. I lost my self-confidence.

Common seen among the interviewees were to turn to themselves, as if they were mistaken. When they could not find a meaningful explanation to their victimization, they asked themselves if they could be the mistaken ones. What is seen from the interviews is this phase of the process was devastating. With the loss of self-confidence, victim's psychology no longer handles the situation.

*Sinem:*

It affected me a lot of course! I felt so insecure and so weak. I started to take anti depression medicines. I could not stand

anything. I was constantly taking leave of absence. Once in a week, sometimes twice in a week. Because, I did not want to be in that environment. To live something over and over again every day, is fatal. I come to work I do nothing [because they will not let me do]. Then I tell my self why do I come to work? On the other hand, I want to work and be useful, be productive. It is very hard, but it is not up to me. In fact, I am stubborn at my private life. But this is a workplace. I do not show resistance. But after a while, I started to look for the mistake in my self. I thought that I was useless, and I could not accomplish anything. I started to blame myself at the end. I thought that if I go to another workplace I would live the same again as I was not a successful person. I was always sick. I had unreasonable fevers. It damages your personality. Once, I went for a job interview. I was waiting for the person across me, to tell me that I was useless. Can you imagine to what extent I have lost my self-confidence?

Sinem lived these after four years of isolation in the workplace. Her superior was transferred as a result of management change in the institution. Now, she is hopeful and happy for the first time in a workplace. Unfortunately, this is not the case for every mobbing victim. Elif had to demand a temporary change because of the breakdown of her psychology as a result of mobbing in her workplace, which she had worked for 18 years. In the past, she had been mobbing victim at the same workplace but at that time she managed to stop the process all together with her friends. This time she was the only target, and nobody stood next to her. In this study, she was the only interviewee mentioned about having suicidal thought.

*Elif:*

I was crying, and I was depressed. It also affected my relations at home. I thought that I should not go further to struggle with it as life was more important. But my psychology was not fit. I thought that maybe I was mistaken, and I should go from this institution. Before, my friends supported me, but this time they did not give me any support, so I should have been the mistaken one. I thought of committing suicide. My psychiatrist diagnosed me with major depression. At home, I was always crying. When my application of temporary transfer was put in effect, I took leave of absence. I could have taken a psychiatric report, but I did not want it to be taken as leverage by her. She could have used it against me. I tried to heal my self. I tried to turn back to living. Nonetheless, I checked in to a psychiatric clinic of my workplace, in case I would need to prove that I ended up in this situation and took a leave of absence because of workplace mobbing. I just made an entrance. In fact, I had been crying for two days, and I thought of going to see for a consult and ask if they could stop this crying. I went to another clinic, which is at the other side of the city, learned that it

has a doctor who was experienced about mobbing cases. I went to see that doctor. She told me that I was in a major depression.

Many women expressed the effect of mobbing on their self-confidence in the interviews. Mobbing creates loss of self-confidence. Sanem started to work in a public institution. She was appointed to a department that she would not want to work in. She requested transfer from the management. From that time, her superiors blocked her every chance to be transferred and mobbed her by giving the most degrading jobs, humiliating her and insulting her. Sanem felt very embarrassed because of losing her self-confidence:

*Sanem:*

My self-confidence decreased to zero. You work and work and work but got humiliated all the time. At one moment, I believed that I was idiot and feckless. I was hopeless also. I acknowledged that I would never leave that department. I was trying to learn the work but thought that I was not going to succeed it. They insulted me, humiliated me in every chance. I hated my self because I was not giving proper response to those behaviors. I was crying all the time. I did not have any pleasure from life. I was incredibly unhappy. I did not want to get out of the house or meet with my friends. My family and my friends were trying to get me out of the house on weekends. When I went to vacation, I was just sleeping all day. When he called me to his office, I was out of breath. My hands and my knees were shaking. I could not talk, or I could not react. I felt so servile.

One of the reasons that interviewees were affected from the mobbing so badly was the possibility and outcomes of losing a job. Zeynep is an example. She had to resign from the job she loved and beyond the consequences of losing a job, she had serious health problems based on stress. She also saw the effects of this experience in her other jobs because she was so anxious because of the possibility of experiencing the same thing in another workplace.

*Zeynep:*

Mobbing had seriously negative consequences for me. I had terrible eight months. Because of what I lived through and being unemployed afterwards I had depression. I did not have diagnosis, but I knew that I was having depression. I was feeling sick in bed all day. I did not do anything about home although I was at home all day. I felt terribly worthless. I felt that I was an unsuccessful person. It took a long time to get rid of these feelings. I found some

exertion so that I could feel myself productive. I started to work in a civil society organization voluntarily. I tried to do some independent jobs. Unemployment and to be bounded to someone economically, made me demoralized. I had been working since graduation from the university. It was the worst period in my life. It was very difficult to resign from a job that I enjoyed. I lost my self confidence. After a while, I started to apply for new jobs. In the interviews, I was so insecure and so anxious that I could not believe that it was my self. I cannot forget the first day I started my current job. My heart was going to pop out of my chest. I was so afraid that I would be exposed to the same kind of behaviors here. It took 1.5 years for me to get rid of these feelings. In those two years of unemployment, I had sleeping problems. I could not sleep at nights and could not get out of the bed in daytime. I had blood pressure problems. I went to a doctor, and it turned out I have had heart rhythm problem. I have been taking medication for three years now. My doctor told me that I should stay away from the stress. I have migraine. In those months, migraine attacks came very frequently and lasted up to 6 days. Now I rarely have migraine. When I turn back, I see that those very bad 8 months affected three years of my life.

Ahsen is working in a university and have been exposed to mobbing of her superior for years. She has been affected by mobbing psychologically and has been taking psychiatric treatment. She thinks that the reason of being mobbing is the superior's jealousy of her successful career and her reputation in the academic community and among the students of the university<sup>10</sup>. She has psychosomatic illnesses because of the mobbing, which lasted 19 years.

