

HOW MOBBING HAS CHANGED MY LIFE

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INAS CISL

I paid for my competence, suffering “psychological harassment” for ten years performed on purpose until dismissal. In January 2002 on “imposition” of the labour court I obtained justice. Suffering has generated in me a strong solidarity essential to have the right sensitivity to the problem. My experience has been supplemented from having listened, advised, helped thousands of workers

Health and safety and vulnerable workers in a changing world of work

**The Law Department
Middlesex London**

**Adapt – Centro Studi Marco Biagi
University of Modena**

**International Conference
at the Hendon campus of Middlesex University
London on Tuesday 8 June 2010**

I wish to thank for their support :

**Francesco Chicco, Giovanna Fasciani,
Sandrina Fersurella, Silvia Franko, Ilaria Rossi**

PATRONATO
inas
CISL
Istituto Nazionale Assistenza Sociale

CISL (Confederation of Trade Unions in Italy), one of the most important Italian Unions, immediately tried to understand the mobbing phenomenon, to monitor it and to give support to the victims and to promote health and safety at work. Right now CISL has 50 mobbing help-points spread all over Italy.



Active part of this network is INAS-CISL (National Institution for Social Assistance), it is a social institution promoted by CISL. For sixty years INAS has been assisting and giving protection to all workers and their families, completely free of charge, on social security problems, welfare, insurance, accidents at work and occupational diseases. Mobbing is a psychological harassment and it causes psychophysical diseases. Therefore INAS decided to intervene and give support to workers.

This study illustrates a research conducted on a group of 200 workers exposed to on the job harassment, interviewed from January to June 2009.

The research was inspired by the experiences gathered by the anti-mobbing counselor's office of INAS-CISL and was planned in order to denounce the fact that mobbing is not just a transitory phenomenon but it brings about radical negative and dramatic changes in the life of a person. For this reason this research has the name of:

HOW MOBBING HAS CHANGED MY LIFE



There were two questionnaires with about 40 questions each; one for the workers who left the company and the other for those still on-the-job.

What happens on workplace

Family and social relationships

Free time and health

The company



The answers provided about 10,000 data which have been inserted into an EXCEL sheet. This gave us the possibility to be able to assess the characteristics up to the single worker.

There are also other questions to be answered briefly:

- **A sentence which summarizes what happened....**
- **If I could turn back....**
- **The future ahead of me....**
- **Notes**

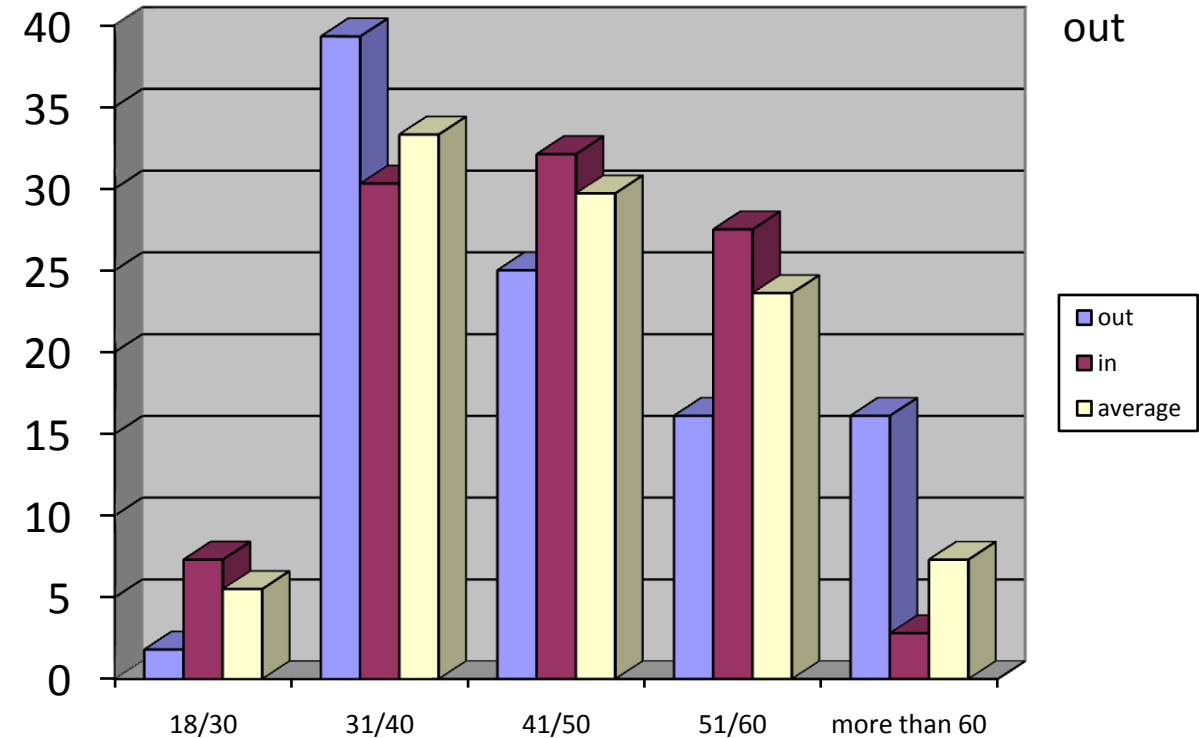
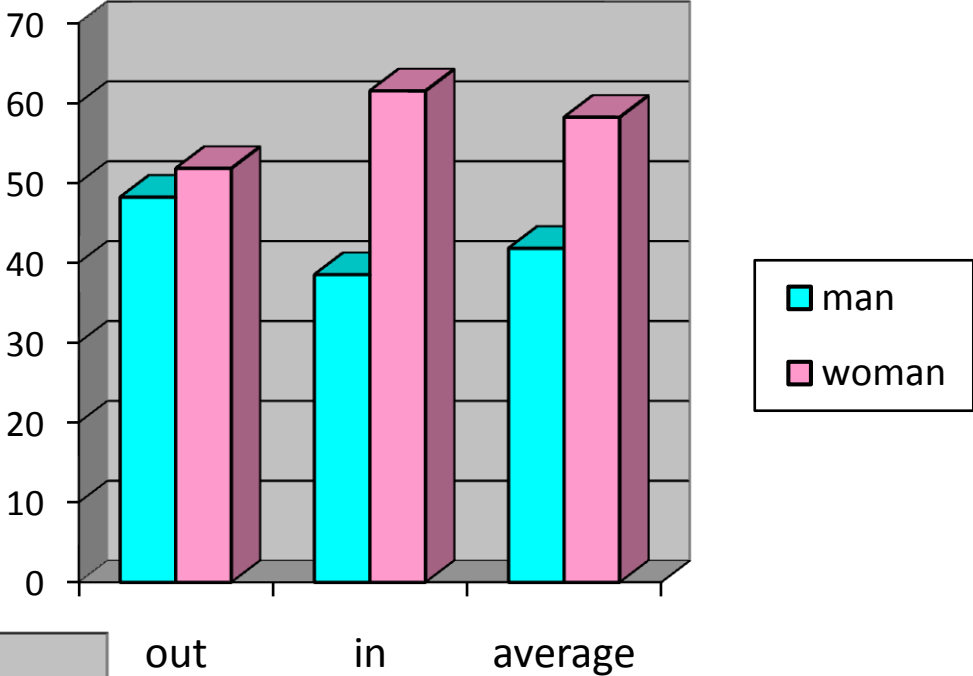
The almost 800 brief sentences have been divided according to the type of answer and synthesized in a summarizing sheet called “statistic evaluation of the answers”.

Complete report will be published at the end of this year

Gender

Gender distinction is clear but we must keep in mind that the female presence in the working world is about 35%.

In = I'm still in company
out = I left the company

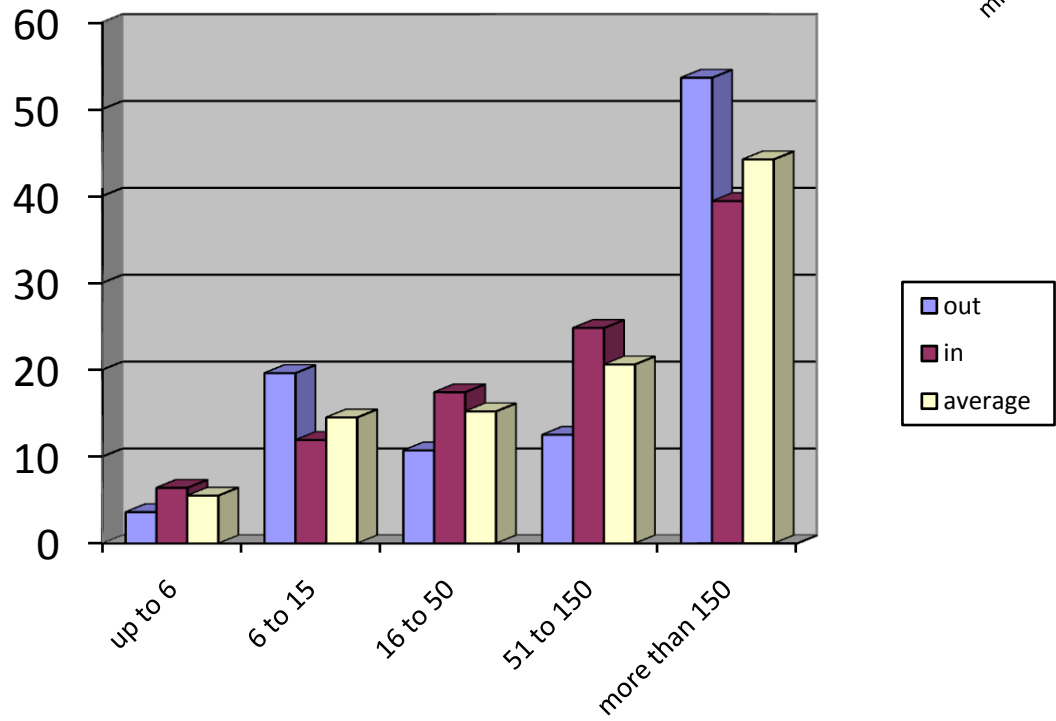
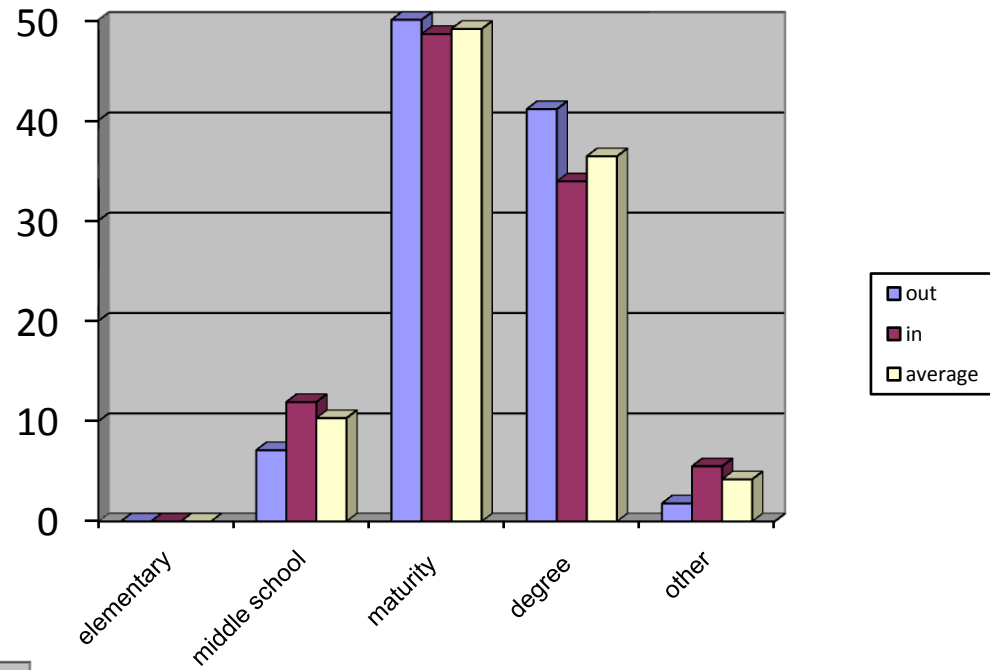


