

Introduction

The research project Sexual Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace was conducted by Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (CIEG) between 2014 and 2016 as part of a partnership project led by Commission for Equality in Work and Employment (CITE), involving a number of different partners, with funding from EEA Grants.

The starting point for this research was a comparison with the data gathered in a pioneering survey conducted in 1989 (Amâncio and Lima, 1994) of sexual harassment of women. In view of the huge changes in society over the past 25 years, the scope of the research in 2015 was expanded to include bullying, and the survey subjects included men, and not only women, as had previously been the case.

Although the term *sexual harassment* is relatively recent, the abuse to which it refers, experienced by women in the workplace, is a much older phenomenon. But it was in the 1970s that the term entered the public consciousness as the feminist movement fought for change, locating sexual harassment in the wider context of inequalities of gender and power. Formerly regarded a moral or private issue, sexual harassment was now viewed as a social problem which needed to be addressed.

At a later stage, the great diversity of employment situations and the complexity of gender inequalities prompted researchers to take a deeper, interdisciplinary approach to the subject, looking at both the female and male universes, their interactions, power relations and the organisational context

Workplace bullying, defined as such, has only recently gained visibility in Portugal as a social phenomenon. Internationally, research started to shed light on this phenomenon in the 1980s, but it was in the 1990s that the debate and research in this area really took off. Although more needs to be known about this problem, which has only recently been defined, the targets of bullying have always had to deal with the negative consequences for their physical and mental wellbeing.

Both phenomena constitute an affront to human dignity, with consequences for society as a whole. In Europe, these are problems which affect tens of millions of workers of both sexes, although women are the main victims (Eurofound, 2015).

Civic movements and supranational organizations, such as the International Labour Organisation and the Council of Europe, have striven to achieve greater visibility for these issues, condemning them, and pushing them up the legal and political agenda. They have campaigned to persuade states to adopt preventive and punitive measures,

especially in relation to workplace practices, and sought to raise the awareness of employers and unions of the benefits of preventing and tackling harassment and bullying.

In order to obtain a picture of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace in Portugal, the researchers decided to combine and triangulate extensive and intensive methodologies. A representative sample of the Portuguese working population (mainland Portugal, excluding the primary sector) was surveyed using a questionnaire. At the same time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with men and women who had suffered bullying and/or sexual harassment. The questionnaire was designed to provide data on the scale and characteristics of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, to discover how sexual harassment is perceived by society, establishing what has changed and comparing ways of thinking 25 years on. It also set out to discover how the targets of harassment react, who they turn to for support and their reasons for reacting in the way they do and for seeking, or not seeking, support.

The book is divided into nine chapters and an introduction. The first two chapters establish the coordinates for the research.

In the first chapter, we explain how the research is designed, the aims, questions it seeks to answer and the methodological strategy adopted. We also provide an overview of the population surveyed and its objective and subjective working conditions.

The two fundamental questions posed are what is sexual harassment or bullying in the workplace? And why does it happen? To answer these questions, the historical, theoretical and conceptual framework has to be established in order to define clearly the standpoint from which the phenomenon of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace is observed, described, characterised, interpreted and explained. This perspective is supplied by the second chapter, which starts with a brief history of how the two concepts - sexual harassment and bullying - emerged, identifying and summarising the progress made in research over the last thirty years, fundamentally in the USA, Europe and in Portugal. Transnational and national legislation drawn up over this period is then briefly discussed. In order to understand and explain why the different types of harassment and bullying occur, the chapter then describes three analytical dimensions which are regarded as crucial for addressing these issues in the workplace: questions of power, social gender relations and the organisational settings. The concepts are then operationalised, identifying dimensions and indicators.

The next three chapters set out to describe, characterise, interpret and explain the phenomenon of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace.

Chapter three is centred on a comparison with the findings of the 1989 research into sexual harassment of women in the workplace (Amâncio and Lima, 1994). Portuguese society has undergone profound changes in the past 25 years, in everything from the structure of the economy and the employment market to sexuality, including levels of educational attainment. So the questions addressed are: Has there been any change in what women and men perceive as being, or not being, sexual harassment? And have reactions to sexual harassment changed? To answer these questions, the findings of the 1989 research and those from the new study, conducted in 2015, are compared at several levels. The first step is to examine changes in the labour market and in the place of female workers in this market. We then assess the change in the frequency of sexual harassment of women in the workplace, placing this transformation, albeit briefly, in the context of broader changes in the conception and meaning of sexuality for women and men. The comparison then focuses on the perpetrators of sexual harassment, examining the effects of the growth of the service sector in the last decade and a half on the identity of the perpetrators of sexual harassment. Explanations are provided for the shift away from the situation in 1989, when sexual harassers were predominantly co-workers, to the situation in 2015 in which sexual harassment is most frequently perpetrated by hierarchical superiors. The fourth focus of the comparison between 1989 and 2015 is on how female targets of sexual harassment react and rationalise the phenomenon. Lastly, we present an analysis of women's attitudes to sexual harassment, characterising the differences in what is and what isn't regarded as sexual harassment in the present (2015) and in the past (1989).