*Ahsen:*

I have been fighting with this for years. I had psychosomatic illnesses in my fingers because of this. Then, in my feet. My nerves were moving. Imagine I had a bowl, and I had documents inside it for three years. I cannot deal with those documents for these years. Meanwhile, I started anti depression medicines in control of a doctor. I was constantly crying when I was talking about what happened at school. I thought that it passed away. As recently as yesterday, we had a tender at school for a project that I have been working on for years, in spite of whole prevention. They did not

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<sup>10</sup> During the interviews, as an observer I had an idea of the personality of the victims. As started in the interviews, these are the perceptions of victims. It is the observer's role to reflect these perceptions and experiences but not the judge or evaluate the truthiness of the story. In this case, I searched for the interviewee on the internet as she is a well known academician in her field. I came across to comments about her in one of the well-known dictionary websites and the comments were extraordinarily full of love and admire to this lecturer. It is understood that she is really very much loved by her students.

bring a document to tender, and there was a short crisis. I had tears falling down my eye, in front of everyone. I went out, and I was crying sobbingly. Any way, the tender resulted. It means the medicines do not work for me anymore. Maybe it comforts me on daily things but still I cannot stand any bad thing related work. I am all that affected. Now, I am in a state that cannot even handle small missfortunes.

Hülya is another interviewee who has been having psychiatric treatment because of being mobbed for 14 years in the public sector. After kept isolated and idle for years, she had perceptual disorder.

*Hülya:*

I was negatively affected because of the things that I have been living, especially since 2002 with this ruling party. I was a very active person. I had to stop my postgraduate in the middle of writing my thesis. Before, I was working a lot. I used to bring work to home. My kids used to see me working all the time at home. Now, since 2002, I have been doing nothing. What will you do to cope with the situation? Firstly you talk too much. After a while, it does not help because you repeat same things over and over again. After some time, you became stupefied. Since last June, I am at the final stage. I have perceptual disorder. I have started post graduate study, but I live concentration problem. At the past when I open a few books in front of me, I could have written a paragraph with a quick review at books. Now I can just copy and paste. Because, I lost my concentration capability. In time, it turned out to using medication. I have been going to psychiatrist for one year. I told the doctor what I lived through. She determined that I was having a problem because of repetitive stress and started medication. I also have sleeping problems at night. Now, I take two types of medicines. Concentration medicine for daytime, and sleeping medicine for the night.

Nihal had severe effects of mobbing psychologically and physically. Her institution relegated her to provinces couple of times. She opened lawsuits, and won the cases two times, but management continues to keep her idle while waiting for court decision of the current case. She is a divorced woman who has been looking after her son for years. Because of what she has lived she has been in psychiatric treatment.

*Nihal:*

I tried to be strong for my kid. I forced myself to stand still, to be strong, and then I had sickness in my neck. I went to the doctor as cringed. They could not find anything physical that would cause this sickness. I had psychical therapy, but it did not work. After a bunch of consults, doctors stated that it could be psychological.

They gave me anti depression medicines. I pressurized my self and my body reacted at last. I lost my hair. You cannot share this with everyone. You have to be strong, seen strong.... After the court cases, and still not having a solution I went to a psychiatrist. The doctor gave me medical report the moment he saw me. He did not even need to talk with me. He already knew about mobbing. The moment I see the building of my work place I get goose bumps. When the time gets close [to return to work], I get nervous like in a nightmare. I am afraid to come by people in the elevator. What will I tell them? I am not guilty. I did not do anything. I have been wretched because of an action of the management. But they turned me in to a mass. When I entere through that door I feel very bad immediately.

Aydan have been having psychiatric treatment because of the severe mobbing she was exposed. She has been having major depression treatment. She defined going to work as going to execution of the death penalty.

*Aydan:*

After three months, I got psychiatry report. I entered in to depression. I was jumping in my sleep. I had sleeping problems. I started smoking. I started smoking at this age after what I have lived through. I was smoking two packets of cigarette in a day. I started depression medicines immediately because I was very afraid of the jumping in the middle of sleep... It was a very difficult period. In time, with the psychiatric help, I tried to see this three month as a vacation. I tried to travel. I tried to build warm relations with the local people. I tried to repair my self. Indeed, I did a little. But it was not easy. I was in depression treatment, and it was very hard for me. I was forcing my self. And in time, depression increased. I went to two different doctors. I used different medicines. I still use. Although I am retired now, I am still anxious in the mornings and afraid as I was working. Like I was going to work. I feel like going to work is going to execution. I still live it every morning.

Above are the analysis driven from the most severe examples of effects of mobbing on health. Besides, mobbing affects the well being of women through lower job satisfaction and motivation. According to the findings in this study, mobbing affects job satisfaction, productivity and motivation at work. In this study, all of the interviewees showed hardworking characteristics. When they were harassed over work or kept idle, and disabled from working, they became very unhappy and their job satisfaction decreased. It negatively affected the well being of the individual. Aydan felt the unhappiness because of being kept idle as she was very experienced in her field of expertise.



*Aydan:*

But, I just wanted to work. I wanted to work, and be productive in my field. I wanted to feed my social life with having job satisfaction in the workplace. I do not want a title. I do not want money. I just want to work. I want a job that is relevant with my occupation. It is my incontestable right.

In the interviews, women who were exposed to mobbing at the very early stage of their work life, were unhappy as a result of low job satisfaction. Didem stated that it was a disappointment for her to experience mobbing in her first job experience as she dreamt of working differently.

*Didem:*

At last it is demoralizing. You do not get satisfaction in your job. Money is important, but I do not work for money only. I want to work and be productive. I told it in the job interview. I said, "I want to really work here". When they do not give you any task, you become demoralized.

## **7.2. Effects on Social Relationships**

Besides affecting women's mental and physical health, mobbing also affects their social relationships, especially with families. In this study, it is seen that when victims lost their self-confidence as a result of mobbing, this also reflected to their relationships. Interviewees, when they were exposed to mobbing, looked forward to a support from their family. In this research, it is seen that women who got the expected support from their families and close environment were more successful in coping with mobbing. On the other hand, when women could not get support, their relationships were negatively affected from the situation and the damage of the mobbing was worse.

Women in this study stated that their relations with their families and friends and their social life were negatively affected from the situation.