Age

Age bracket between 31 - 40 shows that younger workers are not willing to stand harassment

Educational level

Workers more affected are the ones with higher preparation and knowledge

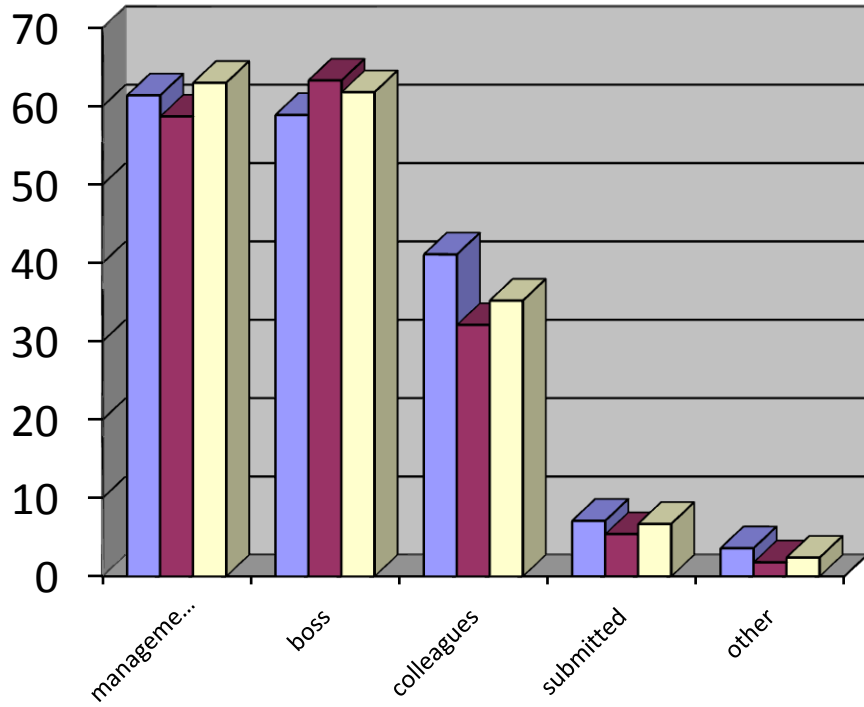
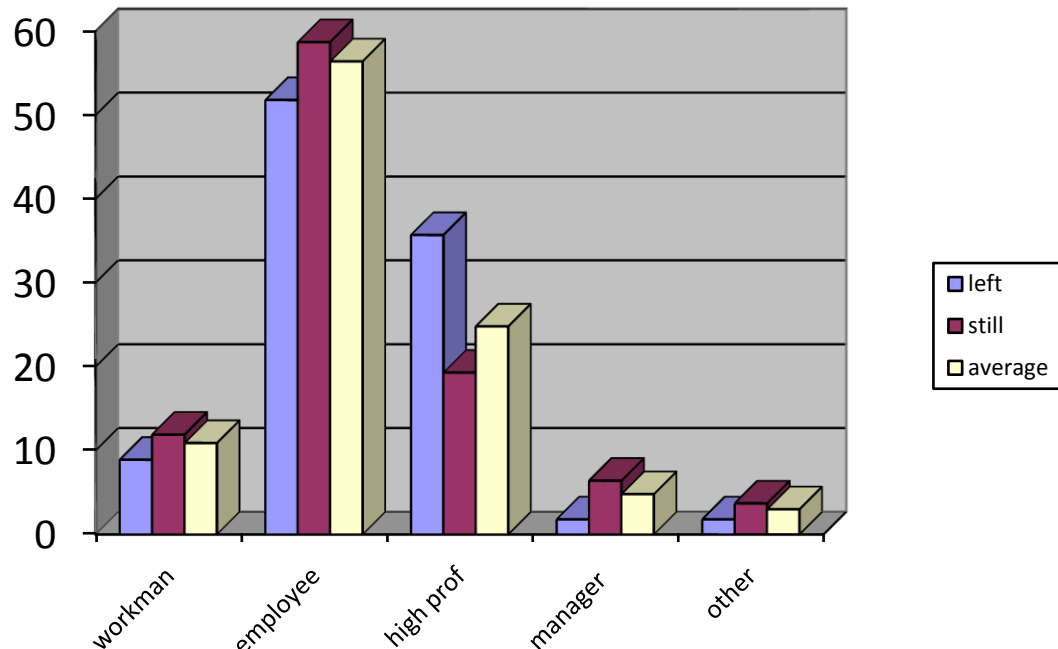


Company size

The percentage gets higher with the dimensions of the company; except the companies with less than 15 employees, because of lower contractual protection. The peak in big companies demonstrates the crisis of our Country.

Professional Level

High level employees and higher professionals have a higher retribution and an age between 40 and 50, they are too young to retire and too old for the company.



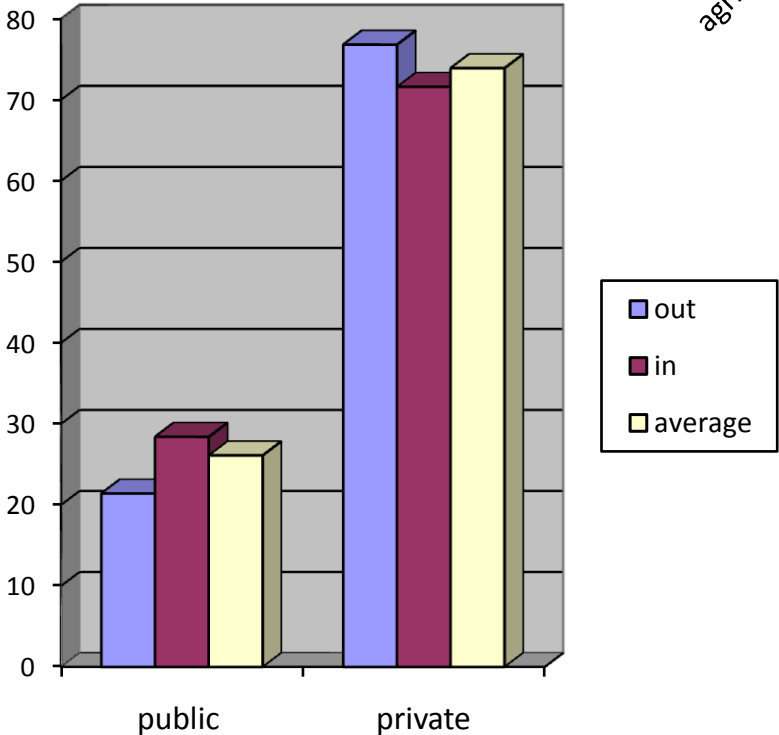
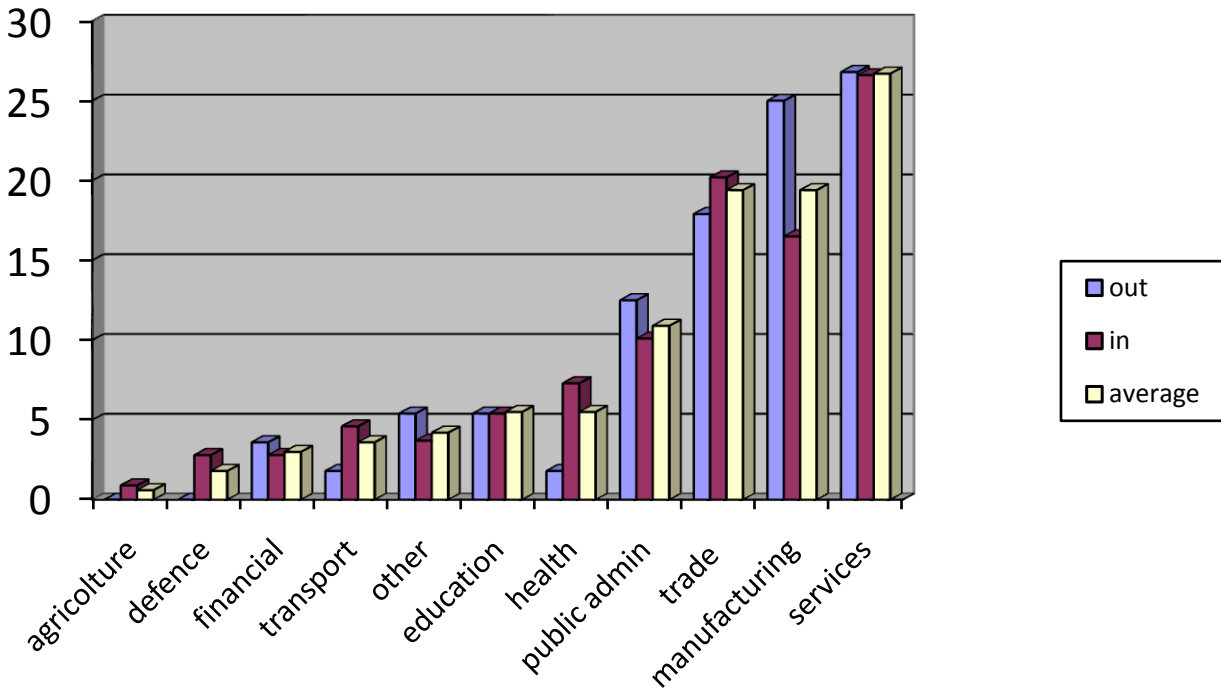
The mobber

He is typically the boss or the management company that usually act together, and colleagues of course that fit into this convenient situation



