

Omerta in Academia

THE MOST RIGOROUS AND DETAILED
ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS OF
SECOND ORDER OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT



SECOND ORDER OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT



Many readers will believe this book narrates a case in their environment. It is normal, because the facts described here occur in many cases of sexual harassment

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Introduction

This book is a narrative, not a scientific publication. It should not be read as if the characters and events narrated were real. If anyone feels self-reflected, it is because he or she is as good or as bad as the character they identify with. Such a reaction is part of many narratives, there are people who saw themselves reflected in Mrs. Dalloway without Virginia Woolf having ever met them.

There are very different motivations which can lead someone to write and publish a narrative. An extraordinary woman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, achieved with Uncle Tom's Cabin for many sectors to become aware of the inhumanity of slavery and for them to mobilize until gaining its abolition. Also, in that novel from the 19th century the characters and events narrated are fictitious; however, many people believed to see in them real characters and events from their own context. We have written this narrative with the only motivation of contributing to making society know the gravity of second order of sexual harassment and know that only overcoming it is it possible to eradicate sexual harassment.

We want to thank the bravery of Diario Feminista and of all its collaborators, especially of those who have signed the different articles appearing in this book. There are many people in the world who are working intensely and risking themselves in order to overcome this much grave problem. We want to invite all of them to debate with us openly how we can jointly achieve for girls and women who are being assaulted all over the world while we read this book to stop suffering it and be able to freely decide their lives without any sort of coercion.

Ana Vidu and Mar Joanpere

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Omerta (1): regarding sexual harassment in Universities

El Diario Feminista

A prestigious weekly publication from Mexico has dared to bring to light the harassment that J has been exerting for some time on students of a Masters' degree, together with the evidence of the harassment received, through emails, messages and images.

The victims have explained, through that weekly publication, the harassment they suffered. They did so mainly thinking of the potential victims from other Universities or places where J participates, aware that public complaint is the best prevention tool for those who are likely to go through that horrible experience in the future. The evidence they provide makes clear that this professor feels unpunished so as to repeat the kind of behavior he previously carried out in other places - such as conditioning the review of his students' to them sending him nude pictures of themselves.

Complaints presented in the newspaper prove once more that the impunity that this professor enjoyed at his University has had extremely serious international consequences due to the fact that he went on repeating identical behavior in other universities and countries. After being accused and denounced of sexual harassment for a long time by victims of the University and people who have shown solidarity with them, he is now accused of identical behavior from victims of another University in Mexico.

This unacceptable behavior surely would not have happened without the existing *omerta* in the University, with the complicities of powerful people that also occurred in this University in Mexico. In 2016, the fight against sexual harassment in Universities went across a historical moment, as the aforementioned professor re-joined the University. At that precise point, *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities*, together with the Students' Assemblies of several faculties in the University, were promoting the film-forum (viewing and post-film discussion) on the documentary film *The Hunting Ground*, based on real cases of sexual abuse at university campuses in the United States.

It was an enthusiastic context that regrettably came to a halt. Just at the point when the assemblies, together with the victims' network, managed to collect over 1,000 signatures in less than three days, on the *change.org* platform, asking for the firing of this professor, some journalists who -according to them were well connected with officials from the University-, launched a cruel attack on the victims of this professor's harassment and on the research center that, as a matter of fact, were the first ones to file a complaint and also carried out the first investigations on gender violence in our universities.

The ferocious attacks of June 13th, 2016, allegedly promoted by hidden interests, silenced any campaign against the professor denounced for sexual harassment. Not only silence was achieved, but surprisingly J got his job back at the University. The only achievement, though

significant, was that he was banned from teaching, thus reducing the likelihood of harassing other potential victims.

On June 13th, harassers and their supporters were very happy with the University and with those unscrupulous journalists who spread slander and defamation. The campaign gave J such a sense of impunity that he allegedly behaved in the same manner at another University again.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of the journalists fortunately reacted with great professionalism and ethics in favor of the victims and those who supported them from the very beginning. Universities themselves are now gradually starting to change. The University's Rector's team has completely broken with the philosophy that previous Rector's teams adhered to. The transformation is already improving the lives of many people within the Universities, but there is still a lot of work to be done and there is still much complicity that must be denounced and overcome.

* This article is part of *Omerta at the University*, a series of publications that address the fierce law of silence generated in some Universities concerning sexual harassment.

Omerta (2): 30 years of silenced victims

Ana Vidu

Fifteen years before the emergence of the #MeToo, the current international movement against sexual harassment, another silence-breaking movement began in Spanish Universities. One of the denounced professors had enjoyed thirty years of impunity for committing the kind of acts we herewith detail. Everything I disclose here has already appeared in other newspapers, radio, and television stations. There are many more things, but I cannot publish them yet; being the first victim filing a complaint against this professor with so much power in the University context, I have been and still am very persecuted. Still, that is not what I am concerned for, because I have a growing and wonderful support from journalists, students, teachers, and my family. What worries me is that, given the strong collusion around harassment in our Universities and other institutions, if I were to make certain things public now, whoever attacked me could present him or herself as the victim and denounce me, and he or she could even get a judge's support to convict me instead of him or her.

The daily paper *El País* published some of the courageous testimonies contained in a report by the Attorney's Office which considered that this man had allegedly committed crimes. However, these crimes were already unprosecutable at the time the University sent the complaint to the Attorney's Office. A student was allegedly harassed by the professor with emails of high sexual content: "I want to see you... I love you very much... For a 60-year-old boy like me a lot of frantic activity in bed... Sex is an excellent way of communication... Come one day to my house... My life is an orgasm, girl!" A student was asked to take pictures of his torso and back, as well as to give him a massage, first wearing his clothes and then without them. On another occasion, in his underwear, he massaged the young man and grabbed his penis.

A cascade of complaints made it possible for him to be unable to carry on with his behavior within our University, but he managed to reach the end of his retirement without any disciplinary measures. The feeling of impunity led to the apparition of similar complaints in other Universities in other countries, with the same professor involved. The *Proceso*, a weekly Mexican publication, published the testimonies of students who declared that women were asked to give him photos of their naked torso or to accept his obscene propositions, in exchange for higher marks in the Masters' course. In another email to one of the students, he writes: "Please send me a picture of your banana". In another one he says: "In sunny Barcelona, almost Easter holidays, I miss you, I imagine you enjoying life, reading, masturbating every day, dreaming of you, many kisses on the tip of your dick" (sic).

In subsequent articles in this series, we will explain why a professor could have behaved this way for 30 years and remain in office until retirement, why he can continue to do so now in another country. We will report the university structures that protect this despicable behavior, the mechanisms these structures have to try to destroy us as victims, the collaboration of the sensationalist press with the harassers, the active or passive complicity

of the University's teaching staff. And we will also report on the good people who, in their newspapers, radio and television stations, Universities, Justice systems, etc., courageously support the victims and succeed in making us stop feeling like victims. Far from being destroyed, we enjoy the success to which our professional capacity and ethics lead us.

Omerta (3): Parliament forces breaking the silence

Rosa Valls

What Omerta 2 narrates does not refer to an isolated case, but rather to a structure which, allowing harassment, destroys the victims and the few people who dare to protect them. In this article we detail how the first research on sexual harassment in Spanish Universities led the Parliament to legislate the obligation to address gender-based violence in Universities. For this purpose, it was necessary to overcome the resistance of the very Universities and the persecution that, from within, was promoted against those of us who were carrying out the research (which will be the reason for subsequent articles in this series).

After applying a survey to 1,083 students from six Spanish Universities, this first research shows that 62% of the students are aware or have suffered situations of gender violence at their Universities. There is also a difficulty in identifying cases and reporting them. 91% of aggressions in Spanish Universities are not reported. 92% of the students were unaware of the availability of a service set for them should they want to explain what had happened, and 85% of the students were strongly demanding it.

The political impact of this research was embodied at the legislative stage in two Laws of 2007 that rectify the error of the 2004 Law, Organic Law 1/2004, of December 28th, on Integral Protection Measures against Gender Violence (GV), which does not include Universities as spaces where GV occurs. In view of this serious error, we raised our voices and presented evidence to different members of the Congress and the Senate from various political parties. They soon recognized the error - which they attributed to their advisors - and they set to fix it in a future Law. Before this situation, at the end of October 2004 we organized a conference at the Barcelona Scientific Park, where we publicly spoke about this issue, and a Member of Parliament committed to ensure that these regrettable situations at Universities will be included in a future Law.

2007 - Organic Law 3/2007, March 22nd, for the Effective Equality of Women and Men. Article 25 specifically speaks of equality in the field of higher education. It covers two items. 1) In the field of higher education, public Administrations, in the exercise of their respective duties, shall encourage teaching and research on the meaning and scope of equality between women and men. 2) Particularly, and to this end, public Administrations shall promote: a) Incorporation, in appropriate curricula, of teaching on equality between women and men. b) Creation of specific postgraduate courses. c) Undertaking specialized studies and research in this field. 2007 - Organic Law 4/2007, of April 12th, on Universities. The "Twelfth Additional Provision on Equality Units" is introduced here. "Universities shall have, among their organisational structures, equality units for the development of functions linked to the principle of equality between women and men".

In this sense, as from 2007, Spanish Universities enjoy equality units with protocols to deal with the reality of sexual harassment in their environments. These equality units represent

an important, although not decisive, step in the fight against sexual harassment in academic institutions. A reality that we will explain in future articles in the Omerta series.

Omerta (4): Harassment between equals at the University

Cristina Pulido

This article has been possible thanks to the deposition of two of the victims of the harassment case herewith disclosed, as well as the contributions of a professor who provided them his support and a classmate of theirs who explained to us this case through his experience.