Some of the interviewees stated that they did not reflect their situation to their family. Some of these women are single, and they live alone. The ones that are not married and live with their families also stated that mobbing gave them disturbance in terms of social relations, but their relations with their parents were healthy. Single women living with their family got full support in their situation. Most affected

women were the married ones. On one hand, they were exposed to mobbing at the work place, on the other hand, they tried to be a wife and/ or a mother. Besides their stress and psychological condition, mobbing negatively affected their relationship with their spouse and children.

Common observed problems among women in social relations because of mobbing were; disturbed relations, withdrawal into one's self, problems in communication with spouse and children, reluctance, neglect, being aggressive to spouse and/or children, incapability in childcare and loss of trust to people. A significant disturbance stated by the women who were married was their husbands' attitudes towards them, which included reference to weakness of womanhood. Some spouses criticized their wives for being weak and for not being capable of struggling with their superiors against mobbing. When this type of lack of support and criticism added to the declined self-confidence, victims found themselves in a very bad condition psychologically.

*Eda:*

Yes, [it affected my relation] because my character changed. I was very strong before. Before, I was like a guy. If the tire of my car exploded, I would change it myself. Now, I am afraid of driving the car at night. I asked my husband to take me from work at night. My husband told me that I was cheerful at past, and I have changed. I became intolerable. Of course, it affects marriage. I was no longer the woman who he fell in love with ten years ago. The woman who was dominant, who was successful was gone. A far out sluggish woman came. She stays at home even cannot manage to do house work.

Gözde expressed that she broke up with her fiancé while she was exposed to mobbing. She empathizes with her fiancé and at some point gives right to him. Besides, she thinks that her fiancé looked down at her, as she could not react to superior accordingly. Also, she thinks that the criticism of her fiancé included deeply embedded patriarchal standpoint towards woman. Because when she turned to her fiancé for support he suggested her to stop working because, "she was a woman and women are too sensitive for workplace".

*Gözde:*

It affected my personal life very much. It might be one of the reasons that I broke up with my fiancé. Because, it changes the standpoint of your partner towards you. I also would not want to see my partner in that position. Frankly, I would not want a partner that was continuously depressed, victimized, crying and oppressed. I was embarrassed of my self. How can somebody else tolerate? It should have been boring to talk about the same thing constantly. How can you tolerate a person that is complaining all the time?

Women were affected in their social lives because of mobbing. Most of the interviewees stated that mobbing made them intolerant, reluctant and anti social. Selma described how her behaviors against her family and relatives became aggressive, distant and how she became an anti social person.

*Selma:*

While I was working, I was seriously disconnected from my environment. I moved away from people. I was so afraid that someone would call me on Saturday. I was so afraid that they would call me out. As a family, we are very close to each other. I stayed away from my family, did not want to see anybody. Holidays were such a suffering for me. Whereas, we just come together and eat. When we came together, I wanted to go home as soon as possible. On Sundays, when I went out, I wanted to cry. I was afraid that one of the neighbors would stop by. I wanted to stay at home and watch television only. I started not to cook. In the past, I loved cooking. I used to make delicious cookies. Then I stopped cooking. I was just putting a piece of meat on the grill. Our relationship with my husband started to break down, and last year I was at a point to get a divorce...our relationship broke down. Distantness was to everything. Not just to my mother or friends. I was not good to my mother. I could not stand to my husband. I was waiting for him to leave the room as soon as possible and leave me alone. I was yelling at my daughter all the time. She was the third among the students in the school, but I was mad at her when she got 90 from her exams, and I was very harsh on her. Then I was going and apologizing from her and telling her that I did not feel my self well. I had great difficulty. Last days, I was barely speaking with my family. When I came home, I wanted my kid to eat her meal talk whatever she wanted and went to bed as soon as possible so that I can be alone and watch television. Nothing got my attention.

Aydan was the most severe example in the research. She stated that mobbing damaged her sociality very deeply.

*Aydan:*

You get exhausted. You feel you have ended. You walk to extinction. There is no social life anymore. For example, I cannot fall in to love anymore. My feelings are blunted. I cannot love anybody. I cannot contact with friends. I cannot give my self in to any social relationship.

Elif and Berrin expressed that their psychological condition disabled them from taking care of their children. The division of work at home shows itself here. None of the interviewees reported any support they got from their husbands in terms of childcare. Instead, they returned to their mother or relatives in need of such kind of support.

*Berrin:*

Very, very effected [the relationship]. This was always the subject in the house. We could not speak about anything else. We were tense all the time. I was coming home already stressed. When we talked about it at home, we were both demoralized. Obviously, I could not take care of my child. At that time, my mother came to help me. I could not look after my two years old baby. I have to give all my attention to him, but I used to come home so exhausted. So, we had help from my mother during that time.

Most striking example to the effects of mobbing to the relations is the Nihal's case. Nihal as, a divorced woman, who has had the custody of her son, has been looking after her son for years all alone. Because of the mobbing, the mother and the son are separated.

*Nihal:*

I have worked a lot for years to give the best education for my son. Mobbing disturbed his life. Should I go to Kırıkkale or wait for the court decision? Where would he go to school? Here, or there. Everything was undetermined. Our summer was ruined in between these. The school started, but the decision of the court did not come. He went in to stress because of this. At last, my child had to run away. He told me that my situation would not be clear. Once this ends another thing about work will come up. And I sent my son to his father. All these years, we have not been apart a single day. [Here the interviewee started to cry] I am apart from my son because of these events.

### **7.3 Effects on Organization and Society.**

Mobbing firstly and mostly affects the individual. But it also affects the organization and has considerable effects on the society in the long run. In this research, women gave their thought about the costs of mobbing to the organization and the society deriving from their examples. Observations of the interviewees' experiences are similar to findings of studies on mobbing.

Considering organizations, interviewees expressed common observations about the effects of mobbing. When mobbing exists there is staff inefficiency, decreased motivation, lower productivity and efficiency, lower concentration, loss of labor force, loss of experience and decreased sustainability. Some of the interviewees mentioned about decreased loyalty to the job and the organization, decreased creativity and loss of workplace memory. Bade described how mobbing affected organization in the finance sector.