Distribution by sector

Services show the biggest problems such as Trade, for Manufacturing is an obvious decline in our Country

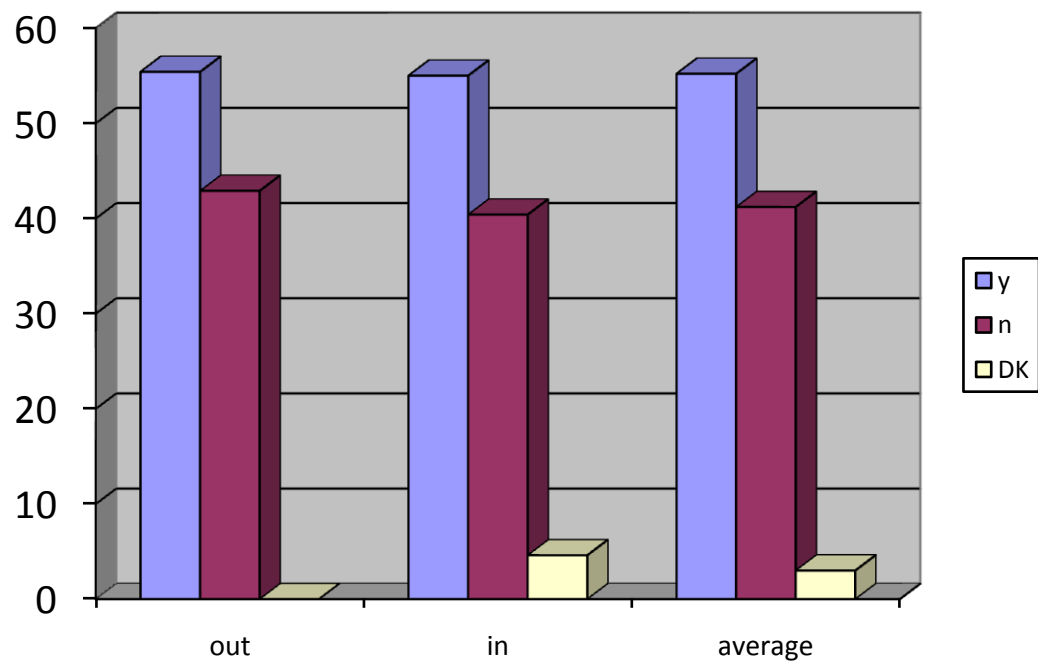
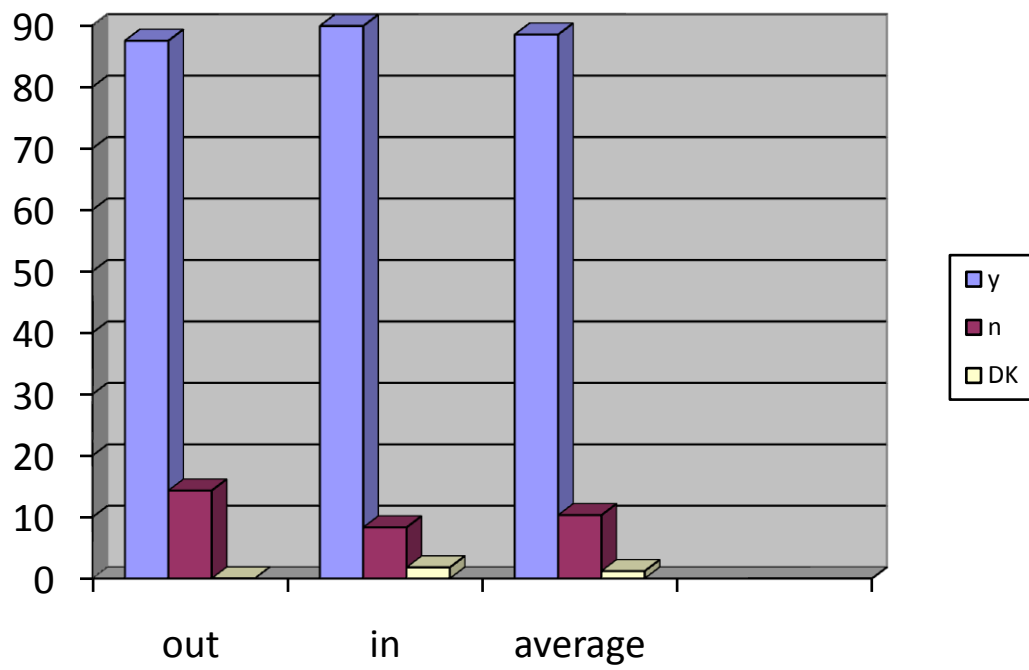


Sector private or public

The present world crisis is generating removal of permanent employees, to give space to temporary employees. Naturally in public administration this need is lower

Exposed to bullying or discrimination

He or she who asks for help is convinced that he/she has been treated unjustly and to be a victim of discrimination, sometimes this is not true.

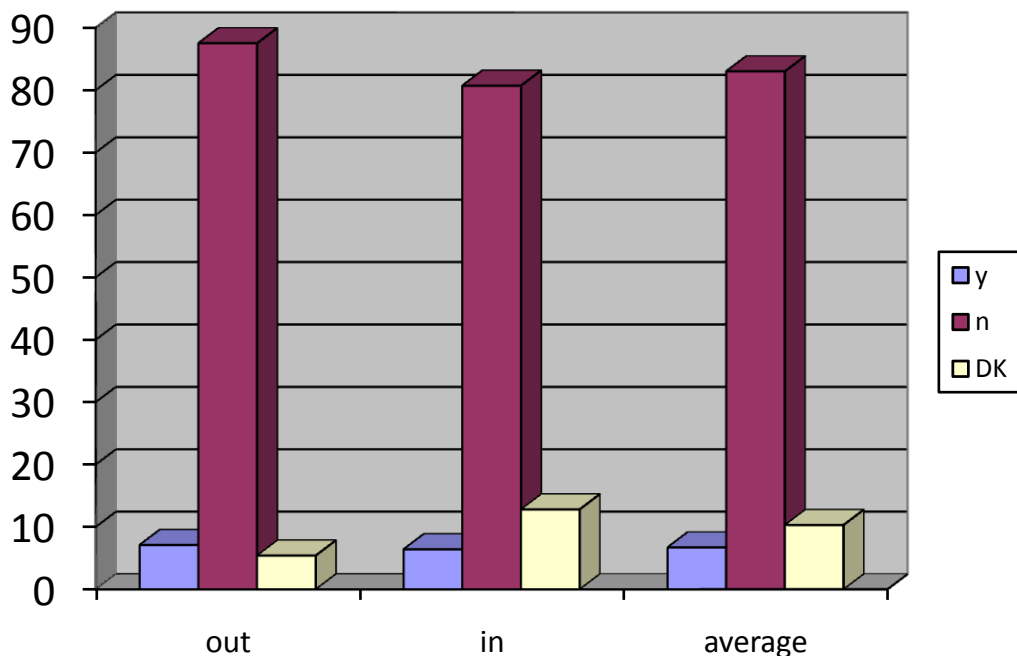
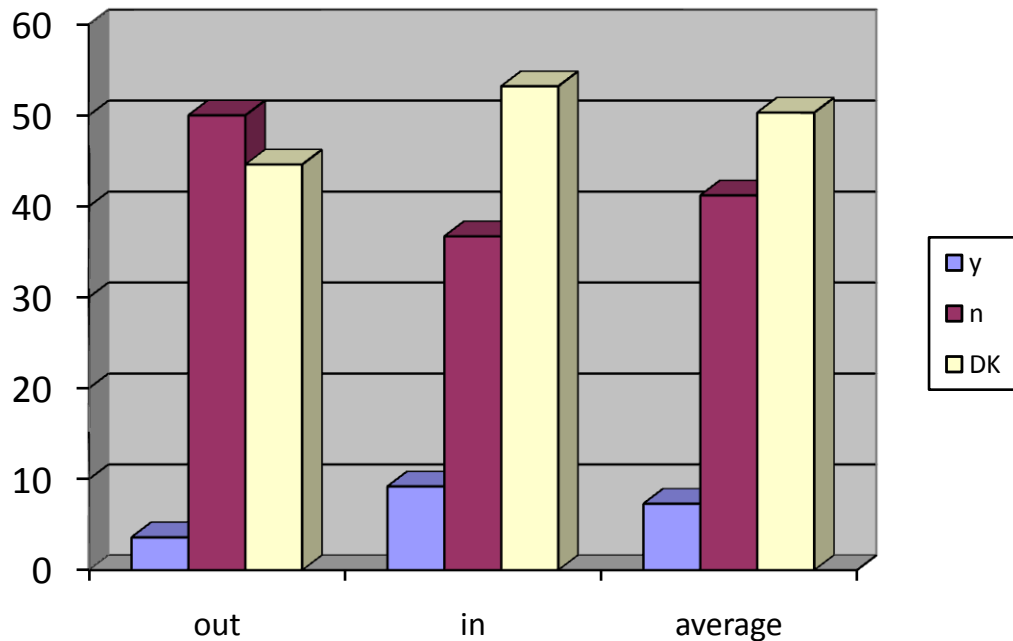


Left without tasks

Harassment consists in leaving the worker inactive in order to cause stress and anguish