In answering the questions underlying this chapter, we come up against limitations, some of which have to do with the methodological options taken when designing the research instrument and also when formulating the indicators. Other limitations to this comparison are due to the evolution in the theoretical debate and the new knowledge accumulated over the past 25 years, prompting scholars to take a new and specific approach, resulting in a change in analytical priorities.

After focusing in chapter 3 on the changes over the past 25 years, the fourth chapter presents in greater detail the findings on sexual harassment in 2015. The presentation starts with an analysis of the frequency of sexual harassment, broken down into the four dimensions (sexual innuendo, unwelcome sexual advances, uninvited physical contact and *quid pro quo* harassment) and into each dimension by sex. This is followed by analysis of the perpetrators and targets of harassment, by sex. Sexual harassment practices are then analysed on the basis of individual characteristics, using four age ranges and occupational categories. The same practices are also analysed on the basis of the characteristics of organisations: by size, dividing organisations into four groups, by economic sector, by type of contractual arrangements with workers and by type of perpetrator, in accordance with the hierarchical position occupied in the organisation. Lastly, the working environment

is analysed, establishing the relationship between organisational climate and sexual harassment practices. This chapter concludes by looking at the ways in which individual targets of sexual harassment react and at whom they turn to for support. As before, this analysis is carried out by sex.

Chapter 5 addresses workplace bullying in Portugal, looking at six points. Firstly, we analyse people's perceptions of workplace bullying, assessing how clearly women and men identify potential bullying situations. The focus then turns from attitudes to the practices constituting workplace bullying, describing the most frequent practices. The third section of the chapter describes the uneven basis on which targets are subjected to different types of bullying, depending on factors relating to their respective life-stages and career-stages. Attention is then paid to the intersection between educational attainment and workplace bullying. The fifth item is a description and assessment of workplace bullies. Our analysis of workplace bullying in Portugal closes with an analysis of how the targets react.

Chapters six and seven put into perspective the facts on sexual harassment and bullying described in the previous chapters, comparing the findings with those of international studies (chapter six). Comparison of data between countries reveals the seriousness of the frequency of sexual harassment and bullying in Portugal (Eurofound, 2015; FRA, 2014).

Chapter seven will put into perspective the findings on sexual harassment and bullying by transposing the research findings to serve as the basis for planning and taking action (this being one of the four fundamental aims of the research project). Therefore, in this chapter the findings are used to identify needs and as grounds for defining paths and strategies for preventing sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace.

Prevention of bullying and sexual harassment is a priority for societies today. Supranational political guidelines on this issue, especially in Europe (Council of Europe and the European Commission), has been adopted in Portugal. However, systematic efforts to prevent sexual harassment and bullying in an employment setting, and to offer support for victims, are a relatively recent development in Portugal.

By means of a nationwide survey using a representative sample of the Portuguese working population, backed up by interviews, this research has clearly shown that action is needed to prevent sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. At the same time, comparative analysis with other countries, as seen in chapter six, also shows that the figures for harassment and bullying in Portugal remain above the European average, clearly illustrating the need to tackle this issue.

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Chapter seven presents a number of strategies for preventing sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, indicating the institutions with responsibility for promoting equality and dignity in employment relations, including powers of inspection and intervention in harassment situations. A range of measures are also suggested for implementation by the different organisations, and in particular by employers.

The eighth chapter provides a picture of sexual harassment and bullying in Portugal in the words of male and female employees with personal experience of sexual harassment, bullying and a combination of the two. This chapter gives a voice to ordinary people, to talk about their experiences of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace.

The closing notes provide a brief overview of the main findings, connecting them to the perspective of how to address sexual harassment and bullying and summing up the conclusions. This final section also shows how the snapshot obtained (necessarily a fleeting image, like any knowledge) points to other unanswered questions and to the need to look further into this phenomenon and monitor its characteristics in Portuguese society.