*Bade:*

Efficiency decreases because of disturbance in the workplace. In fact, when you work peacefully, you add something from yourself to work. Otherwise, creativity declines. Workplace memory goes. Especially in the finance sector, there is a lot of information unwritten, and they disappear when there is turnover.

Berrin mentioned how mobbing affects the performance of the mobber also and suggested that the effect of mobbing for the organization indeed is much more than assumed.

*Berrin:*

Efficiency decreases. Here, not just the victim but the perpetrator also gives all his attention to this [mobbing process]. If you expect 100 units of efficiency, it certainly decreases to 50. Because the two are fully distracted with [mobbing] process, there are opportunities missed in terms of the job. The victim could not concentrate on the job because of the psychological status but the perpetrator also cannot fully give himself to the job. He misses the points that he could show his performance. It is noteworthy because if people do only routine job in the company, the company could not grow. It is the time when people explore new things, new approaches, they add value to the company, and the company grows. But in order this to happen, employee must be motivated. In order to be motivated you should be happy at your work place.

This could matter for private organizations but in the public sector, concern for efficiency is less than the private sector. This may be one of the reasons that duration of mobbing is more than the duration in the private sector. Nursen described how she has not been contributing to the country as a civil servant.

*Nursen:*

Before, I was doing 10 units of work. Now I cannot do half of it. I have been in this institution for 16 years. This is the first time I have seen such kind of event. My success declined, my productivity declined. I come and take my salary and do nothing. I do not contribute to my state; I do not contribute to my country. I am an expert in this field and you take my authorities and give it to someone who is not competent as I am. You delegate my work to a person that does not have any relation with my field of expertise. The unit has been operating with poor quality.

The interviews in this study show that the loss of efficiency, productivity, loss of labor force and trained personnel affects organizations and the state economically. Turnover in the workplaces affects private organizations economically. State incurs social security expenditures and tax losses because of the loss of personnel. Also, public sector has costs related to retirement demands, health expenditures and costs due to absenteeism. At last, all these affect society. On the other hand, sometimes mobbing affects the society directly. Especially in certain sectors like education and health, effect of mobbing on society can directly be estimated. Nalan sees the effects as a teacher.

*Nalan:*

There is no such thing as sustainability [in education]. At past people knew about certain teachers. Now, there is turn over. It is not easy for people to provide education for their children. People do not provide education for their children very easily. To have equal education is their right. There were teachers who could not stand what they lived, and resigned because of this. It is a shame. The people, who could not get their rights, in addition if got exposed to mobbing, how can they give quality education? People in this sector affect society directly. What can you expect if you do these to the people who train next generations? Efficiency declines. Success declines. This was the reason why I stopped working.

Nilüfer is an example how mobbing affects directly many people. As the psychologist of a women's shelter, she described how she became at a point that she could not be useful for women who needed her help, anymore.

*Nilüfer:*

I have seen all kinds of things in the women's shelter. I have seen suicide. I have taken threats. I listened every kind of trauma. I have never felt bad as this eight months...then I began to count days...I have been marking the calendar. If they told me that it would take two days more, I was going to suffocate. I was going to work every day, crying. I could not wake up. I could not enter into the building. It came all over me. Imagine, I have to help women in this situation. They are women who are in a very bad situation. They do not have any other choice other than to come here. I tried a lot not to reflect my situation to them. I was smiling to them, but I did not feel like listening to them.

Unfortunately, these are not the only examples in the study. Besides these direct affects, mobbing affects the well being of the society. Interviewees expressed that mobbing corrupts the culture, damages the mental health and causes an unhappy society and damages the family relations. A part from all, this study shows that mobbing moves women away from the workplace; prevents their access to economic and social resources and this nurtures inequality between men and women in society.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **CONCLUSION**

Mobbing is a form of psychological violence and harassment towards individuals perpetrated in the workplace. Mobbing, which have been recognized as such since the 1990s in the international literature and since the 2000s in Turkey, negatively affects the health and the well being of the individual. Studies have shown that mostly superiors perpetrate mobbing and men show these behaviors more than women. Mobbing have been conceptualized as a gender neutral process, and mainstream studies did not see gender as a reason for mobbing because the behaviors often are not done overtly over gender. Also, the fact that mobbing is first conceptualized in Scandinavian countries, which equality between sexes is at desired a level is a factor, in the neglect of gender. Subsequent studies show that women's victimization rate is higher than men in mobbing especially in European countries. The terminology difference regarding to this phenomenon (psychological violence, psychological harassment, bullying, emotional abuse and etc) among countries and scholars comes up as a difficulty while studying mobbing. One should follow an interdisciplinary approach as mobbing involves power relations, organizational factors, individual traits, gender, human resource management, business administration and jurisprudence. This broad scope also shows how and why mobbing is particularly important.

The reason that I chose mobbing as a research subject in 2008 is my own experience as a mobbing victim and my recognition of the lack of gendered perspective in the conceptualization of mobbing. As a woman, I had encountered difficulties in work life. Mobbing was the last and the most destructive experience. In fact, this experience led me to study at the Gender and Women's Studies graduate programme.

Recently some scholars begin to criticize the gender blindness of early mobbing studies and suggest that gender is a salient factor in mobbing behaviors. Masculinity



theory and gendered organization theory together can explain how gender is embedded in mobbing behaviors with the help of feminist theory.

Gendered organizations theory, theorize gender as deeply embedded in organizations through gendered division of labor, symbols and images of sexuality, power distribution at the disadvantage of women, control over women's reproduction or sexuality and social interactions between men and women that determine power relations and social roles for women. According to the gendered organizations theory, women are passive, marginalized supporters of men in organizations. Women take place in the workplace according to this structuring. Mobbing is a tool in the workplace for men to show their masculinity, which symbolizes men's gender superiority over women.