Motherhood is the reason of my problems

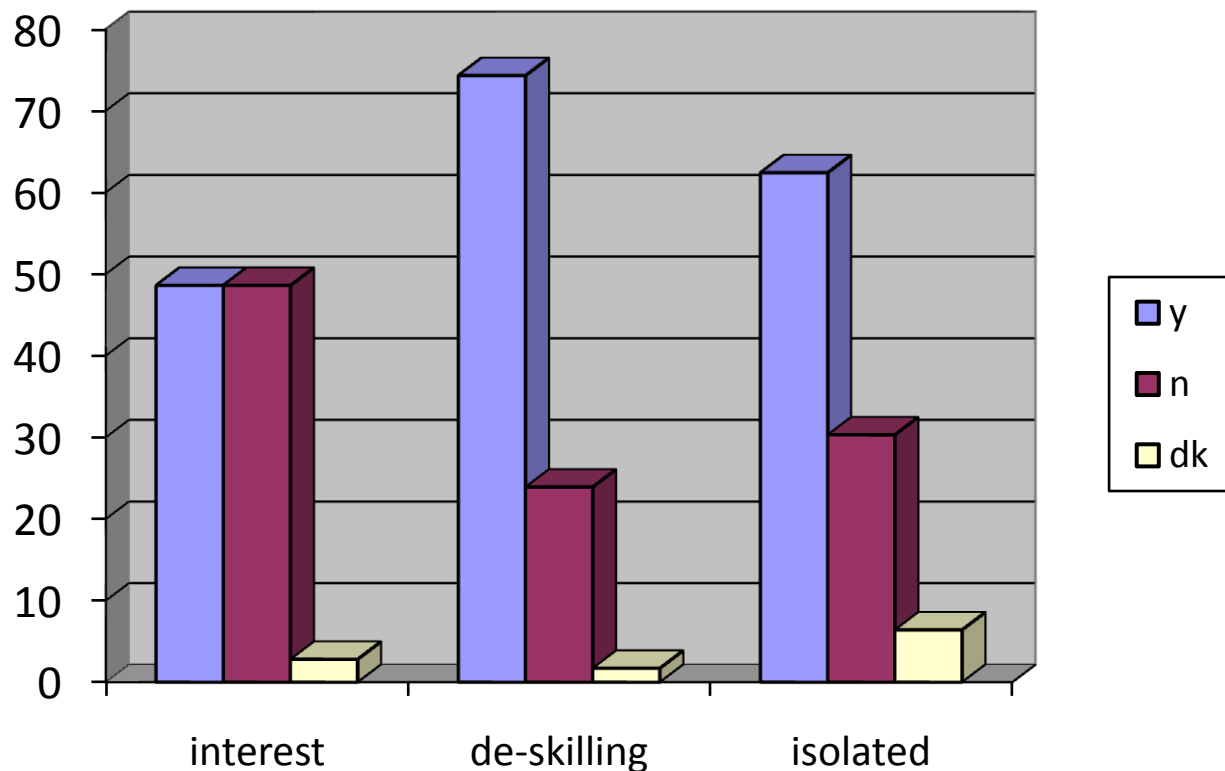
It is a recurrent phenomenon to remove the female worker in case of maternity this is explained by the conviction, often wrong, that she will not be available any longer



Please note: Although the low percentage we have to keep in mind that if the estimate of a million mobbed workers in our Country is true, the 7% corresponds to the suffering of about 7,000 workers or families.

I have suffered sexual harassment
The percentage seems modest, but we have to keep in mind that it is about a female minority. Mobbing is often due to the reaction of the rejected molester

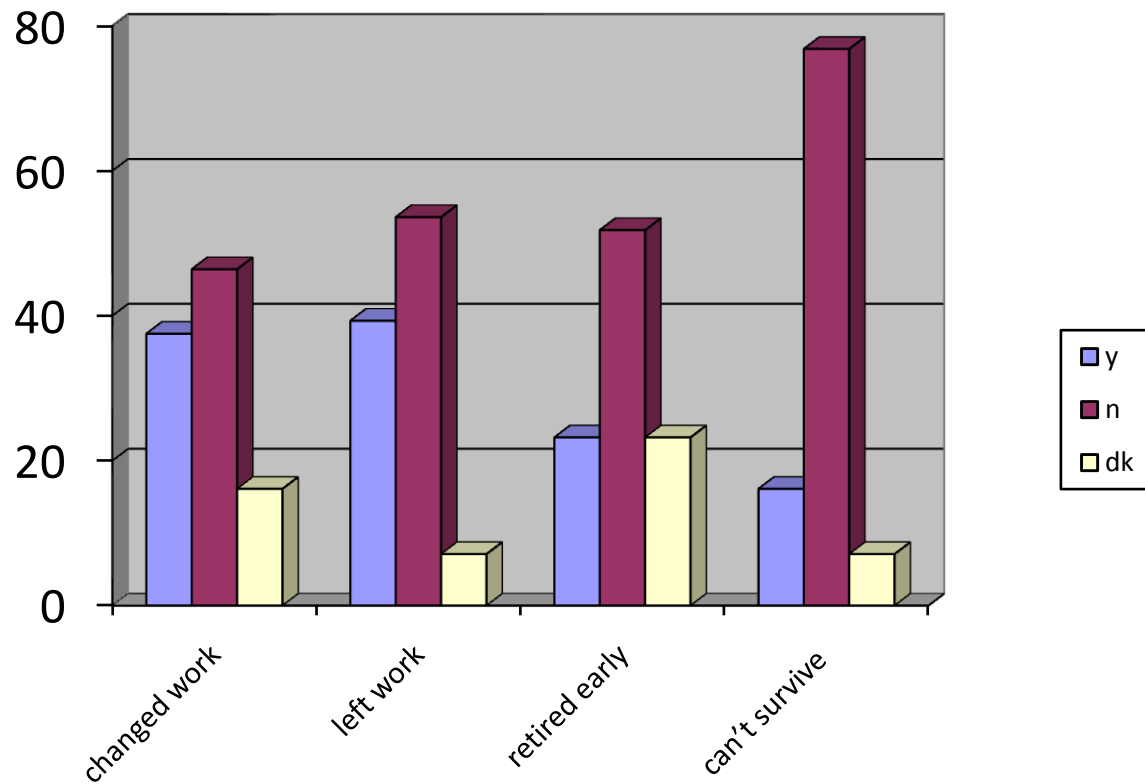
These answers are of
workers **still on-the-job**



- **I still have interest in the job**
- **I changed my job undergoing a de-skilling**
- **I have been isolated from colleagues**

The de-skilling is typical of mobbing, the humiliation brings about mental anguish, depression coupled with indifference towards their job. The isolation of the victim is due to fear or convenience of colleagues.

These answers are of
workers who **left the job**



I have radically changed work

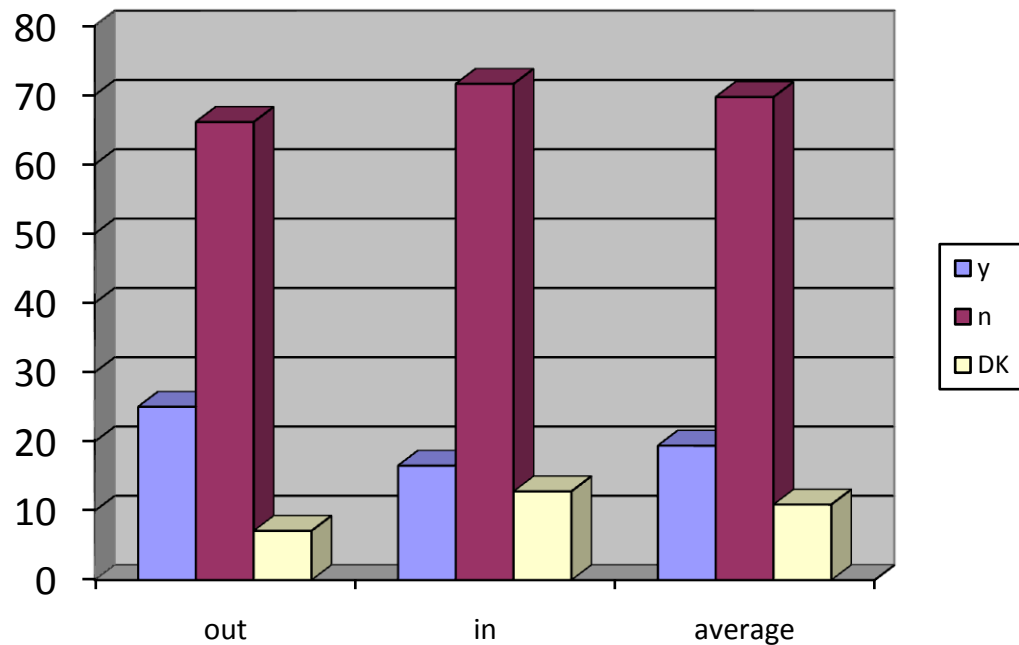
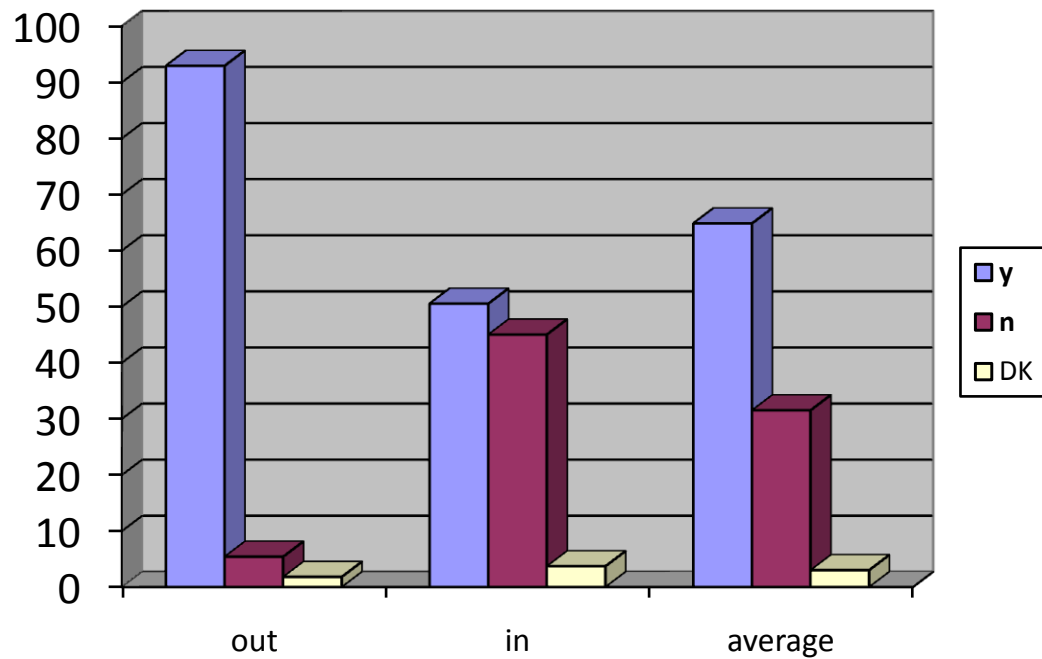
I left the world of work

I retired early

I cannot survive and are charged to the partner

The loss of professionalism causes a lot of anguish, many prefer to give up the job and live by the day. Others prefer to run away retiring with a minimum of economic support. Others decide to live with the shame of asking the partner for economic help.