The two female students who wished to share their experience explain to the DF that in the academic year 2012-2013, they were starting a Masters' degree at the University. According to them, in this Masters' course, from the first presentation session, they noticed there was a kind of tension in the room. The teaching staff was introduced in said session. The girls said "something strange was happening there. We saw peculiar relationships between the faculty team, one of the professors accompanied by a boy who did not take his eye off us during the whole session. We left the hall with a very bittersweet feeling".

The days passed by, and the student's attitude towards them became more and more intimidating. "He would look at us intensely the whole afternoon, fortuitously appear in the toilets area, in the library, even on the subway, in class he would place a large knife on the desk while he clearly drew naked girls". The first reaction of the three girls who were harassed was to keep silent and feeling guilty about what was going on: "We started to think that our analysis regarding this issue was wrongly tackled, that it was something to do with us, or that we imagined things, yet we felt that we were becoming more and more frightened".

One of the girls said that "the thrill with which I started the Masters' course seemed to vanish, while my nervousness was increasingly growing, as did my discomfort. I remember October 31st 2012 because I felt terrible. Even the teacher saw me and convinced me that I had to go home, pick me up at the University. I could not stand-up and could not catch the metro. I felt hopeless. We had been sharing the class with him for a month, but I couldn't take it anymore.

A Professor said in class that if a student was bullied or harassed, she could ask for support from a teacher member of the Faculty's equality commission that had always supported the victims. The victims went to said Professor and then to that particular teacher, thus obtaining valuable assistance and comfort. The victims started talking to each other. That brought them together and empowered them, and as they mentioned, this was something that would have been impossible without that solidarity.

Meetings began then with the head of the Faculty's Equality committee, who, as one of them says, "always asked us to say nothing, to keep quiet, to remain silent. Both she and the Masters' coordinator told us that we were too nervous and that didn't help us, that the whole thing was not a big deal and that if we relaxed, we would see that there was no danger. How

odd it was all together when she told us that when the head of the equality commission had to meet with the harasser, she was accompanied in the office by another teacher while outside the room security guards were standing. What a cheek! Meantime they made us think that we were exaggerating!"

The large Masters' Faculty (except for three teachers) and the student body (except for a colleague we talked to) did not support the victims; on the contrary, they supported the harasser. According to our classmate, "he chased female students through the corridors, made obscene drawings in class and used an aggressive tone of voice as he spoke. He noticed the group felt unease with him; I even thought that they did nothing because they were scared, they were not active at all, although there were people who from the beginning justified his behavior with arguments such as the need to integrate this person".

All this happened while the teachers carried on with their classes as usual, pretending nothing happened, as our classmate states: "Everything changed for me when some of the teachers waited for us to leave the classroom to justify their attitude, then I realized that it was neither fear nor pity. Unfortunately, it became clear to me when they launched a campaign of academic and psychological sabotage against the colleagues who denounced the facts under the group's support. They did so because they denounced the facts and, yes, also because they were women themselves. At that particular moment, I was very close to them; we were together as much as we possibly could, we went together across the Faculty, and they did absolutely nothing to me. (...) But a female teacher indeed urged me to sabotage a class of one of them".

Attacks by the rest of the class against the girls and the teachers were added to the attacks to the teachers who had stood in solidarity with the harassed girls. As one of the teachers, who supported them, states: "The person responsible for the Masters' course, rather than congratulating me for my support to the victims, said that I had been unfair to the Faculty. The Dean increased her aggressiveness against me, even more than she addressed to me from the very moment I officially complained against the Professor in our University, whom she protected and went on protecting him. At the same time, he carried on attacking their victims".

According to the girls, the whole process of denouncing that unbearable situation was accompanied by a great variety of inconsistencies: "It was absolutely unbelievable, as we had teachers who talked about feminism and social movements in their classes, they pretended to be progressive thinking people who stood close to the student body, just like the equality commission or even the Dean of the Faculty who did nothing to help us. They were well known so-called progressive thinkers in the city and the University, and what happened was that they mistreated us as they did with those who gave us their support. That was how they showed their real face of what they did for years and years to avoid facing cases of violence".

Despite the reprisals, the two girls, with the collaboration of those who supported them, started a fight to get the University to protect them from harassment. This is how they began to organize and meet with the *Solidary Network of Victims of Gender Violence in University*.

This collective solidarity was crucial for them to denounce the case internally through the University. In the end, the case was favorably resolved, with the expulsion of the student from the Masters' program and the prohibition to ever be back to the Faculty.

There were horrendous months for them, not only because of what they got from the student but also because of the environment's reactions. At the same time, they found themselves in the middle of a lot of misunderstandings, where hypocrisy was apparent regarding the case: "When we had to enter the Masters' class, we had a meeting with the coordinator, as well as an interview, all participants did the same. A few months later, we got to know that this student had already harassed a student during his bachelors', and he had been taken to court for it; everybody in the University was aware of it. That was the icing of the cake, we were interviewed and everything... and he, even knowing that he was a declared harasser, was allowed to enroll, risking our lives and professional careers. What a shameful and awful situation!"

After much struggle and support from outside the University, the victims managed to win the case thanks partly to a law professor who issued an unequivocal report. However, the victims considered it a scandal that the only teacher on the Equality Commission who had supported them was excluded from the commission, whereas those who did not stay in. Sources from Spanish Universities which DF has managed to contact us that this is a frequent practice: to exclude professors from equality commissions who support the victims of harassers linked to powerful groups.

The message of the girls today is encouraging, as they not only managed to overcome the case of harassment and the barriers that the institution and a large part of the environment placed on them, but they also wanted to organize themselves to show solidarity with every victim of harassment in the University giving them comfort. Victims say that it was the first case of sexual harassment won in our University, where fortunately other harassment cases have been recently won. As one of them states, "the key lies in creating support and solidarity networks. Whatever the institution (University) does not do for us, we must do it ourselves. Always thinking of the most vulnerable girls, those who join the first grade now and who are lost in such a huge area in the University. We have to be there, denouncing these situations and supporting them so that no girl suffers harassment. No one in the whole University suffers reprisals for positioning themselves and showing solidarity with the victims of harassment.

Omerta (5): Sexual harassment in the media: success and failure

Mar Joanpere

Some of the main vehicles and tools for the prevention of sexual harassment are the press and the media, which can and must have an active role in favor of the victims. However, sometimes they passively collaborate in maintaining the silence or, even worse, there are journalists who act against the victims and, therefore, in favor of the harassers. On the one hand, there are media and journalists who, from their commitment against all and any kinds of violence and right violation, choose to be the vehicles of the victims of any injustice, turning them into survivors and empowering them to transform into role models for those who have not dared to report yet. On the other hand, there are media and journalists who have taken a stance in the side of the attackers and harassers, basically in the side of power and structures, so that nothing changes and victims continue being victims, with no voice.

We have very clear examples of these two positions in our society, which show us that gender violence in universities is not an issue which excludes neither committed journalists nor mediocre yellow press journalists (this is how those who do mediocre journalism are referred to; those who, instead of informing, work for promoting scandal and morbidity).

The reports of sexual harassment in universities have been diverse. The mobilization against the reincorporation of the alleged major university professor harasser was stopped cold by the attacks of a small, but very active part of journalists towards the professor's victims. Their only contact with the victims was to ask them morbid details about their sexual relationships or their ways of living, besides giving voice to the harassers' lies in the media (sheltered in anonymity) regarding the private lives of the victims.

On the other hand, however, crushing the aspirations of the most mediocre side of journalism, a big part of journalists from very different media continued with their occupation's professional and ethical criteria, deciding to give voice to the victims and critically corroborating all and any kinds of information. Extraordinary journalists from Documentos TV included the victims and the research group that broke the silence about gender violence in universities in their documentary film entitled *Voces contra el silencio* [Voices against the silence]. The documentary film received the Golden Globe Award from the World Media Festival of Hamburg and is already recognized, seen, debated in many social spaces (including universities) in different parts of the world, bringing the voices of survivors to every corner that remained silent.

The difference of the former and the latter in the impact in the lives of the girls, in those who have supported them, in their trajectories, in their environment and in the feminist movement, is very big. Victory has been and will continue to be very outstanding both among survivors and among the journalists who have done a great job and whose international prestige does not stop growing. At the same time, those who positioned

themselves against the victims are not and will never be able to avoid the fact that their lack of professionalism and that they still have not rectified is more and more known at the international level.

Omerta (6): A child abuser, original source of yellow press

Mireia Arrufat and Cristina Pulido

On June 13th, 2016, some media launched a lynching against the victims who dared to break the silence in our universities. Who were the sources of the lies they presented as if they were facts? Let us see one of them, a child abuser.

Z had private classes as a reserve for underage girls whom to abuse. In this case, he first gained L's family's trust to harass her with more impunity. He had even managed to be invited to family reunions. L's dear ones could not even imagine what was about to happen, nor could they think about it once it happened. In that situation, Z's pressure on L became stronger and stronger until he managed to abuse her. When years later L started to participate in a research group, Z left him to ask to be admitted in that one, using his curriculum in the other one and competency on a subject, which was very rare by then. He soon disliked due to his persistence in chasing many girls, not accepting their denial of having sex with him, and a comment he made regarding a municipality in the coast, treating all girls as b...

There are many and diverse sources that DF has been able to consult about all this process. That research group started little after its open breakdown of the silence about gender violence (GV) in universities, including the first research funded by the Women's Institute of the Spanish Government and another one funded by the Catalan Institute of Women. In preparation for what would become these studies, L told two feminists from the women's group what Z had done to her when she was a minor and how annoyed she felt with him. Z refused to give his version. He left the group and soon started explaining to L's family that she had entered a sect and that they should not believe anything she told them because she had been psychologically manipulated. The family wanted to know the truth, and L gave them all sorts of details until Z could not deny it and was expelled from the family. From that moment on, L's mother (and other family members) was a great advocate of the research group which had supported her daughter. They could not report because, unfortunately, those felonies prescribe, then and now, in the Spanish legislation, although there is a growing movement for them not to prescribe.