In the light of the studies done internationally and in Turkey, my departure point in this study was the findings of higher victimization of women than men. Hence, I approached these findings with the theory of gendered organizations. The aim of this study is to approach mobbing with a gender perspective, and explore women's experience of mobbing. The study is done by feminist methodology. Accordingly, a research is conducted through in-depth interviews with 20 women employees. The findings of the study show that women employees are targets of mobbing. Women targets in this study, mostly perceive mobbing as a type of violence and harassment. The identified mobbing behaviors comply with the typology of Leymann's inventory of mobbing behaviors and findings of literature on mobbing. However, there are certain behaviors found to be more specific to Turkey like continuous relocations and transfers and disregarding the court decisions, in the public sector. Mobbing behaviors may show differences due to cultural differences of the society. Therefore studies, which focus on identification of mobbing behaviors in Turkey, are very important. The identified mobbing behaviors in the study show that there are three types of mobbing. They are "political mobbing", "individual mobbing" and "organizational mobbing". Especially public employees claimed that "political mobbing" cases increased with the rise of the single party government in Turkey since 2002.

Throughout the analysis, I found differences between mobbing experiences in private and public sectors. Although the number of interviewees was not enough to do an actual comparison, the findings showed commonalities within each sector and difference from one another. The research demonstrated that duration of mobbing is longer in the public sector. This could be because of the job security in the public sector. At the start of the study, I assumed that mobbing would be more prevalent in the private sector because of the low job security. It is difficult to come to a conclusion with this size of the sample. Considering the data which came out in this research study, it was found that mobbing in the private sector happens with high frequency, but the duration of mobbing is shorter because the process mostly ends with the exit of the employee who can not stand to live with it anymore or who was dismissed because of the conflict with the organization. The fact that I have not been able to reach as many women from the private sector as desired can be interpreted in two ways. Either as the private sector operates with profit-oriented organizations, mobbing is not prevalent as it is in the public sector, or because of the low job security, people are afraid to come up as mobbing victims. This study shows that mobbing can last for years in the public sector. The intensity, severity and duration cause psychological, psychiatric and psychosomatic illnesses on victims.

The study also aimed to inquire in to the reactions and strategies of women victims against mobbing. The findings demonstrate that women victims apply several strategies within the organization. They also seek for legal help outside the organization, but ultimately leave the organization or labor force by transfer, resignation and retirement. Few stay and struggle and few survive.

Mobbing has effects on the individual, the organization and the society. Individuals pay the biggest cost. Mobbing directly affects health and well being of the victims. Out of 20 women in this study seven of them have/had been having psychiatric treatment. Nearly, all have them have seen a psychologist or psychiatrist. It is seen that although women went to doctor because of the effects of mobbing, until the effects were very severe they hesitated to take medical reports or medicine treatment. The reason behind this hesitation is the fear of getting labeled as having mental illnesses. Along with depression, anger, self-hatred, psychosomatic illnesses,

sleeping problems, perceptual disorder and continuous crying; women suffer from physical health problems like blood pressure, heart rhythm disorder, gastric problems, fatigue, chronic headache and neck stiffness. Besides its effect on health, mobbing negatively affects the well being of woman as it lowers the job satisfaction, motivation and creates unhappiness at the victim.

Mobbing also affects women's social relationships. It mostly affects the relationship with the close family members. Mobbing makes the individual aggressive, sick, reluctant and antisocial. These affect their communications with people around them. Besides, women cannot take care of their children or cannot full fill their responsibilities expected from them. This creates additional psychological burden on the victims.

Mobbing has significant costs for organization and society. Lower efficiency, staff turnover, loss of expertise and knowledge and lower productivity are some of the consequences of mobbing for organizations. Costs for the state increase due to increased health problems and social security expenditures and loss of tax gains due to interrupted employment. Especially through sectors like education and health where mobbing is observed more, society is directly affected with the decreased quality of these services.

In this study, gender was not expressed as a reason for being exposed to mobbing by most of the women. In other words, women in this study do not think that they were chosen as a target just because of their gender. But, gender explains why women have high victimization rate of mobbing and why they experience it intensely. They are exposed to mobbing more because they are marginal in the labor force. They are exposed to mobbing more because men are more in the high levels in organizational structure. They are exposed to mobbing more because there are strong gender stereotypes operating at work. They experience it more intense because they are not perceived as a "worker" but approached with their gendered roles both at work and in their relationships. The theories that guide this study and findings of the research indicate that despite gender is ignored in the conceptualization of mobbing and does not overtly distinguish itself as it does in sexual harassment, it is a factor in mobbing experience.

Evaluated in the case of Turkey, when the recent increase in violence against women and the increase in the number of women pushed out from the labor force is considered; mobbing may turn out to be an important tool against women in the workplace to exclude and marginalize them and at the end, this would be one of the obstacles for reaching equality between men and women

In Turkey, mobbing is only recently recognized as a problem and an issue to be dealt with and studied. There is an ongoing debate on the conceptualization of mobbing. There have been few promising steps about mobbing like the formation of Mobbing Sub-Commission under “Commission on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men” in Turkish parliament. Also, the circular of the Prime Minister of Turkish Government is an important sign about the recognition of the problem at the government level. As the recognition of mobbing is very recent in Turkey, approaches from the start are very important. More studies and research shall be done about mobbing by feminists. A comparison study of victimization of men and women in terms of mobbing in Turkey would be beneficial in this manner. As more feminist scholar and activist put their effort for the recognition of gender factor in mobbing cases, both in its conceptualization and politics, they could more strongly claim that mobbing is a women’s issue.