I am forced to leave the company
Getting rid of the subject is the goal of mobbing

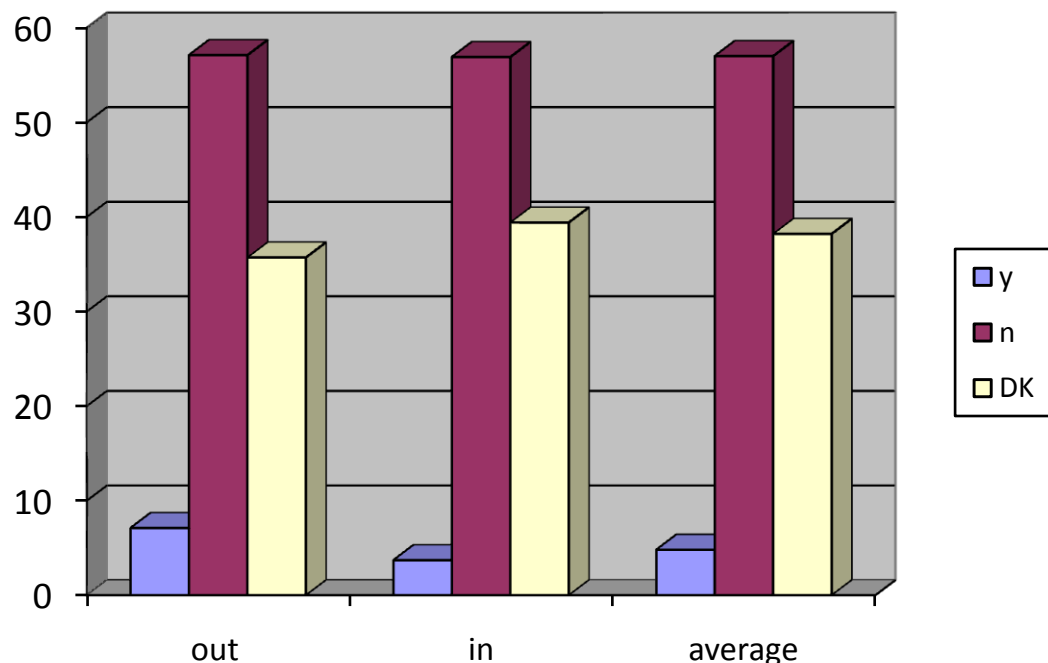


The relationship with my partner has deteriorated and we broke up.

For the worker everything is less important than his problems. The family did not succeed in overcoming the existential crisis, therefore it breaks up.

I don't have contact with my children anymore.

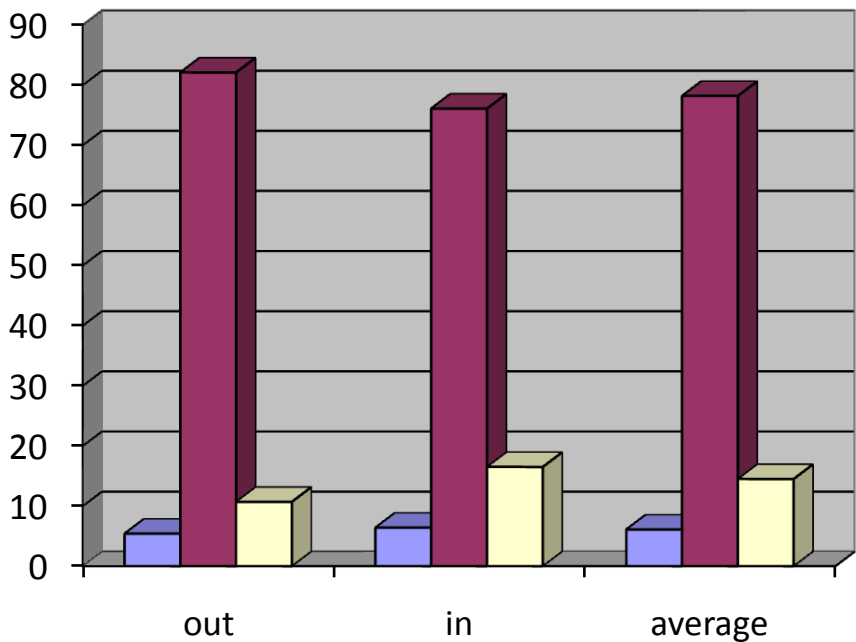
The consequence of the destruction of the family is the loss of the dearest affections, fundamental for the mental equilibrium



y

n

DK



y

n

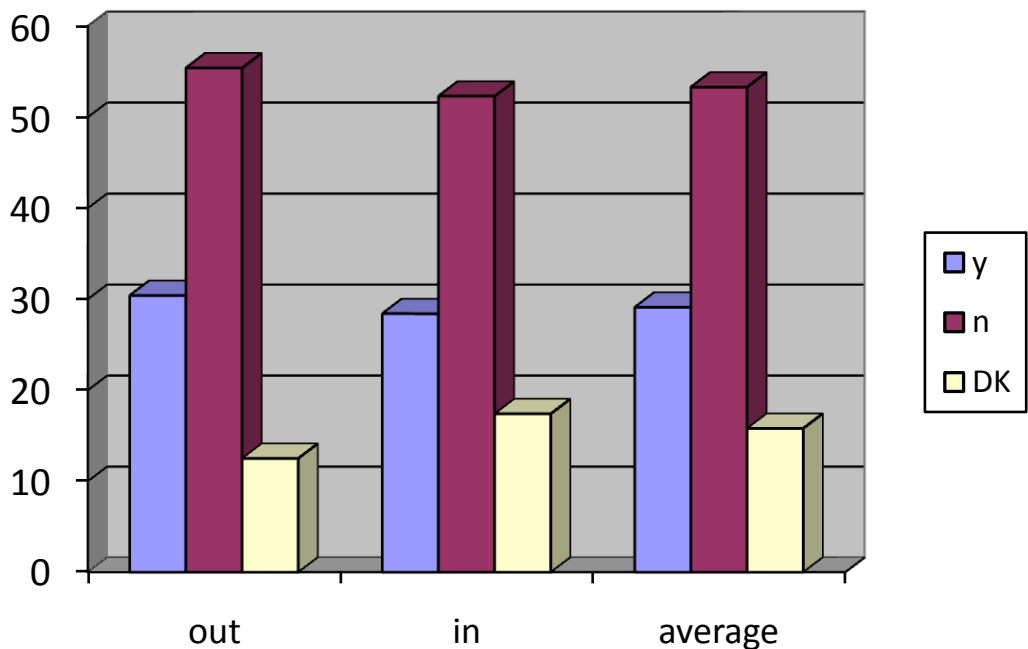
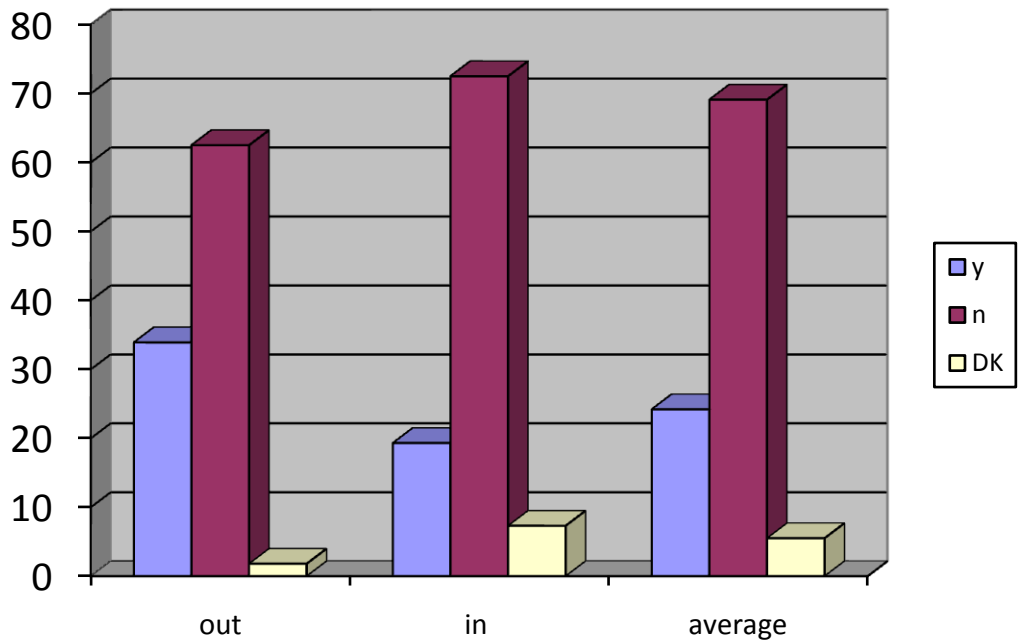
DK

I went to live by myself

The destruction of worker continues, with anguish more and more profound. Even the answers “no/dk” very often signify that the individual feels like a stranger in his own home

Friends have moved away

We are at the last act, caused by unjust persecutory attitudes and depressive syndrome: we arrive at complete isolation

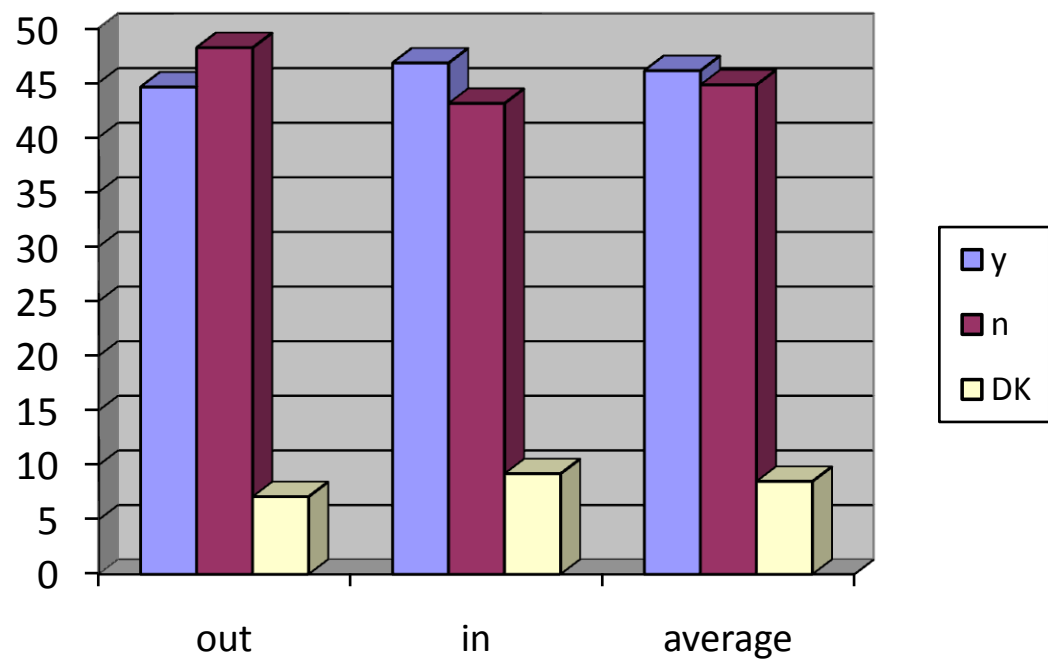
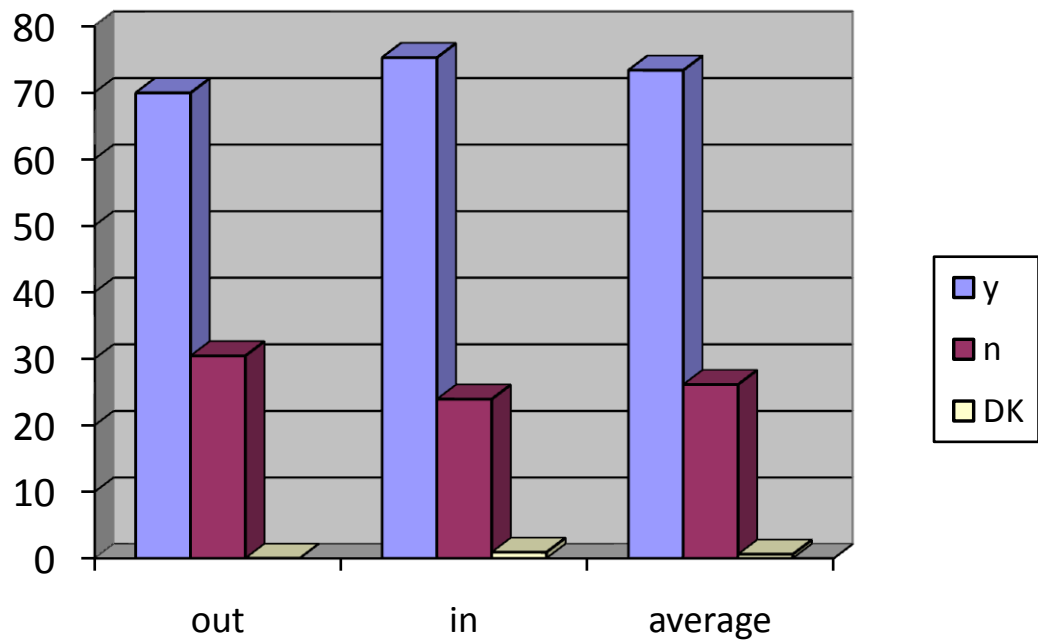