At the beginning, Z's slander had very little dissemination, but he insisted on uniting anyone to make the most significant harm possible. However, the progress in the breakdown of silence about GV joined other harassers and their accomplices to that campaign. A growing number of individuals collaborates with that child abuser, calling the research group "sect", a research group that is considered at the international level as one of the most open, democratic and transparent ones.

Omerta (7). Sample counterfeiter, yellow journalism source

Elena Duque

P sent an article to a scientific journal falsifying the sample on which its content was based: most of its cases had never existed. DF has been able to contrast oral and written sources that demonstrate this falsification and that P himself has admitted. This is one of the most serious misconducts that can be committed in the scientific community, which is based on the confidence that the data provided by the researcher are true. Precisely for this reason, the scientific community loses all its confidence when someone falsifies this data and it is discovered, which is what usually ends up happening in the current information society. P could have rectified and publicly acknowledged his mistake and committed not to do it again.

As neither recognizing the truth showed the slightest self-criticism, nor willing to not do it again, his research group had to expel him. From that moment on, the main objective of P was to slander that group, mistakenly believing that it could destroy it, thus avoiding the testimony of his falsifications.

He knew that he could not do it alone and, because of this, he looked for help among the lobby of sexual harassers at the University, who were preparing a public lynching against that group for having been the one who broke the silence on gender violence in our universities. That lobby had co-allied with journalists who were looking for easy success with news they knew were lies, but which generated a morbid expectation that would give them a large audience.

This was not P's first action against the ethical values agreed in democratic societies and in the scientific community. In fact, two previous times he had acted against those values. Both times, he had been expelled, but he had reacted by committing himself not to do it again and begging to be able to continue in the group. However, when he falsified that sample and was finally expelled, he sheltered himself in anonymity and, in co-alliance with journalists who knew why he was lying, he spread through the media that he had never been allowed to leave the group, just the opposite to what had actually happened.

Omerta (8): 100% fake news: the yellow press informant

Laura Ruiz

G gave the media full details of what he had experienced as a member of the research group: psychological manipulation, control of his personal life, oppression in all the senses that he had suffered within, the very negative consequences for his health that he suffered and still had. This "information" had a problem: G has never been part of that group where they did not even know him, nor did they know that he existed until journalists in favour of the harassers decided to spread his slanders.

DF has oral and written evidence that G is an imposter who presents himself to the media as a former member of that research center, and he never was. Journalists who spread his story already knew that he was never a researcher of that group and that everything was 100% fake news. These journalists were not interested in the truth, but the search for an audience at the cost of provoking a re-victimization of the victims and second order of sexual harassment against those who had always supported them.

G was one of the most active harassers in social networks against the research center. He opened an anonymous account on Twitter, whose only purpose was to attack the victims with the same slanders that later appeared in some media. Twitter rectified (cancelling that account), but the media that promoted this harassment have not yet done so, even a public TV and radio channel that agreed with the victims to rectify, has not yet done so. Sources consulted by DF have been able to verify that a police investigation has confirmed the membership of G of the harassing Twitter account and that a judicial process is now open.

G's harassment was not limited to giving a false testimony to the media. Nor was it enough for him to write tweets from the anonymous account. He used to call and send emails wherever a researcher from that center gave a lecture, a course or was presenting a paper. But he went beyond. He dared to spread the attacks that accused of sect to the research center among the teachers and families of a school where some people from the research group had enrolled their sons and daughters.

Those who really act against gender violence do not tweet in favor of #Metoo while looking the other way in these situations; that is a hypocrisy that favors harassment. Those who do not want to collaborate actively or passively against sexual assaults are those who publicly pronounce in favor of the victims.

Omerta (9): The “everything goes”

Rosa Valls

C has tried to be the public leader of all those “affected” by the victims of violence who have dared to complain. His greatest triumph was when those who handled the threads decided to use him as the public name of the media lynching campaign against the victims. This attack took place on the Monday of the same week that the Full Professor who had presumably perpetrated more cases of sexual harassment to students had to return to his position at the university, after months of work leave. The goal was to destroy the great and massive sign-up campaign aimed at forbidding that this Professor could continue harassing. That day, C celebrated his triumph along with the people whom he pretended to impress. However, he did not know that those who really handled the threads celebrated it even more: they were throwing the stone and hiding their hand afterward. They had even funded and disseminated a public act organized by him, which was focused on attacking the victims and those who had supported victims.

Unlike the “Informer”, whom the article Omerta 8 speaks about, C was a former member of the research group until the moment when the group decided to finally break the silence about sexual harassment in university. At this very moment, C was removed from the group. In having himself been a member of the research group, his lies about what he had lived and experienced while being there would have sounded with more credibility among the uninformed public. Journalists who spread his attacks already knew not only that these “pieces of information” were lies, but also the reason why they were told. However, those journalists were not moved by looking for verdict information or even defending the victims, rather feed their morbid audience and thus achieve a projection that they could not achieve with their own -lack of- professional quality.

What they did not count on was the support that both breaking the silence and the group that had dared to initiate it had internationally, including scholars from Harvard University, Cambridge University, or the European Women’s Lobby. Nor were they aware of the support the victims received from very significant civic organizations such as the Platform against Gender Violence in Catalonia, which gathered more than one hundred associations. Nor were they aware that the large majority of journalists were indeed going to exercise an excellent professional role which would not include at any case collaborating with first nor second order harassers. Those attacks that were thought would destroy forever the research group in question did cause cruel damage to its members and their families. Nevertheless, they did not achieve its destruction. On the contrary, the cruel attacks portrayed in some media generated a great increase in the international prestige that the research group already had.

C has once again increased his discredit and his frustration, although he does not stop thinking about it though which means he can continue attacking. C dedicates to this objective the energy that many people dedicate to create scientific knowledge that can serve to improve society. However, those who handle the threads, those who throw the

stone and hide the hand, continue denying their collaboration with the attacks. Nevertheless, the written and oral pieces of evidence that DF is consulting make us think that little by little the truth will be unfolded and that they will never again be able to harass.

Omerta (10): Charges in exchange for attacking victims

Gisela Redondo

The sources consulted by DF highlight the role that University power structures have played in the impunity of harassers and in the attacks on their victims. One of the clearest cases is that of H, who had a University position that served her as a launch pad for what interested her most, that is, to achieve a fruitful career in politics. Amongst those people who shared her same ideological option, she was chosen for radio and television talk shows because she had a position that provided an intellectual image to such talks.

Previously, she had publicly shown admiration for the research group that had broken the silence, while she did not dare to do so for a long time in the past. Nevertheless, she had won that job thanks to a very small difference in votes, believing she could only keep it by leading the attack against the victims, thus protecting those denounced by the victims.

When she received the first registered complaint in the entry record book, she assessed which one would be the best choice for her political ambition, whether to support the victims or the aggressor rather. If she opted to attack the victims, she was convinced that she would keep the post as long as the University regulations would allow her to, but that option was risky as if what she did in the past became publicly known, she would face her future political chances cut short. If, on the other hand, she went ahead with the complaint supporting the victims, she was certain that she would not win the next elections again, that she would not be able to stay in her University job and her launch pad would no longer serve her purposes to achieve her intended political positions.

At that time, who was responsible of the Harvard Office against Sexual Harassment said in front of her that if the faculty or the student body did not speak out clearly in favor of the victims, then she would go nowhere in politics. However, she preferred to follow a different advice that said that our situation was very different to that in Harvard and that here she could attack victims in a way that nobody would believe them.

She gradually realized that her situation became more and more complicated. A student decided to break the silence about the harassment she suffered from a well-known professor through his despicable behavior. The press reported that the attorney's report included the fact that H was aware of the harassment that went back to the days when she was still a student. A senior political official told the press: if you knew, why didn't you do anything about it?

She already saw an imminent danger when the professor decided to return to his post at the University and the student body launched a massive campaign of signatures to protect themselves from being harassed. It was then when journalists supporting H in the media launched a cruel lynching against the victims based on the lies of, amongst others, the four people described from Omerta 6 to Omerta 9.

There is an ever-increasing number of politicians nowadays who do not wish to socialize with her since they are shocked about the position she took and because they know that, as time passes by, the whole truth will be disclosed and most citizens will reject this kind of behavior which obviously will have a devastating electoral cost.

In the short term, she might manage to achieve some political positions, but she will never achieve the ones she was after in the medium and the long term, because the women and feminist movements and the rejection towards the harassers and their accomplices by the citizenship are growing very rapidly.

Omerta (11): Interferences in our sexual lives

Ana Vidu

Some management bodies of our universities and some of their teaching staff have very actively contributed to anonymously disseminating, through social networks and even in the press, comments on the sexual lives of those victims of sexual harassment who have dared to report and on those of who have dared to support us. According to international criteria, the interference in the sexual privacy of any person is considered gender-based violence. When it is perpetuated to a victim, it is also considered revictimization and, when it is perpetuated to someone who supports survivors, it is defined as the Second Order of Sexual Harassment. In the case of this article, everything that has been said is a lie; everything that was used to generate more scandal, more morbidity and more audience has been invented. However, even if they had told truths, it would also interfere in our sexual lives and, therefore, harassment.

That interference from the harassers has been so intense and continued that it has created a climate where even many individuals with good intentions have collaborated. Many people have asked me, without my permission, if I had any sexual engagement with my dissertation advisor, in a context in which, if so, all slanders that were said about the research group that broke the silence about sexual harassment in our universities, would have been considered as proves.

A journalist recorded a talk in which a student told me that a friend had rejected proposals from her dissertation director and asked me if that situation is harassment. I asked her if the friend's "no" had academic consequences, and the student said it had. Then I replied that it is indeed harassment.