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## APPENDIX A

### PROFILE OF INTERVIEWS

Name	Age	Education	Occupation	Position	Sector	Mobbing from	Victimized by	Marital Status
Eda	36	Master Degree	Business Administration	Senior Manager	Private	Superior and Co workers	Man	Divorced
Nermin	50	Master Degree	Engineer	Manager	Public	Superior	Man	Single
Bade	39	University	Business Administration	Specialist	Public	Superior	Woman	Married/ 1 child
Songül	53	Resident	Doctor	Clinical Chief	Public	Superior/ Organizational	Woman	Divorced
Gözde	29	Master Degree	Human Resources Specialist	Junior Specialist	Private	Superior / Co-workers	Man/Woman	Single
Didem	26	Master Degree	Engineer	Specialist	Private	Superior	Man	Single
Sinem	33	Master Degree	English Linguistics	Specialist	Public	Superior	Woman	Single
Elif	45	Resident	Doctor	Deputy Chief	Public	Superior	Woman	Married/ 1 child
Nursen	41	Phd	Academic	Associate Professor	Public	Superior	Woman	Single
Nalan	37	Master Degree	Social Science	Teacher	Private	Superior/ Organizational	Man/Woman	Divorced
Zeynep	36	University	Finance	Specialist	NGO	Superior	Man	Married/ 1 child
Aydan	40	University	Engineer	Civil servant	Public	Superior/ Organizational	Man	Single
Nilüfer	28	University	Psychologist	Civil servant	Public	Superior	Man	Single
Sanem	33	University	Economist	Civil servant	Public	Superior	Man	Single
Deniz	43	University	Business Administration	Regional manager	Private	Superior/ Organizational	Man	Single
Selma	44	University	Teacher	Teacher	Private	Superior/ Organizational	Man/Woman	Married/ 1 child
Hülya	55	Master	Engineer	Manager	Public	Superior/ Organizational	Man	Married/2 children
Berrin	35	Master Degree	Engineer	Manager	Private	Superior	Man	Married /1 child
Ahsen	55	Phd	Academic	Associate Professor	University	Superior	Woman	Divorced
Nihal	45	University	Finance	Manager	Public	Superior/ Organizational	Man	Divorced/1 child

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### B.1 English

1. What is Mobbing (psychological abuse)? Could you share with me what you know about this issue?
2. Do you think that you were exposed to mobbing at any stage of your work life? Could you share your experiences? How long have you been exposed and what was the frequency of it? How did it end?
3. What was the reason of this process that you have lived through? Why you?
4. Have you ever made a complaint about these behaviors against you, inside or outside the work environment? To Who? At which phase? If you did not, how did you handle with the situation? Did you have a professional support? Who did you talk to and share with?
5. What were the reactions of your colleagues at work and how did they react?
6. What were the effects of mobbing behaviors on you?
7. What were your family's reactions during the process of mobbing? Did you receive support from them? Did they understand you or thought that you may be wrong?
8. What was the impact of mobbing process on your family? If you are married, did the process affect your spouse and/or children? Did your family relationships were influenced by this situation?
9. How do you think mobbing affects the institution and the society?
10. Do you think your gender constitute a factor in the process of mobbing?
11. Do you have knowledge about ways to apply the law about mobbing?

12. What precautions should be taken for the prevention of mobbing in workplaces? What can be done individually, institutionally and socially?
13. If you compare the public sector with the private sector, which of them do you think mobbing is more prevalent?

## **B.2 Turkish**

1. Mobbing (psikolojik taciz) nedir? Bu konuda bildiklerinizi benimle paylaşır mısınız?
2. Çalışma yaşamınızın herhangi bir döneminde Mobbing'e uğradığınızı düşünüyor musunuz? Deneyiminizi paylaşmışsınız? Ne kadar süre ile maruz kaldınız ve sıklığı neydi? Bu durum nasıl bitti?
3. Sizce yaşadığınız bu sürecin (mobbing sürecinin) nedenleri nelerdi? Neden siz?
4. Uğradığınız mobbing davranışları ile ilgili işyeri içinde ya da işyeri dışında şikayette buldunuz mu? Kime? Hangi aşamada? Bulunmadıysanız bu süreçle kendi başınıza nasıl baş ettiniz? Size destek olan, yardım aldığınız profesyonel bir kişi var mıydı? Kimlerle dertleştiniz, konuştunuz?
5. İşyerinde uğradığınız davranışlara karşı iş arkadaşlarınızın tepkileri nelerdi, nasıldı?
6. Mobbing davranışlarının üzerinizdeki etkileri neler oldu?
7. Mobbing süreci boyunca ailenizin tepkisi ne oldu? Onlardan destek alabildiniz mi? Sizi anladılar mı, yoksa sizin de hatalı olabileceğinizi mi düşündüler?
8. Mobbing sürecinin aileniz üzerindeki etkileri neler oldu? Evli iseniz eşiniz varsa çocuklarınız süreçten etkilendi mi? Aile içi ilişkileriniz bu durumdan ne yönde etkilendi?

9. Sizce Mobbing'in kurum üzerinde ve üst ölçekte toplum üzerindeki etkileri nelerdir?
10. Cinsiyetinizin mobbing sürecinde bir faktör olduğunu farklılık yarattığını düşünüyor musunuz?
11. Mobbing ile ilgili başvuracağınız hukuk yolları hakkında bilginiz var mı?
12. İşyerlerinde mobbingin önlenmesi için ne gibi önlemler alınmalı? Bireysel, kurumsal ve toplumsal olarak neler yapılabilir?
13. Kamu sektörü özel sektör ayrımını düşündüğünüzde sizce hangisinde mobbing ile daha fazla karşılaşılmaktadır.

## APPENDIX C

### SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

#### **1. Eda**

Eda was a high status manager in the private sector. When she came across to mobbing she was a ten-year employee in the firm. She was exposed to extensive mobbing from superiors and also from other employees in last nine months. Eda's case was one of the extreme cases in the interviews. She thinks the mobbing occurred because of the differences in religious standing. She stated that especially in recent years there was invisible pressure on her as managers, and more importantly most of the employees, were conservative and Islamist. All together they made impossible for her to work properly there. They did not do it overtly but through prevention and obtrusiveness on everything at work. At last, the mobbing behaviors came to a point that she was no longer working as a high status employee in reality. She was diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder and was medicated. After what she has lived through, she broke up with her husband. At the time of the interview, she had been unemployed for one year.

#### **2. Nermin**

Nermin is a public employee for twenty-five years. She has a post graduate degree. She was exposed to mobbing of her manager and colleagues for four years. According to her she became a target of mobbing because she is a single woman, very hardworking and ambitious. At the time of the mobbing, she thought of getting retired because of what she lived through. The mobbing ended with her transfer to another unit.

#### **3. Bade**

Bade is 39 years old. She is a hardworking, committed type woman. After eight years private sector experience in 2003, she started to work in a public institution with a service contract. She was exposed to continuous pressure and mobbing of her



woman manager. She was hanging on as she had a mortgage debt to pay. She was 5 months pregnant and was able to work at least two more months. Because of what she lived through she had a blood pressure problem while she was pregnant. As a result of the health problems related to mobbing and burnout psychology, she quit the job. She has been unemployed for two and a half years. She states that she will never work in a public institution.