With expenses for lawyers and doctors I can barely arrive at the end of the month

The strong desire for revenge and the will to have justice mean expensive medical certifications or lawyers advice.

I feel empty inside and I don't feel like doing anything

It is typical of the mobbed worker to fix his mind on-the-job problems, forgetting his life.

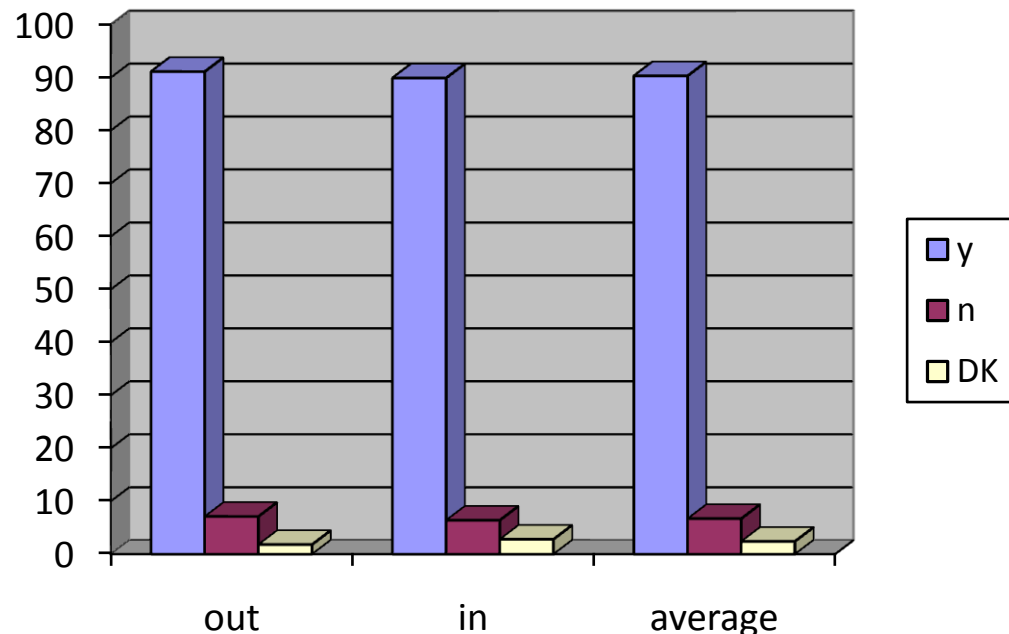
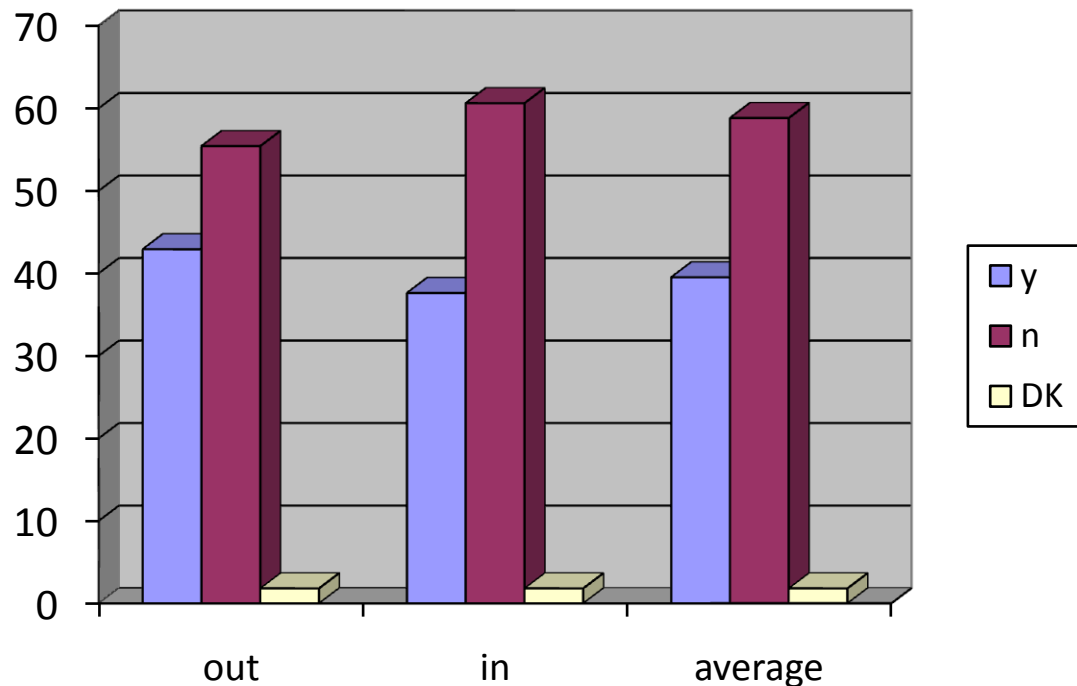


I have serious pathologies I went to specialists but with little results.

It has been demonstrated that the consequence of the stress generated by the persecutory attitudes, produces functional alterations which lead to a series of pathologies, often they are irreversible.

I do many absences from work

The very high absenteeism is generated by the stress-related psychopathologies, but most of all by the rejection of being humiliated

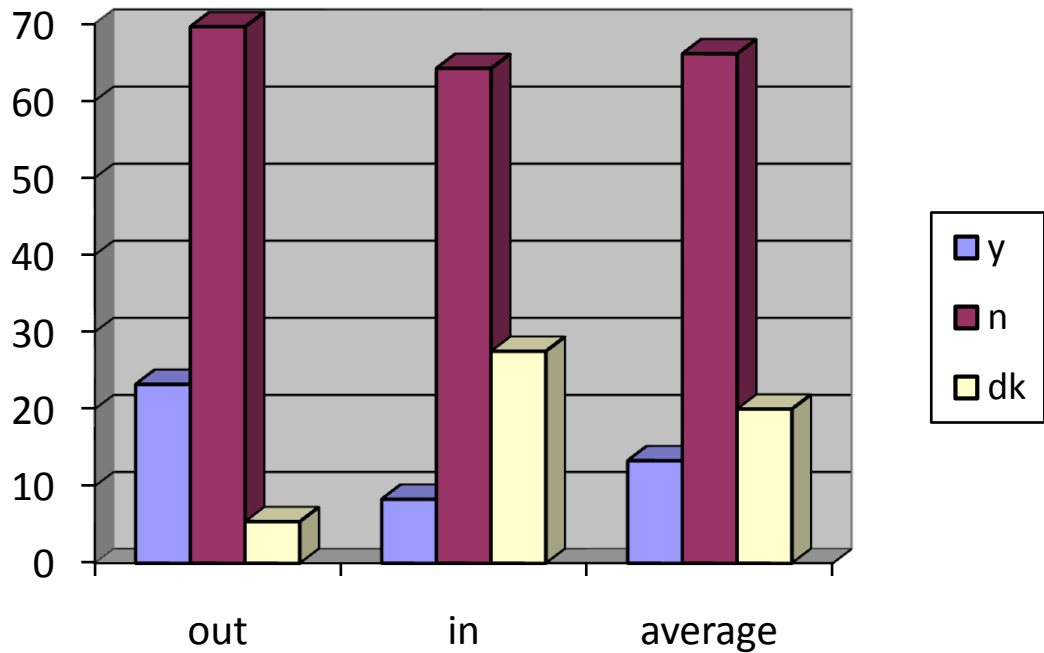
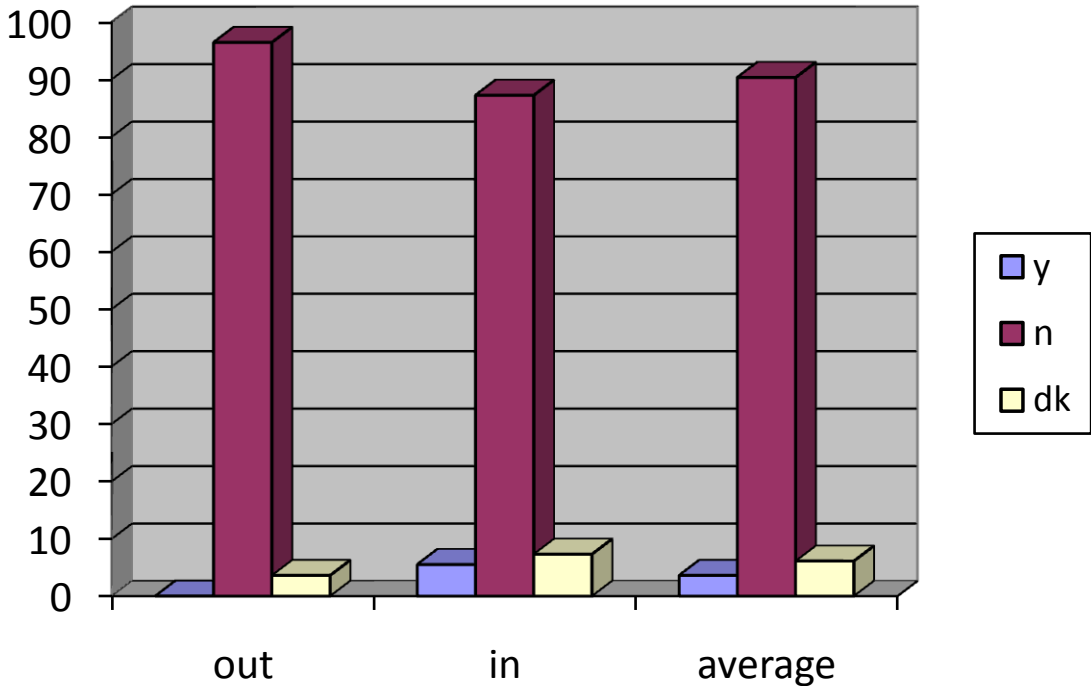
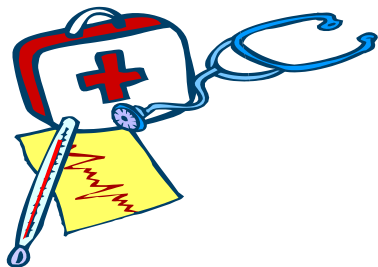


The company work climate is negative

The environment where mobbing finds fertile soil can be nothing but negative, this is the indication of a very sick company

The employer has tried to solve my problem

Despite the current Italian laws, cc 2087 and D.Lgs. 81/08, it is clear that the employer is not complying with one of his fundamental duties.