After the talk, the journalist told me that I was very tough since two adults can have sex whenever they want. I replied that they can, that I stand for freedom, which is why I am against all harassment, such as the fact that the professor, instead of accepting the refusal, had used his academic power to harm her.

When she asked me again if I had had any kind of engagement with my advisor, I replied I hadn't, adding that I was answering her because she was nice, but that she cannot ask a question like this to any woman who does not want to be asked; even less to a sexual harassment survivor or to whom supports survivors. I also wanted to create awareness on her on the fact that another effect of this kind of interference is to coerce us, so we do not exercise our freedom. She defended the professor mentioned above's right to insist on meeting her student and, nevertheless, considered a confirmation of harassers' attacks that my advisor and I had had any relationship. To exercise that freedom, assuming we had wished to, would have meant to terribly increase the attacks against the victims and our families.

At the same time, I pointed out that harassers base their attacks on the fact that we interfere with people's sexual lives. However, we have never done so. While they do not stop doing

it continuously, as anyone can verify in anonymous slanders on the Internet and in the "yellow" press, no one can find any single message of interference from us, neither in their private lives nor in those of any person. They cannot find them just because they do not exist.

Omerta (12): The thesis on sexual harassment at the universities that overcame historical rejections

Ana Vidu

After putting every effort and achieving an extraordinary bachelor's degree prize (a recognition to the best degree record), being an outstanding student on faculty's lips, I arrived at a Master's degree in which I also achieved to finalize with an extraordinary prize. Everything changed when I decided to denounce of sexual harassment the most recidivist professor of the Faculty. In only a few months, I went from being the best student to being the worst, having the worst grades and not being able to make a work or an oral presentation, according to the same faculty.

I focused my doctoral dissertation on the reality of sexual harassment in the universities, and the process of making a complaint, comparing the first one at the University of Barcelona with the first one at the University of California, Berkeley. After submitting my thesis, it was approved by the Academic Commission of the doctoral program. Subsequently, the thesis had to be approved by the PhD Commission of the Faculty, formed by members of different knowledge fields, other than my field. The only expert on Sociology was the director of the Academic Commission of the PhD program of Sociology, who had agreed with the presentation of the thesis. Furthermore, the thesis had an article published in a journal ranked in the first quartile of the most prestigious JCR database, which is at the top of the scientific level, and quite uncommon for doctoral students in Sociology. However, the thesis was rejected at the request of the Dean and the chair of the Equality Commission at that time. They wrote 10 pages with 7 attachments against the thesis and what the thesis analyzed about their position in the process concerning the first report for sexual harassment of a famous professor of the University.

I was doing a research stay at the University of Stanford when I received the notification. The imposition consisted of removing all elements of the thesis that could suggest that the Dean or the Equality Commission had not positioned themselves in favor of the victims, or that they had had some active or passive complicity with the alleged harasser. One of the changes imposed to the thesis to be approved was to include an interview with the Dean of the Faculty and one with the head of the Equality Commission. I interrupted my stay at Stanford and came back to do all the changes that were imposed in their joint letter. The faculty at Stanford University understood very quickly what was going on and they were shocked with a system that, rather than protecting victims, crushed them if they spoke and broke the silence.

What seemed a way to solve their discomfort was not a path strewn with roses. It started at the very moment of the interview with the president of the Equality Committee, in which almost everyone who was a member of the Commission was present. They dedicated themselves to criticizing the thesis, even one of the members of the committee who was not a PhD. And they also criticized me and the research group that has always supported me.

But the motivations of this work were so clear that their rejection and treatment were the results of the injustice that motivated me to continue. For this first rejection, we came to the supposed agreement that the thesis would not include any allusion to the role of the Dean or the Equality Commission in the course of the report, or the lack of support for the victims. However, that didn't turn out to be enough. The second rejection came when the Dean was not satisfied that the thesis did not mention her complicity but demanded that the thesis include many parts written by her explaining that she was in favor of the victims and against the harasser.

However, since my commitment to the international scientific community does not allow me to lie, there seemed to be no solution to the situation. Finally, I found a way, introducing her many words in my thesis but in quotation marks, making it clear that they were her textual quotations, without assuming them as mine. This act, together with the first conference on Second Order Sexual Harassment held in Barcelona, the judicial sentence of the professor of another University also accused of sexual harassment, and other articles in the country's most widely read press that explained the truth of the facts made it possible for the thesis to be finally defended.

Omerta (13): International Solidarity

Ana Vidu

The solidarity of Universities such as Harvard, Cambridge, Berkeley, the European Women's Lobby and the End Rape on Campus victims' network has been very active in signing documents against the victimization of GV victims at Spanish Universities and the second-order of sexual harassment against those who have supported us all the way. Without this active international solidarity (together with the one here from a Platform against Gender Violence and other entities, various groups as well as individuals), the sexual harassers Lobby in our Universities and their accomplices in the press and other similar organizations would have managed to destroy us as they have done until then with the victims, one by one.

When the defamations against a research center for breaking the silence at the University began, prestigious academics across the world decided to take a stand and support the research center in their struggle. There were remarkable cases, like a Harvard professor who complained because he had not been warned and strongly asked to include his signature too. They were perfectly aware of what could happen when walls as strong as those of the feudal University were broken. Universities in Europe, United States, South America and Australia joined the support and showed it at crucial moments carrying out specific actions.

The fact that the best Universities in the world did not hesitate to show solidarity and offer their support was possible, among other reasons, due to the excellence and prestige of the research center, as well as by its firm stance against sexual harassment and abuse of power and, consequently, in favor of those who denounce them. They know and wish to know that, as in any hierarchical institution, sexual harassment can also occur in University, which is why they undertake the necessary steps to prevent it, respond to it and be able to combat it with the least impact for the victims and for those who support them. On the other hand, for a long time the Spanish University has tried to deny this reality, with statements such as "there is no sexual harassment here". A clear example was when in an American University, at the time of recounting the sexual harassment that had been taking place for three decades at a Spanish University, the answer was: "But who on earth lets a person harass for thirty years without punishment?" Other than getting angry at the aggressor, they were angry as well at the ones who allowed them their impunity, making it very clear, as they say, that if there is only one harasser, it implies that there are also others covering for him. That protection concerning the Spanish University meant a persecution of both victims and those who supported them. This is how silence has been maintained regarding internal sexual harassment and the complicity that covered it up.

The international solidarity campaign proved that breaking the silence at the University and suffering these accusations would not end up destroying the victims and their supporters: quite the opposite. The multiple ways of solidarity, signatures that were raised and messages from professionals and international institutions managed to counteract the

attacks of a lobby that only wished to maintain and reproduce the prevailing power structures.

In 2009, during her visit to a Spanish University, who was the responsible for the Office of Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment at Harvard University said: "future generations of students and faculty would undoubtedly have a very different experience thanks to the work of the research center". She represented a University in which victims are both protected and supported, being aware of the difficulty involved in breaking the silence under a structure as powerful as the one operating in the University

Omerta (14): Complicity between sensationalist journalists and University authorities

Ana Vidu

It is not an easy thing for the protagonists of the complicity with the University sexual harassers and their attacks on the victims to rectify; they have plenty of things to hide, great lies to recognize and short professional and personal ethics. But the institutions they belong to will do so when those holding responsibilities in them are not the current ones and when there no longer exist servitudes with them.

As everybody knows, the professor being mostly accused by many victims of gender violence in the University (even several years after) is J. Which complicities were there that made him remain in office until his retirement age and that he has been able to carry on with his despicable behavior in another University (see "The Process")? What complicities managed to stop, on June 13th, 2016, the massive campaign against his reincorporation to the University? The Rector at the time acknowledged that he was a friend of J even to the press (see "El País"), something that, on the other hand, many people were aware of. Other relationships he held with some of the University top officials were known too, without which it cannot be understood that he could have carried on with his behavior for thirty odd years and that the institutional attacks were precisely against his victims.

That very Rector, upon a research center's legal requirements to be informed of the alleged report that the University made on his activities, issued an announcement stating that there had been no report. Members of the small group of journalists who attacked J's victims on June 13th, 2016, said that their information came from top Officials from the University. E repeatedly states in his articles that the University told him that the Attorney General's Office requested a change in some attitudes conducted by the most committed against harassment center, but at the same time affirms that the Attorney General's Office has never investigated this research center that as a matter of fact is one of the very few truthful items on the subject. Actually, the Public Prosecutor's Office never investigated this center, nor has it seen the need to ask for any information despite the number of lies that University sexual harassers have continually disseminated.

How on earth can be said in a newspaper that the Public Prosecutor's Office asked this center to change their behavior without investigating it or asking for any information? Had this journalist checked with the victims, if only ten minutes, he would have learned that the one who asked this research center for changes was the Rector's team and not the Attorney General's Office. But the group of journalists mentioned above did not want to know nor tell the truth, and they did not confront anything with the victims. Actually, what they did was to release as true facts those lies fabricated by the harassers that are mentioned in articles 6 to 10 in the Omerta series. Only through a brief consultation with the victims, he would have also known that the changes that the Rector in those days asked the mentioned researched center for were not what he repeatedly said in his articles, but on the contrary,

something completely opposite: we now mention one of them, and we will talk about some others at a later point in this Omerta series. The most important one out of all was the annulment of the ethical code approved, trouble-free, by the University in 1995, which became very problematic for the harassers when an item was added that set-up solidarity with the victims of gender violence at the University.

They made us victims suffer a great deal with the so-called Second Order of Sexual Harassment, but they have not silenced us, and they will not. Besides the international support we always got, we also enjoy the ever-growing support of the vast majority of journalists who are acting professionally, not in any sexist way. Who do not support harassers any more but the victims, who do not spread lies but inform on contrasted and verifiable facts.