#### **4. Songül**

Songül works in the health sector. She worked in the public sector many years. She was a chief physician of a small state hospital and a very successful doctor. She has a perfectionist and responsible personality. Songül, first met with mobbing in 2002 with the change of government. In the hospital, where she was chief physician, she faced with artificial investigations, and she was dismissed from the duty. She sued the hospital management twice and had right to go back. When she went back, she was transferred to a new duty. At this new duty, she was exposed to mobbing of her superior and colleagues who had strength from the management. After a while, she could not take it anymore and asked for retirement, left her idealist thinking of public service and started to work in a private hospital. She still has nightmares and severe headaches.

#### **5. Gözde**

Gözde is at her twenties, a university graduate, young woman. She met with mobbing at her first workplace. For more than one year, her woman superior showed behaviors that could be categorized as mobbing. She thinks that it occurred because she was fresh from college. Her superiors' education was not sufficient, and she saw her as a threat to her position. As this was her first job experience, Gözde could not handle the behaviors against her and could not manage to overcome its effects and so she resigned from the job. Now she wonders what her career would be like if she did not give up and fight against these behaviors.

## **6. Didem**

Didem works in the private sector as a mechanical engineer. She is a self confident success oriented young woman. She thinks that she has been intentionally disabled from working with systematic mobbing behaviors. She has not been given any task for about one and a half year. Things got worse when she applied to human resource management and made a complaint. They took her project from her, put her in to an isolated position in the firm. It seems that she managed to resist the intimidation process. Now, things are a little better, but she still does nothing at work. (Two months later, I made this interview, Didem called crying on the telephone. She was fired.)

## **7. Sinem**

Sinem started to work in the public sector as a worker, after two years private sector experience. Sinem has been working in this institution for four years and thinks that she has been exposed to mobbing of her superior, which is a woman. She thinks that she has been discriminated because she has started to work as a worker (without taking any exam) and she is not an engineer. For four years, her manager left her out of the job, never called for attendance to a meeting, gave only paper work and excluded her from everything related to job. She just wanted to work and be useful. During this time, Sinem lost her self-confidence, increased her absenteeism and started to take depression medicines. The institution went through a restructuring phase and the mobbing ended with the transfer of her superior to another unit.

## **8. Elif**

Elif was exposed to mobbing of her superior, which is a woman also. She had been working in this public hospital since 18 years. She is a successful science woman who won a prize for her work in a working group. After a conflict, her superior ended communication with her. She had several investigations, which had no sound reasons. Her tasks were given to other people in the workplace. According to her this occurred because of her superior's personality. Her colleagues also ended communication with her and totally excluded her from the workplace because they

did not want to be against the superior. Because of what she had lived last eight months, she had major depression. After that, she demanded a temporary transfer to another hospital and continues her work there and waits for her superior to retire.

### **9. Nursen**

Nursen is a public employee in the health sector. Three years ago, in a staff meeting she opposed to her superior because of her manager's insulting and condescending behaviors. Since then, she is paying the price. She had several investigations ended with warnings and condemnation and was driven to a hospital that was not constructed yet. She opened a lawsuit and won it. Then she had another investigation. This continued, and she opened four lawsuits, and won two of them. Her authority and her tasks are taken from her. She still waits for the results of the two legal cases and goes to work every day, sits at her desk and returns back home. What upsets Nursen at most is, in this way she has no use for the society. According to Nursen, the reason for these behaviors is her manager's passion to show her power against people. She thinks that this is solely because of her manager's personality disorder, and she does not find a relation between the situation and her gender.

### **10. Nalan**

Nalan is 35 years old. She has been working as a teacher in the private sector for 10 years. A while ago the school she is working at opened a branch in another city, in Turkey. She went there temporarily. She still has the difficulty to define what she had gone through. For one year, she faced with insulting words, humiliation, invasion of private life and threats. Out of 14 employee, 10 was dismissed from the job, and four of them including Nalan was transferred back to center. She thinks that the managers showed this kind of violence and pressure because they thought that this was a management style, and she suggests that this did not work. The employee turnover in the school is very high, and students cannot get a sustainable education.

### **11. Zeynep**

Zeynep is 35 years old, married and a mother. She has been exposed to mobbing by her manager in a non-governmental institution for eight months. Giving impossible

deadlines, continuous criticizing, and calling to work at weekends, preventing training opportunity and yelling are some of the behaviors which she faced almost every day. She loved her job very much and tried to stand still. But the frequency and the intensity of the behaviors increased. One day the manager swore behind her. This was the moment when she could not take it anymore. She went to her desk and wrote her resignation at that moment. She left the workplace and friends with tears. After that she suffered from depression, sleeping disorder, migraine and arrhythmia. She had difficulties in her relationship with her husband. She states that she was not aware of this phenomenon at that time and blamed her self for being unsuccessful.

## **12. Aydan**

Aydan worked at public sector as an engineer. After privatization, she began to work at the institution with contract. When it was a public institution the workplace was a highly politicized place. After privatization, it turned out to a workplace where mobbing behaviors were very common and intense. Even victims of this institution formed an association where all the victims come together and seek for their right. Aydan clearly stated that being the “other” is the main cause of mobbing. After privatization, she was exposed to exclusion, and her tasks were taken. She had no desk, no computer, and no job to do. Even if they did give job it was below her qualifications. She made a complaint to her superiors but could not get any response. She opened a legal case. After that, she was driven to the east side of Turkey (Şırnak) for three months. Besides being a lonely woman, the victim is a disabled. The woman, who was very successful and hardworking before, hated her self, had major depression and medical treatment. When she turned to her original workplace, she did not have a place or room to work. For months, she sat on her colleagues’ guest chairs. She started smoking. At last she asked for retirement. She has moved to another town and tries to built a new life for her self.