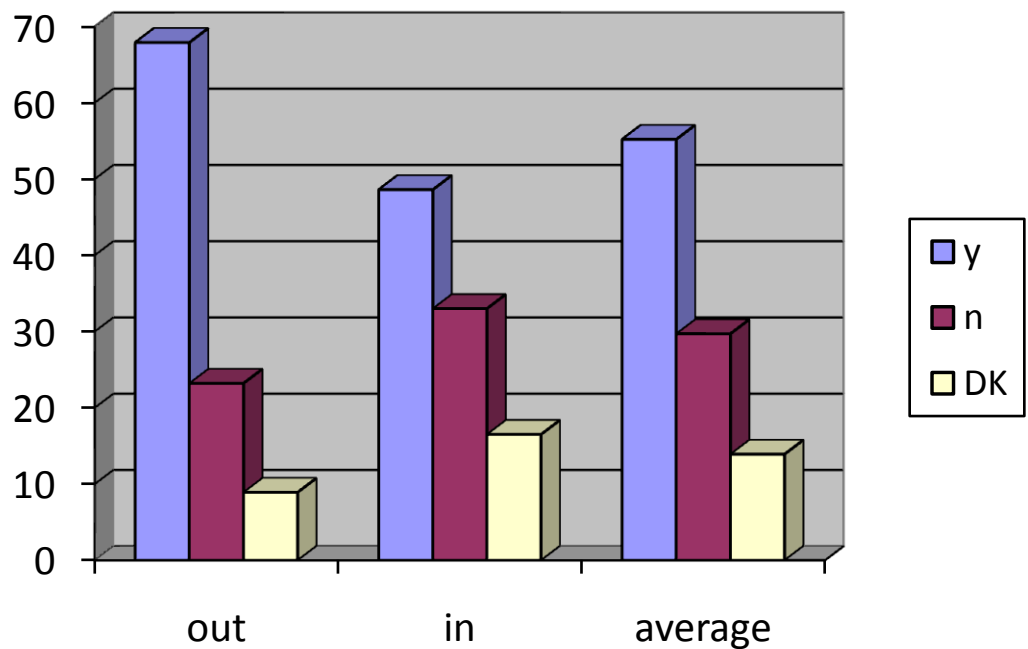
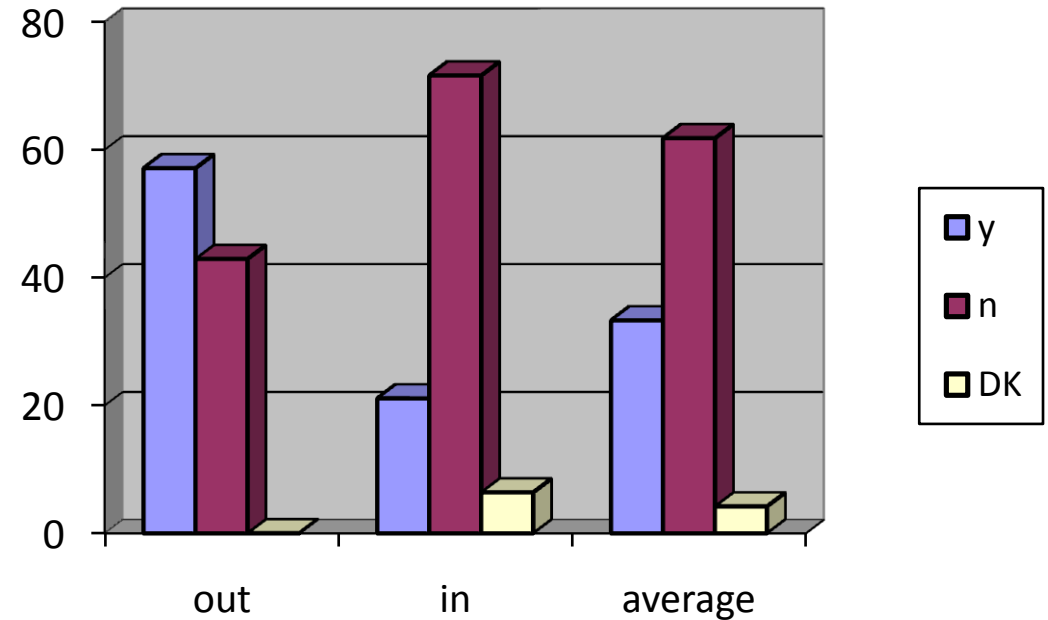


The company physician intervened to take care of my health

Very often the qualified physician detracts himself from his responsibilities, as a consultant it is difficult for him to oppose the company and respect his function and duties.

I went to the labour court

Usually, the workers who go to the judge, are the ones who already quit the job. The lack of an appropriate law, the abnormal quantity of claims, the lack of clarity are the reasons why most of the claims are losers



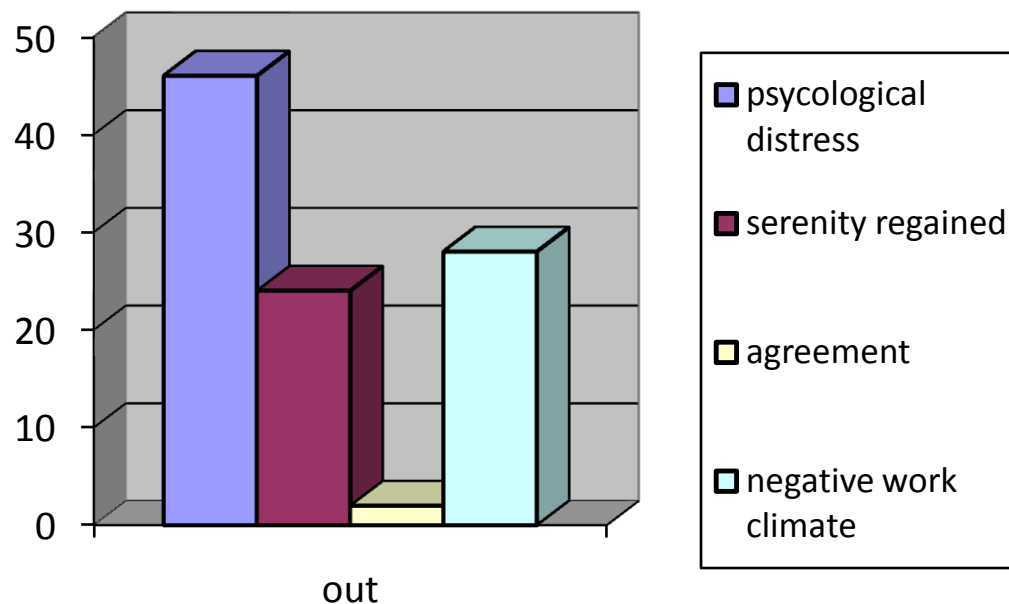
In my companies there are specific strategies for reduction of personnel

Globalization, world economic crisis, new precarious contracts, have as a consequence the disappearance of the most protected workers by “spontaneous” resignations

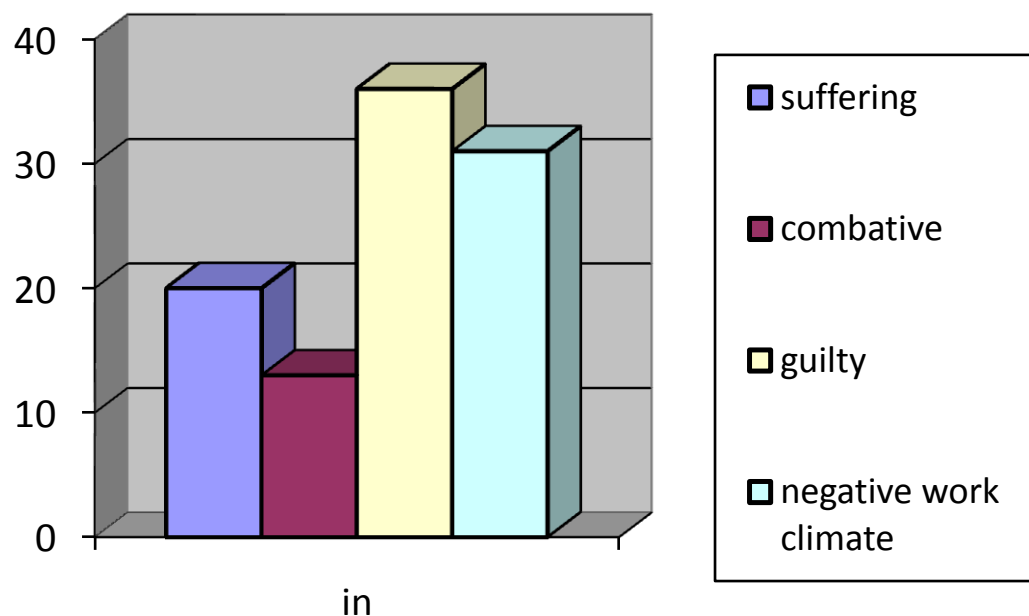
I left the company

emerges a feeling of:

- dismissal
- forced, resignation, injustice, disease, psychological distress
- serenity regained
- a pain, but after an agreement with company
- strong pain for a negative work climate



- a sentence which summarizes what happened....