Omerta (15): No matter what they do, they won't stop us

Marta Soler

Omerta 14 said and announced that other changes would follow. In this Omerta we will explain that another requested change was the prohibition for the members of the most committed against harassment research center, to work over the weekends. At that time, a letter from the research center deputy director to the Rector asked if that request included a ban on attending European scientific research meetings out of working hours.

On Friday, August 17, four members of this research center received the conditional approval of an article in PLOS ONE, the world's most important open-access, non-profit journal of the Public Library of Science. The condition was to make some changes and send them by Monday 20 August. The only possibility to achieve such a condition was to work non-stop over the weekend to have it ready within the established deadline. It has now been published. This is a common practice in the international scientific community even at their highest levels, as is the case of this journal. Many members of this research center have done doctorates and postdocs in the best Universities in the world and sometimes we have worked Saturdays and Sundays and we found, not only that the University was open, but also that there were great scientific and prestigious Professors working there too.

The Rector of that time never answered the deputy director's letter. Perhaps someone might think that it was for fear to put in writing a nonsense argument like this, which clearly harms science, the country, and the University. In fact, if our University has already been internationally discredited for having eliminated a pioneer Ethical Code that had been approved without problems precisely when it included the rejection of gender-based violence (see Omerta 14), this problem would have increased even more, clearly stating in writing the impossibility of participating in these international scientific meetings. Neither could they argue that someone paid by the research center was forced to work beyond the hours established in their contract because, although this was a very frequent practice in other research groups at that time, it had never been done in a research center like ours, which has among its members, people who have even presided companies councils.

There are still people who think that the real reason for these two changes had to do with an objective that was not officially written down, but that the sexual harassers had managed to make people say a lot in the corridors: this research center must be destroyed. Obviously, hindering our ethical commitment against gender-based violence and prohibiting the usual productive functioning of the international scientific community would have destroyed our research center. However, as our director told those days to the mentioned Rector, we were not going to do it. She clearly told him that, even if we were made to remove this ethical code, we would continue to support all victims and ensure that all Universities had the obligation to create equality committees. She also told him that, in case we were not

explicitly prohibited through writing, those of us who wanted to would exercise our freedom to work whenever it was scientifically necessary.

We have done so and we will continue to do so.

Omerta (16): Forbidden free menu for scholarship holders

Sandra Racionero

Some other changes that the University Rector's team demanded to the research Centre that broke the silence on gender-based violence were to remove the menu tickets available to all those students who enjoyed FPU or FI grants (i.e. fellowships from the Spanish government or the Catalan government) or an equivalent wage. At that time, in the canteens of the faculties where they worked, while the permanent teaching staff were having their lunch menu, the scholarship holders were forced to have a sandwich that they could not bring from home, since in the canteens you could only consume products bought in the premises (it was not permitted to bring any external type of food), which did not exactly have a good value for money.

This research center claimed from the beginning for a drastic change concerning that norm considering that it should be allowed to eat anything in the canteens of public universities, irrespective of whether it was bought in the premises or directly brought from home in a lunch-box. Since obscure interests were aiming to delay that conquest for many years, said the research center, which shared the values of equality and freedom, decided that everyone who wanted to eat the menu had the right to enjoy it. They provided lunch-menu tickets so that it would be free for those who had a lower salary. In order to fund this measure, some of the people in the center who enjoyed higher salaries in the Universities and who delivered well-paid lectures frequently, used to ask that the payment for those lectures, training and reports be made to the center instead of being directly credited to them. This solidarity helped to create a very egalitarian atmosphere that further improved the "good vibes".

This new scenario made harassers angry as they were aware that their potential victims were a lot weaker when isolated, whereas they became stronger in case they enjoyed good relationships with other human beings. They set out to destroy what, according to them, was misunderstood egalitarianism that could be passed on to other groups. They disseminated all sorts of slanders with this objective and achieved the collaboration of the feudal faculty of other research groups that did not do it and did not want to do the same, and that took this measure as insulting, and also from others who were envious for not enjoying the same pleasant atmosphere. One of their lies was that the solidarity teachers were forced not to be paid for some of their activities, when the truth is that some teachers got paid, others did not, and there was no problem whatsoever. Another lie was that this free ticket had the objective of forcing the scholarship holders to eat together. In reality, each person, both at lunch and in their free time, has always done what they wished in this center that has been a defender of individual freedom in a feudal University environment.

The ban on free menu tickets was not applicable to the University as a whole. At that time, some high University officials had free meals outside the University, much more expensive,

paid in part with the overheads of research projects of this and other centers. The ban applied only to this center, which enabled the Rector's team to validate the lies and also tried uselessly to spoil the good atmosphere in the center. There have been no menu tickets ever since. Now, this does not matter that much because currently, anyone can take whatever food they want, but for a few years, this was harmful to the scholarship holders.

The atmosphere amongst the people of the aforementioned research center in the canteen still causes anger to some professors due to, among other things, the maximum respect, tolerance and defense of the individual freedom of each one. Besides, the "contagion" that the harassers feared so much has occurred, in part because anybody can take their lunch-box and you can see people from the same research group enjoying lunch together, some of them having a menu and some others eating the food they brought from home and both with the same quality.

Omerta (17): When the position of Responsible for Equality is more important than victims

Cristina Pulido

Susana had to leave the doctorate and the university because she could not stand the attitude of the *catedrático* that had harassed her in a tutorial session, starting to tell her that she was very pretty while he was touching her head, her hands, and face. Susana was in the final stage of her PhD. the classes had finished, and she only had to hand in two final research assignments. A great opportunity to do a Masters' in the US had arisen and she was going to propose to the professor the possibility that the last two or three tutorial sessions that were required to finish the work could be done online, by email. She was nervous, as she did not know whether he would accept. The *catedrático* got angry when she explained it, because something he did not like and the painful episode happened. Susana left, and she failed the two research assignments. She did not give up and thanks to the listening, help, and understanding of fellow students and professors in the same university, she started afterwards a new doctorate, she finished it, did her thesis and is now a doctor.

She had not imagined that something like that could happen in university. She could not believe that someone who was working in an area linked to social and human issues could do this. Talking to other students of that doctorate, she realized that she was not the only one. Years later, while she was doing her thesis in another university, she learned that Roser -who was a former teacher of hers while in nursery school- had been nominated as responsible for equality of that university. She understood that Roser loved her very much and, although she was not able to fix her situation anymore, she would at least understand her, and the information about her case would help prevent others. The conversation went very well, with much understanding and esteem, Susana went out very cheerful and convinced that she had done something very positive for other girls. Susana remembers that she asked Roser not to do anything for her, that she was lucky to be overcoming it. In the first moment, she did not even want to tell the name of the *catedrático*; however, the person responsible for equality asked her for it and Susana decided to tell it, not for her to do something for her, but with the aim of avoiding that other girls would go through the same.

A few weeks later, she had another even more unpleasant surprise. Roser had changed her mind and was taking part in the attacks to the professors that were helping the victims, the same professors thanks to whom -just as Susana had explained- she had moved forward. This hurt her very much, she had not asked her to act for her, but she never could have thought that she would act against the only "lifesaver" that she had met and that had kept her afloat.

Little by little she understood what had happened. Roser had been nominated Responsible for Equality due to the personal confidence that the Rector had in her, and the Rector was a friend of the *catedrático* that had been reported as sexual harasser by the largest number

of victims. Roser gave priority to keeping her position instead of doing the task that she was supposed to be doing in that position. Meanwhile, Susana's harasser *catedrático* continued to do his tutorial sessions without penalty, and those who had supported her continued to suffer second order of sexual harassment from the harassers.

Susana did never again talk to Roser, the memory and esteem of whom had been her teacher in her first years of life was completely vanished. She never let herself be weighed down by the sadness nor the disenchantment. The friendship, the solidarity, and the support that she received contributed to her to continue believing in the best of human beings.

Omerta (18): Male chauvinism brings them together

Beatriz Villarejo

The president of the International Sociology Association wanted to exemplify the daily life of a young woman who practiced her profession in the forms that he considered best for Sociology and society. He chose that a video clip was made from Esther, who responded to the public sociology that ISA wanted to boost. At first, she didn't enjoy the idea, because she doesn't like to be in the spotlight at all, but she considered it another service to society and sociology, that many other people could have done, and that she could not say no to ISA's proposal. The video clip was made and was a big success because it was largely disseminated and was projected on many public audiences.

When this assignment was accepted, it was not expected that the university's sexual harassers and their allies would have it in for that video, for her and her life, for being one of the few professors who had supported the victims of those harassments. The same day that the most reported *catedrático* (Full professor in Spain) was going back to his position, a small group of journalists launched the attacks on the victims that so much benefit meant for that *catedrático* ([Omerta 14](#)). That same 13th June 2016, two journalists and another guy that shared their same attitudes, chatted proudly on Twitter about how they were attacking those who they publicly recognized as victims, and the only people who had supported them reporting that *catedrático* when everyone else was silent.

Those same two reporters gathered once again on Twitter with the one that has invented the most lies against the victims ([Omerta 8](#)). Their fun, attacking the sexually harassed victims in universities and those who supported them, has significant parallels with how the worst male chauvinists have fun in some pubs disseminating lies about the victims of sexual aggression against which feminists and many other people are demonstrating. The former, are older and get together in bars while the latter is younger and do so on Twitter, exactly for the same. And they pretend to be an alternative, but this should not surprise us, there are male chauvinists and harassers in all sorts of contexts as has been shown through many cases, like the Vice case.