## **13. Nilüfer**

Nilüfer is a psychologist. She was graduated from one of the best universities in Turkey. She has been working as a psychologist in a women’s shelter in the structure of a municipality. She was exposed to mobbing of her manager who came to work

after last elections and who was not competent for the job. Her manager threatened her with closing the shelter, did not invite her to any meeting but then issued a condemnation to her because of not attending, excluded her from everything. He criticized her clothes, her make up, the way she worked, everything. He did not know the procedures of the shelter, and because of his preventing actions the processes of the shelter began to be jeopardized. This continued for eight months. At last she started to have psychological problems herself and decided to resign. The shelter was opened on her diploma. As, a closure of a women's shelter would be a bad image for the municipality politically, this time a lot of people tried to persuade her to withdraw her resignation. This put a lot of pressure on her. Then she was transferred to another (but still responsible for women's' shelter) unit reporting to another manager. She suffered from insomnia, anxiety, sleeping disorder and depression. (By the time this thesis to be submitted, managers in the municipality opened an investigation against Nilüfer, and she was dismissed from the job)

#### **14. Sanem**

Sanem is a public employee. Three years ago she was transferred from university to this public institution. She was settled to a unit that she did not prefer. When she demanded to be transferred to another unit, mobbing has started. The managers took it personally. They did not talk with her. They gave degrading works, insulted her and humiliated her. Especially the deputy head manager made jokes which had sexual content, yelled at her, send every single work she did back numerous times. He was very rude and made her life miserable. When the managers saw that she was very hardworking, this time, they really did not want to transfer her to another unit. This lasted for three years. During these years, her psychology was very bad. She had sleeping disorder, and she was crying all the time. She stated that her self-confidence decreased to a level that she perceived her self as an incapacitated and worthless person. Recently intensity of the behaviors decreased and she attributes it to uncertainty in the workplace due to restructuring. She thinks that one of the reasons of these mobbing behaviors is her manager's personality disorder. The manager, by personality, shows these kinds of behaviors to everybody, but the

intensity and the forms of the behaviors change according to the gender of the victim.

### **15. Deniz**

Deniz was a regional sales manager in a private sector company. Her region was at the second row in sales figures out of eight regions. During two and a half year, she was exposed to severe mobbing. Besides humiliation, insult, threat, attack to personal life and pressure, the behaviors that she faced with pushed the limits of manner and logic. She is not the one and only who experienced it. Even there are websites in the internet, which give anecdotal of employees who worked and left this company. According to Deniz, the managers of the well-known company in Turkey perceive and define these behaviors as a part of a “stress based management technique”. By the time this interview was made Deniz was about to resign from this company and was seeking for legal help. Deniz’s mental health was seriously affected by mobbing, and she had fifteen sessions of psychological treatment.

### **16. Selma**

Selma is an English teacher for twenty years. She worked 15 years in a private school, in Ankara. Working at this school has become more difficult in recent years. The attitudes and behaviors to teachers have become inappropriate. Especially, she thinks that there is discrimination against Turkish teachers. Selma has a strong character. She states that mobbing started when she strongly defended her rights when the school started to carry out unfair practices against teachers. She also thinks that being the most paid and experienced teacher in the school is a reason for being a target. She was also very much loved by students and parents. In recent years, the staff turnover in the school has increased. As the management would not want to get reactions from the families, they tried to intimidate her. Because of the intensity and frequency of the behaviors, she had psychological problems. One day she woke up and sent an official warning to the school stating that she opened a legal case on the basis of encroachment of her employee rights. The case still continues.

## **17. Hülya**

Hülya is a public employee for twenty years. She defines her workplace as a highly politicized place. The management changes very frequently. She also tells about religious structuring within the organizations since the late 1980s and 1990s. She met with mobbing at the beginning. She was sent to a department for isolation because she took leave of absence immediately after she entered to work. But the intense one started when she refused the general manager's inappropriate bribe offer. She was one of the four people in the country who was trained about a special issue at that time. The general manager offered her an illegal way of earning money. She refused it. She had been sent to numerous departments and different buildings of the institution in the city. She had investigations and penalties. She was put in a room full of rats in the basement with other people like her. Her title could not be taken, but all of her authorization was taken. She is a manager with no room, no personnel and no work. She still works in this institution. She is diagnosed with sleeping disorder and concentration defect.

## **18. Berrin**

Berrin defines mobbing as a tool to attack someone's self-confidence. She has started to experience mobbing when her workplace engaged in a merger. In this new restructuring, she was sent to work in the new organization. Her manager had a dispute with her friend who was reference to her for the job. She thinks that she had become the target for this reason. During four months, her manager and people around him excluded her. The manager gave her degrading jobs. She was forbidden to communicate with the higher managers. She was systematically taken in to meetings where she has been yelled, accused of being incompatible and threatened. She started to take medication. One day when he was shouting at her, she had a nervous breakdown. She made a complaint to higher manager, but it was late. They fired her but paid her compensation.

## **19. Ahsen**

Ahsen has been working in a university and has been exposed to mobbing of her superior for 16 years. Everything started when her friend was chosen as the head of department. Her projects were taken away from her; she has been excluded from meetings and events of her department. Her jobs outside of the university were prevented. Ahsen is a well-known academician in her field and is loved by the academic environment and her students. She thinks that the reason of mobbing is jealousy and defines the perpetrator as incompetent of her status. She has been suffering from psychosomatic illnesses because of mobbing.

## **20. Nihal**

Nihal is a public employee. Since 2007, she has been subject to several mobbing behaviors, which came to an advanced stage with change in the workplace in terms of headquarters province distinction. Her employment record is full of good evaluations. She has never been criticized in terms of her performance. She thinks that the reason is, basically, a staffing issue and as she is a divorced woman this makes her easy to be a target. She is center manager, and by law, she could not be entitled to work in provinces. She opened a lawsuit and won it. The morning she returned back to work, they give another notification of change of workplace despite it is forbidden by the law and despite the former court decision. She has been suffering from psychological problems and has a psychiatric report. These ongoing legal cases and her workplace problems deeply affected her and her son. She is a divorced woman and has custody of her son. For years, she has looked to her son by her self. Because of what happened, her son is going to stay at his dad in another city in order to prepare for university entrance exams. She returned to work after second court decision but mobbing still continues. She sits in the telephone operator's room with no job and still struggles.