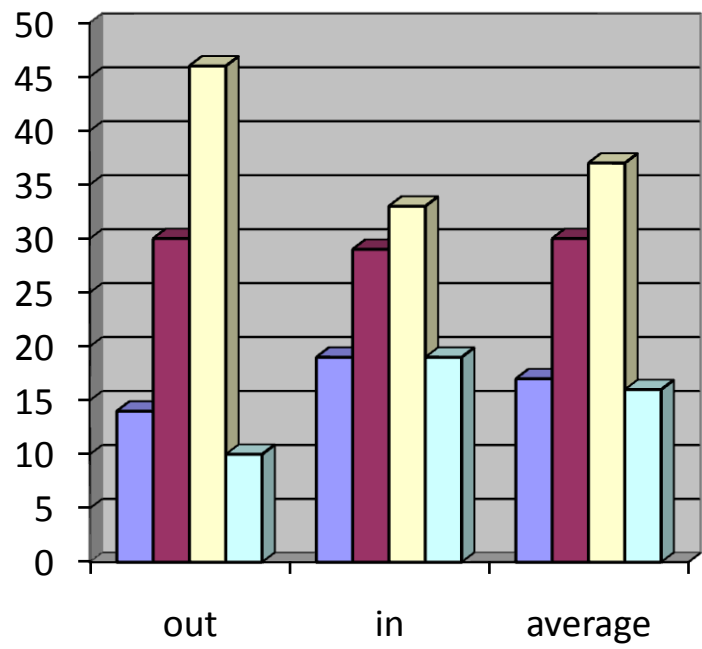
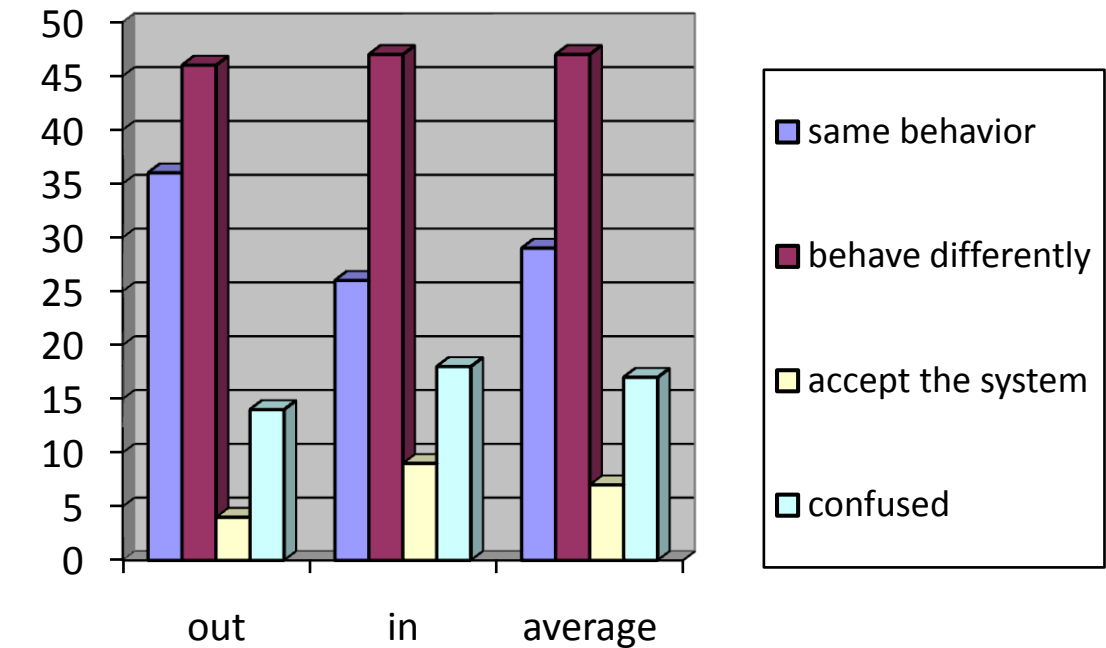
I'm still in the company

emerges a feeling of:

- anxiety, suffering, isolated, disqualified
- want to fight for their rights, to resist, with hope for justice
- to their lives destroyed, we feel guilty, hopeless, feelings of fear, anguish
- strong pain for a negative environment and health damages stress-related

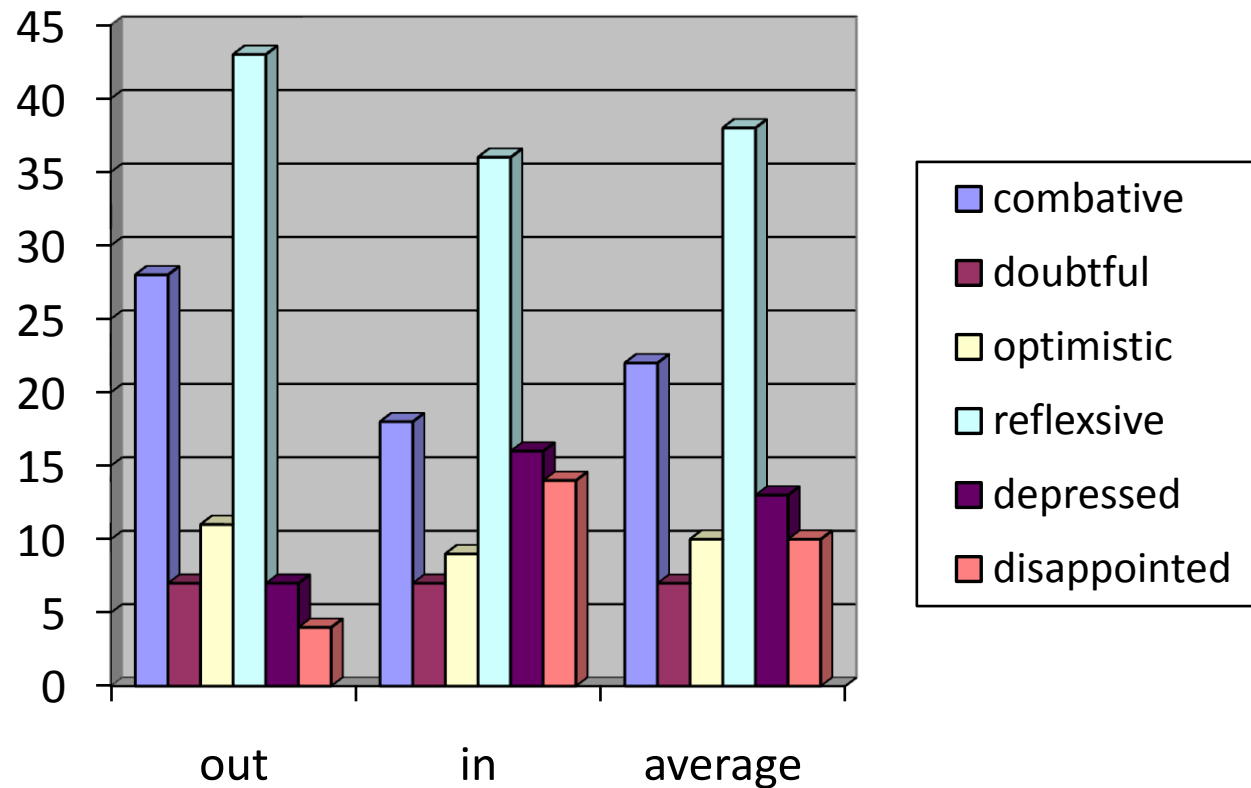
If I could turn back

- emerges a feeling of:
- would do the same, the same behavior
 - behave differently
 - would accept the system
 - are confused, cannot find an answer or meet other



The future ahead of me.....

- emerges a feeling of:
- answers decided, desperate, negative
 - the future is certainly not the best, but with uncertain hope hidden
 - Moderately optimistic, hopeful
 - They have no answer, are focused on their history, talk about the problem, are confused



Notes free thinking

From what is written there emerges a feeling:

- Combative
- Doubtful
- Optimistic
- Reflexive with denunciation of the situation
- Depressed
- Disappointed

Among the questions asked, **20 are particularly useful** to evaluate the “ **State of Self** “ of the mobbed person and the risks he could encounter.

Looking at the “self” means to see the representation each of us has of himself.

Freud showed how the parameters of normal function of the subject are the ability to love and work and Mobbing has negative effects on both.

Working, not only satisfies the economic needs, but also gives a social status recognized and appreciated that allows the individual to express himself in what he is able to do.

Due to stress generated by mobbing, work can become the source of deep suffering, which in generally provoke lasting transformations in the individual, mostly negative ones.



Particularly **12 questions** remind us that the mobbed is actually forced to suffer continuous wounds being exposed:

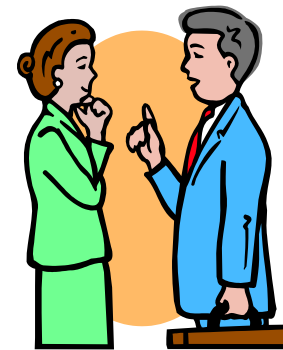
- to bullies and **discrimination**;
- to **sexual harassment**;
- **impediments for maternity**;
- has been **disqualified**;
- has to **radically change job**;
- has been left **inactive**;
- is **isolated**;
- may have to **retire sooner**;
- may have **strong economic difficulties**;
- may have to **ask for economic help from the partner**;
- can have **serious pathologies**;
- A long and **expensive legal battle**.



Therefore, the mobbed is **exposed daily to oppressions and humiliations**, which provoke a sense of failure with and intense feeling of shame.

For other **8 questions**, we can suspect that the mobbed one may risk the onset of a very acute psychic anguish for the re-emerging of old traumas; our finding shows :

- be **out-side when everybody else is at work**;
- be **excluded from the working world**;
- being **isolated from their family**;
- watching his/her own **family fall through**;
- lose contact of their children**;
- being **neglected by his/her friends**;
- feeling rejected and **forced to live alone**;
- losing any will to live**;



The situation of a subject with old traumas is very different: he or she may go towards the physiological destruction, a profound fall of the self-esteem and a disarming sense of lack of meaning. He/she is a subject with big gaps and easily will encounter worsening modifications when he/she is exposed to the traumatic stress, mobbing-related action, with the most extreme consequences on himself or on others

All this demonstrates the necessity for a national law dedicated to mobbing, which is already at planning stage at the Italian parliament for the past 10 years, a law that will enlighten the phenomenon and could be a deterrent for the molesters.

Two stories

	A	B
Gender	man	woman
Age bracket	51- 60	31- 40
Educational level	maturity	
Company size	more than 150	6 - 15
Professional Level	employee	
Who is the mobber	management	boss
Sector	pub. adm.	private

A My present situation is of desperation, I have no future

B Insecurity and fear, At the moment I don't see a future, I only hope there is one

Recently I have been contacted by **A's** family, thanking me for the support to their relative and they told me that he **committed suicide**.

and **B** wrote: I am not **scared of being among people** anymore and the **panic attacks** are an old memory. I am **still taking medications** and I keep on going to **psychotherapy**. I want to thank you, because you have been the person closest to me and gave me the strength to keep on going.

Not being alone in that moment made the difference