Omerta (19): Women professors committed against harassment, separated from equality committees

Ana Vidu

M was one of the faculty members who consistently showed the most support with survivors. She was a member of the first Equality Committee of her School, in which also the first complaint was handled against the most reoffending and denounced professor at the University. The protocol against gender-based violence (GBV) in our universities was approved in that School. It quotes, as its basis, the research of the research center led by M. The first reaction of the equality committee to the first complaint was to dismiss it for considering that the evidence presented was not strong enough. However, an email from the Harvard Office of Sexual Harassment changed that position. Following the ethical criteria of that university –in which M also received her PhD-, it was M, the only one of the committee who was always actively supporting survivors and acting against the harassers.

When many cases of the same professor began to reach the committee, all of its members stated that if the School took no measures, they would all resign. However, later on, when the University decided not to take action, the Dean and the President of the Equality Committee wrote a letter maintaining that the School had done everything possible and could do anything else. They brought up to all members of the Equality Committee that they had to sign that letter individually. M refused to sign it because that meant leaving the student back in the hands of that professor and affirming that she agreed with that position. All the other people reproached her for not agreeing to sign, but she replied that no one could force her to stamp her signature on any document and much less on one of that kind.

The Dean appointed a new Equality Committee, of which M was no longer part. This was not the first nor the last case. Before and after, people who have supported survivors and have researched and published on this topic in the leading international scientific journals have been excluded from the same university's equality committees. Despite having consulted many sources, we have not been able to find any case in that university in which a person has been removed from these committees for having attacked the victims and defended, therefore, the harassers.

Omerta (20): Some female teachers sided with the harassers

Ana Vidu

As in other similar contexts, some women and men took part in favor of the victims at the University but, startlingly, also men and women who took part for the harassers staying by their side. We have seen the same situation with the "wolf-pack" issue: while demonstrators strongly demanded that what was being judged was to be treated not as abuse but as an obvious rape case, other men and women were entirely in favor of harassers.

Regarding the University, some of the female teachers who took this position justified it by trying to give a feminist image, when actually feminism has always been, is and will be in favor of the victims, which implies a strong position against the aggressors. They say that taking punitive measures against the aggressors is patriarchy when, in reality, patriarchy has always been characterized in the opposite direction, thus, by disagreeing with taking actions against the aggressors. In the many demonstrations across the Country against the "wolf-pack," victims of gender-based violence at the University demanded specific measures to be implemented and taken; those who oppose it are those who defend patriarchy.

When gender-based violence is involved, there is no room for neutrality: either you are in favor of the victims or the harassers. All the international recommendations go in this direction: active solidarity with the victims. The positioning these female teachers took unfortunately benefited the harassers and seriously harmed us as victims, re-victimizing us and making Second Order Sexual Harassment. Most of the main models of this discourse use the feminist label to earn money, prestige and/or power, but they do not support the victims of gender violence in their Universities; on the contrary, they attack us and those who support us.

Omerta (21): From martyred to triumphant victims

Ana Vidu

I was the first victim to break the silence on the Spanish professor with more complaints of sexual harassment. This has made me aware of the fact that there are women and men in favor of the victims, as well as men and women in favor of the harassers. This has not only happened in my own personal case, but it is part of the general fight against gender-based violence. Those who say that all women are against the aggressors and that all men are at least potential harassers cause us, as victims, a great deal of harm. Such statements remove the support that we need to succeed and overcome the consequences as much as possible. Being able to move on is not only an individual or collective need of the very few of us who eventually dare to denounce. Rather, it is a key requirement so that other victims dare to come forward too. And for that it is also key that victims receive the support they need, both from women and men. If all victims breaking the silence end up completely destroyed, it is more difficult for others to follow their lead, and for their families and friends to encourage them to denounce this despicable behavior.

I was first supported by a professor, who suffered consequences himself. This happened after a female teacher refused to support me. The previously mentioned professor had always backed the victims of gender violence. From the beginning, we both agreed that the complaint had to be carried out in such a way that I would not end up destroyed but triumphant. Both harassers and those men and women who supported them wanted to destroy us, in order to set an example that would discourage other victims from breaking the silence and other people from supporting them. For me, to be a winner was not just something I did need, but a condition to give the opposite example to what harassers expected: that victims can denounce and not end up sunken.

There have been many wonderful anecdotes of how we have achieved this dream. I explained one of these personal experiences in a social network and the Women of RTVE Facebook shared it. My views were disseminated to many people and this successful story has already encouraged more than one victim to denounce what they had to put up with.

Omerta (22): “Forbidden to join those who defend the victims”

Mar Joanpere

P was awarded a competitive predoctoral fellowship (named FPU) acknowledging her brilliant academic record and because of the CV of her advisor and research group. Yet her department was dominated by harassers and, breaking all the rules and all moral criteria, they managed to have her lose that fellowship. Her advisor and her research group were the ones that had broken the silence about gender violence in universities and the student herself was actively involved in the platform against gender violence. One of the sentences that those people told the student was: “the problem is not you, the problem is the people you have decided to join”. They acknowledged she was one of the most brilliant students they had ever had, but they did not want to have a person committed to the struggle against gender-based violence in their department which, being of a university known as public, they administered as if it were the private property of the harassers.

Cheerful because having managed to take her out, the department conspired so that never no one from that research group could gain a contract. International solidarity made it possible that they could not take away the second fellowship that she was awarded given the same merits (a FI fellowship, similar to the FPU one). Nonetheless, when the period of the fellowship finished, they vetoed her to gain another contract and she had to leave for another university. United by their unspeakable interests and dynamics, it was easy for them in examining boards to make assessments that excluded those who had more international merits.

The exercise of violence in the university context does not always happen in a direct and clear manner. On some occasions, harassers cannot make it that way because of various reasons -despite none excuses them-. In this case, with the will to continue perpetuating the law of silence and showing an exemplary punishment, which shows potential help, they decided to go for the most vulnerable, this is, to go for students with fellowships. And in so doing, to employ other people as executing arms.

The professor who is the protagonist of this story had always been involved in diverse struggles for the rights of all women. For her, to break the silence in universities and to achieve the implementation of mechanisms to stop harassers was a priority. Her positioning was public, and that had meant to her receiving multiple attacks, but her labor situation impeded harassers and their allies from being able to expel her from the university. So, they decided to direct their actions against those who are the most vulnerable, and those above whom they had the power to harm directly: the students with fellowships working with this professor and other students that collaborated with her.

The cowardice of the harassers led them to try to act from the shadows, making other people -who accepted to be manipulated- act as executing arms. This led to the consequence that one student that had been selected to gain a predoctoral fellowship of

four years -related to a research project led by the aforementioned professor- lost that fellowship. This way, in a despotic manner, via the direct attack on one student they managed to attack the professor too. On two occasions, in public meetings, the harasser boasted of having been the person that organized that plan. In the words of the professor when leaving one of those meetings: "I don't know what has been harder, whether the attack itself or seeing how the rest of people look at the other side thinking that in such a way they will be safe".

The tireless struggle of this professor, with the help of other colleagues, made it possible for this student to eventually gain another fellowship, as well as a written commitment, on the side of the university, that made explicit that never again it would be permitted that other students had to go through the same situation.

Their silence had not freed some of the people who looked to the other side from receiving attacks. Only the total submission could have freed them. Those who allowed being manipulated and then have been aware of it, nothing allows repairing the harm of the past. Yet their courage when acknowledging it and even taking a position is joining forces in making our universities spaces that are safer for future generations.

Omerta (23): Request for the victim to ask for forgiveness

Mar Joanpere

In June 2016, more than two thousand five hundred people, primarily women, and two hundred groups and entities participated in the Radically-minded Feminist Conference held in Barcelona. In the session dedicated to sexual harassment in Universities, a member victim of the *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities* expressed her experience publicly. She mainly explained the sexual harassment suffered by several people and the subsequent attacks received from University officials and other significant people therein after being duly reported.

At the end of the interventions, the head of the University's Equality Unit raised her hand in anger, asking the victim of the *Solidarity Network* to apologize for her criticism and defended the University and those who, like herself, held positions of responsibility. The victim tried to respond by presenting her arguments with reliable sources. One evidence was the public recognition that the Rector declared he was a friend of the professor with the highest number of complaints of a sexual harassment nature. Another source was what appeared in the press in the prosecutor's report in which the Dean of the Faculty acknowledged having heard of the harassment of this professor since she was a student and, even while being the Dean, had not implemented any measures to solve it. Fortunately, the public raised the voices of feminists in solidarity with the victim, opposing the attitudes and manners of those who supposedly had to defend feminism in the University's most critical institution.

At the end of the session, she addressed the victim in a way that seemed threatening and continued with her accusations, asking her to apologize publicly. Nevertheless, the latter maintained her defense of the victims of gender violence in the University context and her criticism of the University for their actions. A few days later, some sensationalist journalists who were in contact with the University launched the most potent public attack that has ever been conducted against the victims of sexual harassment in Universities.

Omerta (24): The Dean Enemy of Feminism

Ana Vidu

It was quite surprising that, as soon as she got promoted from Dean to a high political job, the research projects which depended on the Women's Institute suddenly stopped being part of the National R&D Plan, after 12 years of close cooperation. However, it did not surprise at all the gender violence victims from the University where she had been acting as Dean. Not only had he spread lies about those who suffered his mercilessly attacks, but also he had responded to their demands for equality units by saying that there would never be any in any Spanish University. According to her, there were no gender-based violence cases in Spanish colleges and, if there ever were, the colleges' legal services would address them.

It did not take long before the victims' research work and the international solidarity succeeded in refuting his assertion. The Spanish parliament established as mandatory the creation of these equality units, leading the aforementioned Dean to be one of the first to appoint a person in charge. She explained why she chose a female teacher by saying that she would professionally represent women since she was not a feminist.

When she lost his political position, she wanted to get back to being the Dean of his University at any cost. He had to neutralize the criticism against him, so he actively engaged in one of the most significant attacks suffered by the victims of gender violence in Spanish Universities. She did not realize that, in her absence, the movement and the international solidarity had much progressed and that the attacks on the victims were like a boomerang against those who spread them. In her despair for not accepting the loss of a position she considered hers, among other things, she started contacting powerful people to show them written reports containing all the lies that the harassers' lobby had disseminated about the victims and those who had backed them.

Victims and those who supported them have to congratulate themselves because she failed in her endeavor. Her return would have meant to go back in time to the worst of the scenarios. But victims should also be happy because, even if she had managed to get her job back, she would have no longer been able to perform the same kind of actions. The strength of the movement against sexual harassment in Spanish Universities and different types of institutions at an international level is now a lot stronger than it has ever was before.

Omerta (25): The "scandal" as a media resource for yellow press

Mar Joanpere

We met several times with the head of news of one of the most active radio stations in launching attacks against the only research center that had broken the silence against gender violence in universities. In one of the main meetings he said that, before any statement, what moves people is the media scandal, to turn a piece of news or an event into a media scandal. Since that was what sold the radio product, that was how they had acted. As justification and legitimization of his actions towards the propagation of the scandal, he showed a book to the two representatives of the research center who were at the meeting. In it, he spoke of scandals as a journalistic milestone. In response to these statements, the researchers continued the meeting, showing their contempt for the lack of journalistic rigor, demonstrating how basing news reports on media scandals has very serious consequences for the victims and their environment. Even so, the head of news continued defending the active dissemination of the scandal, and not the ethical and journalistic rigor.

The meeting ended with a lot of promises from the editor and a commitment to give a voice to the victims. The aim of this action was to restore, as far as he could, the damage he acknowledged he had caused them with his pursuit of the scandal. He never fulfilled those promises and commitments.

If the media with the greatest international impact would have dedicated themselves to publishing and broadcasting scandals without any kind of rigor, the fights for civil rights and against gender violence, as well as the scientific advances, would never have reached as far as they have. If this has been possible, it is thanks to journalists and professional media that have given voice to the victims, instead of attacking them.

Omerta (26): How did the university react to screenings of documentaries against sexual harassment?

Ana Vidu

Student assemblies and the movements they generate often play a key role in universities. These assemblies mobilize for injustices, but mobilizations against sexual harassment have never before been as present as they are today. In a context where the silence had already been broken, the screening of the documentary "The Hunting Ground" was organized. This production unveils the harassment and rapes produced on American university campuses, as well as the strategies of the institutions to avoid taking responsibility. Released in 2015, "The Hunting Ground" gives voice to more than seventy victims on camera and more than two hundred off-camera, through direct interviews. The voices of the participants contributed to deepen the debate about sexual harassment in college - also among peers - to start activism and generate change. Andrea, Annie and Sofie are three girls who left their careers to create a solidarity network that would support and believe the victims, avoiding the re-victimization they had suffered, and also pressuring universities to act against all harassment. The film comes to raise the urgency of addressing this issue in other countries around the world, contributing to generate the favorable context that soon after would be known under the hashtag #MeToo.

As in other universities where it had been screened, at our University the release of these film-forums had a great impact in three very different faculties among students from different fields of study. Nobody remained indifferent and the problem was debated by linking it to the reality of our context, to our classrooms. These spaces have allowed students to break their silence and tell their cases, while mobilizing to join forces and fight against this scourge in their universities. Aspects such as peer harassment, the fear of suing or the revictimization of those who dare to speak out, are limits to breaking the silence; all of these are aspects that are addressed with real narratives, such as those collected in the film.

Although the documentary and the debate it generated had a good response among the student body, the same was not true for the teaching staff, and even less for the management teams. The Dean of one of these faculties forced the students to remove the posters announcing the screening of this documentary. The response of the student collective was categorical, and they proceeded to develop, at the same time, a banner stating "Your indifference is complicity". This was a clear statement that there is no turning back. The lack of institutional response would only push them to mobilize more, raising their voice against so many decades of covert sexual harassment at the university; which, in turn, would cause aspects such as the prestige of the University to be increasingly linked to a university's committed to anti-harassment.

Omerta (27): Journalist who attacked the victims and defended the aggressor

Mar Joanpere

T did not hesitate to cruelly attack the victims of the most recidivist professor by spreading his lies about them. This journalist used for this dissemination the great power she had in a public media, financed by the citizens and that should be on the side of the victims and not of the harassers. Why? In this first article on this particular subject, we uncovered one of the causes.

On that day, the aforementioned professor returned to his post and so T was able to do so by stopping all opposition. This journalist was linked to the Dean of the faculty of that professor and they believed that only by silencing the opposition to him could their actions be covered up. They had the firm support of the Rector, who had confessed to the press that he was a friend of the recidivist professor.

Whom did T harm with his actions and whom is he still harming by not having rectified his actions three years later? In addition to the victims and those who supported them, he has internationally discredited the public media that gives him so much power. With each passing month, knowledge of the case and outrage at what he did and for still not having rectified it is spreading internationally (including the best universities in the world and a growing number of media outlets). It also discredits internationally those who cover up T's attacks on the victims, instead of asking him to rectify them, because they are of his same political option (although so are some of his victims) and do not realize that they are also discrediting that political option.

In a context so permissive of harassment, T still has many supporters. However, international movements like #MeToo are bringing to light behaviors even from many years ago. We have no doubt that active and passive complicities with these attacks on victims will also end up coming to light in our context, and that will be a sign that we will have taken an important step towards that public media that citizens deserve, a non-sexist media that never assault victims or protects aggressors.

Omerta (28): From covering-up to the appropriation of the feminist struggle in university

Garazi López de Aguilera

Omerta 26 exposed the difficulties encountered by some university leaders and some members of the equality commissions when unveiling the problem of sexual harassment in universities. The response to any willingness to break the silence was not only to hide it, but to attack the victims.

This practice could be observed when the *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities* and the student assemblies of the different faculties of the University began to organize film forums and debates on the issue of sexual harassment. This film forums had the aims to open spaces for dialogue and transformation in the academic community. In response, posters and propaganda to advertise these events disappeared from the walls and, on more than one occasion, the institution itself tried to boycott the events by suddenly promoting parallel activities.

Within the actions against gender-based violence, posters were hung exposing the conclusions of the first conference on second-order sexual harassment: "Every person who attacks anyone who defends victims of sexual harassment is doing second-order sexual harassment" (quote from Professor Ruth Milkman, President of the American Sociological Association in 2016). Some of these posters quickly disappeared from the faculties where they were hung, in order to cover up the second-order sexual harassment they were enabling and engaging in.

This week, two years later, after feminism reached last year in March the largest mobilizations ever seen, there are many people who see that there is no turning back. This fight is no longer of a few, but now it is of all women and men who dream of equality, respect and commitment from the diversity of each one. This new wave in favor of women and men committed against harassment has placed between a rock and a hard place those who, for years, wanting to occupy positions of power in the name of equality, have perpetuated harassment and machismo, unprotecting and revictimizing the survivors.

In the midst of this context, or rather this turning point, everyone needs to jump on the feminist bandwagon, even if it is with unethical or dishonest attitudes, claiming things like "that [the movement] was theirs, because without them, it would not have been possible". This is how now they no longer tear off posters, but seize the acts and demands of others. Recently, the student assemblies of the same faculty decided to propose sexual harassment as a topic for debate and discussion among the student body, to which the equality commission joined in trying to seize the event. As a vindication, some participants commented on what had happened in the previous years, to make the audience aware.

The transformation and opening of the feminist movement and the inclusion of all voices has left behind old and outdated dynamics of power and seizing of voices. In the university

context, this has allowed to open up new spaces for dialogue detached from those dynamics which are more typical of a feudal system, which they often claim to criticize.

Omerta (30): Legal Services first statement at the first instructor

Mar Joanpere

When the victim V was the first to be summoned by the Commission to prepare an informative dossier on the professor D, she was very hopeful that the University would finally start to act; in fact, this was the beginning of the application of the protocol against harassment that had just been approved. However, from the very first moment, she was involved in a very harsh and attacking interrogation about her own life and about the life of Professor F who supervised her thesis and who filed the complaint, supporting her and the other victims. The questions were not aimed at clarifying the alleged harassment denounced, but to find some detail of the personal or professional relationship between V and F that could delegitimize her complaint. Anger and irritation were not directed against the sexual harassment, but against the persons who initiated the complaints and who were considered to be disruptive to the "normal" functioning of the university.

Questions about the incorporation of the victim as a faculty member in the department had no other objective than to discredit her intellectually by doubting her professional quality. Subsequent questions about why she chose her dissertation' supervisor, or why she belongs to the same research center as him, again made her more interested in aspects related to the professor who supported her than to the accused. The tone, the style, the content, and the forms wanted to make him question her willingness to denounce.

In the middle of the prepared questions, he skipped some or introduced others, and it was not until the eighth that he asked her about the professor D. From that moment on was when the victim could tell the reason why she decided to break her silence. But then, the instructor of the case interrupted her, not letting her finish. When recounting a case of harassment, all these impediments made her feel uncomfortable, making her feel that the concise questions and the elaborated language did not respond to the situation she had experienced and which had motivated her to denounce.

Finally, the document of the minutes of the statement taking did not fully reflect what was said there and how it was done. While the minutes included the questions that the Commission had prepared for the official record, the interrogation had introduced important changes without which the questions were decontextualized. In the end, with the printed record and in the final reading before signing it, the victim saw a series of things that did not correspond to what was said there. Then the instructor, taking advantage of his position of power and authority, rushed her to finish quickly.

This context is the one that blames and re-victimizes the victims themselves and those who support them. It was also curious that the interrogation focused more on aspects related to the complainant than to the accused. An instructor, who defends the Dean's office, the legal services, and the same structure that has kept internal harassment silenced for decades, is using his position of power in the face of the weakness of the person being questioned and who has been harassed by a professor.

Omerta (31): The consequences of allowing facts getting barred by the statute of limitations

Mar Joanpere

The facts that the prosecution considered as a felony at a later point, were still prosecutable when, in 2009, teacher L sent an official letter to the institution, when the case of student A was specifically denounced, and when the University began their series of three inquiry commissions. However, they were unprosecutable when, on October 5, 2012, the University informed the Public Prosecutor's Office. This has generated serious problems up to this day to old and new victims, as well as to the people who support them.

On November 25th, 2009, coinciding with the World Day against Gender Violence, teacher L sent a letter to the Dean, in which she specified that the structure of the Master's and Doctorate of that School fostered "three types of pressure. The first one is sexual pressure; not responding to insinuations or not accepting tutoring outside the University facilities where the professor choose, could have serious consequences for the students' qualification, even though, without any doubt, the director would then justify the grades with academic criteria and obtain the endorsement of the Faculty". In this same letter, it had already been mentioned that "there is no top-quality University in the world with a process like this or even similar". L never received a reply.

Almost two years later, on September 26, 2011, A, a master's student, asked Professor R for help after showing him an email from Professor J. R filed a complaint attaching this email and clarified that "the recipient of the email agrees to send it, as well as to talk to you and to whom is necessary to solve a situation that has lasted for years and years, affecting a lot of both female and male students. Because the aforementioned professor also adds to his signature the badge of one of the most recognized Universities in the world, Harvard, I feel that, under a professional and ethical obligation, I must also inform Harvard University of this situation, specifically their Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response". On October 5, 2011, the Faculty Equality Committee evaluated the letter and the email and decided that there was no case. On October 19, Harvard's Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response sent an email to the Dean saying that Professor J could insert the name of Harvard University in his communications. Henceforth, in view of the scandal that this could produce at an international University level, on October 26, the Faculty Equality Commission met again and decided to initiate the case. However, it was not until one year later, on October 5, 2012, when the University sent the case to the Public Prosecutor's Office. In September 2013, the complaint was then barred by the statute of limitations, even though in the prosecutor's report, the facts were recognized as felony conduct of sexual harassment.

The filing of this case was a consequence of the University's negligence since no response was given at the time of receiving the first complaint in 2009 and nothing was done until three years after, just when the felonies were barred by the statute of limitations. The non-

response of the University and the subsequent filing of the case opened the door to the immunity of the denounced professor in very different fields. Years later, news appeared in Mexico's newspapers publicly denouncing abuses of power and harassment carried out by the same professor. This shows that the structure of silence has serious consequences wherever it goes, concealed by such impunity. The power connections then further extended, succeeding at stopping a student's campaign of protest against his reincorporation in University, diverting the focus of attention, and attacking people who had always positioned themselves against gender violence in University.

Another consequence of this immunity, given by the institution itself, was recently seen when he was selected as one of the appointers for a very renowned award. This fact, once again proves that, when a case of gender violence is not dealt with, as it should once it is detected, silence and attacks on the victims increase and strengthen. The result of this all is very serious, for the victims, for the people who position themselves with them and, of course, for the name and reputation of the institutions that hide it.

Omerta (32): When the "feminists" protect the aggressor

Ana Vidu

The students were terrified of the daily harassment they received from one of their classmates. He would chase them everywhere, appear out of nowhere, appear anywhere during class, carry a knife with him. He would also stare at them in a threatening manner, drawing them naked, while no one said anything about it. It was a constant horror.

They decided to ask for help to the representatives of the Equality Commission of their faculty, who were supposed to protect them and keep them away from the harasser. The representatives responded by stating that the victims were too nervous and that it was not possible to act well in this way. They told the victims that they needed to cool down and see things more calmly. The victims were shocked by this response. They were experiencing unbearable harassment and the answer was that they had to relax. They could not understand how it was possible that these people had been appointed as the persons responsible for the equality commission if they did not act in such a clear case.

The "commissioners" proposed a first meeting with the alleged harasser to ask him not to repeat the harassment; this meeting, however, had no impact whatsoever on the harassment. Moreover, the victims found out days later that in order to hold the meeting, the representatives of the equality commission asked for security personnel at the door for their own protection, given that the harasser had a knife on him, and they could not take such a risk. In other words, the same people from the Equality Commission who considered that the victims were exaggerating the danger when the harasser appeared with his knife in the women's restroom, demanded a security guard to be present while meeting with him.

From the beginning, the "feminist experts" were more concerned with knowing the aggressor's opinion and protecting themselves. It was never their priority to protect the victims, to guarantee their safeguarding and to support them. They even denied the fear they had experienced at that meeting. They kept advising the victims to relax a bit and wait... Luck came to them from the truly feminist people who stood by their side and protected them. Thanks to those supports they managed to win the case. In DF we have tried to identify other previous occasions in which a case of explicitly for sexual harassment in a Spanish university has been won by the victims, and we have not found it. This victory, along with other similar victories already being won, has opened the door to ending impunity and making life better for university women on campus.

Omerta (33): Qualifications, from victim to survivor

Mar Joanpere

Despite having arrived in Spain at the age of 13 without knowing the language, V had finished high school with the second best record of her cohort. Four years later, she was awarded the Extraordinary Award in her field for getting the best grades of her cohort. However, as soon as she reported a professor for sexual harassment when she was already studying for her master's degree, some faculty members who had graded her with the maximum grades began to say that suddenly she was not intelligent anymore.

That was the case of Professor B. She had given V. the best grade with honors in the undergraduate course and praised her a lot in public. However, after her complaint, she set out to sink her in the master's degree. Professor B publicly humiliated V by saying in class that she did not understand how she had managed to finish her degree, thus getting the majority of the student body to join in the scorn. When V presented a topic, she would publicly say that she did not understand her, that perhaps it was a linguistic problem (making a racist reference to V's immigrant origin); and she would send her on to the next presentation, avoiding the debate that normally took place at the end of each one. It was clear that the goal of this professor was to fail V and thus encourage the rumor about how she had achieved such good grades in the past.

Far from staying in the role of victim, V acted much more intelligently than that type of faculty member. B had been at the university for about 25 years and had not had a single scientific evaluation passed. Instead of giving scientific articles as a bibliography, she imposed newspaper articles, instead of giving current books, she proposed obsolete ones. V used the imposed bibliography, but added first level scientific articles and current books by the same authors that B. followed. She did and presented a much better paper than the teacher ever did. If she had failed her or given her a low grade, V would have gone public with her work making it clear in the scientific community what this professor had done to her. She gave her an A (the best grade).

For V, the grade given by this professor was not an indicator of quality, but it was very important so that other girls would dare to denounce against harassment, knowing that if they acted intelligently, the reprisal of lowering their grades would not be too great. V has already published her work in journals of a much higher scientific level than the teachers who, after her complaint, began to say that she was not intelligent. It is now very clear, at her university and at some of the best universities in the world, that she is much smarter than they are.

Omerta (34): Equality techniques calling for objectivity and awareness of victims

Ana Vidu

Only one student publicly criticized the victims who denounced the harassment of a classmate who came to class with a large knife and appeared with it in the girls' bathroom, just as they were entering. When the victims managed to put together all the pieces of the puzzle about persistent sexual harassment at the university and put words to the mistreatment they were suffering, they decided to send an informative e-mail to the whole class.

The email explained the situation in the voice of the victims, who demanded solidarity from the group as well as a joint solution to reject the harassment. It also conveyed a message of fraud on the part of the coordination of the master's degree that, having all the information, had done nothing to protect the victims or to prevent harassment.

Almost no one responded. One student excused herself for not being able to meet with the victims due to lack of time and the silence continued. Until, six days later, one of the classmates opened the mail and, saying that she was a technician inequality policies, asked the victims for more objectivity and awareness "of the damage that an interpretation of facts of relative gravity" could do to the aggressor, questioning everything exposed by the victims and appealing only to the damage that the repercussion of our denunciations could do to the aggressor.

No one responded, only a classmate questioned the words of the equality policy technician, expressing solidarity with the victims.

The events that took place showed once again that the name of the position does not define the greater or lesser degree of feminism of the people involved. A person who, occupying a position of responsibility in the matter not only did not position herself with the victims but publicly do it against them, is unfortunately not an isolated case in the university. She described herself as having a lot of training and experience in gender issues, but she did not even know that the first scientific journal in the world on gender violence "Violence Against Women" existed. She lacked the two conditions that an equality professional should have: Knowledge of the scientific evidence and an attitude of support for victims as opposed to aggressors. Neither the position nor the gender of the person defines the degree of social commitment to feminism. In this case, of the only three responses received, the only one that was in solidarity and support of the victims was that of the colleague.

Omerta (35): It is not inbreeding, it is feudalism

Mar Joanpere

You will have heard and read many times that the problem of Spanish universities is inbreeding, that those who are already inside always win the competitions for permanent positions against those who come from outside, supposedly with better scientific curricula. The numerous and diverse interviews we have conducted have provided us with multiple pieces of evidence that this statement is false and very detrimental to the prevention of sexual harassment.

It is true that insiders are usually chosen, but when the insider has denounced the sexual harassment he/she has suffered or has supported the victim, the outsider is usually chosen, even if he/she has a much worse scientific curriculum. This practice, which is publicly presented as positive because it supposedly overcomes inbreeding, is, in fact, a revictimization of the victim or second-order sexual harassment of the supporter. This characteristic of the structure of Spanish universities is one of the key sources of the iron law of silence because it harshly punishes those who do not submit and rewards those who do submit, regardless of whether they are from inside or outside. The problem is not endogamy, but feudalism with its inseparable servitude.

In recent years, a meritocratic system of accreditation has been introduced that sets limits to this feudalism, which, nevertheless, continues to act with the leeway it has left. Since the level of the respective curricula vitae is now clearer in public, the harassers and their allies launch more intense campaigns to discredit the victims in order to justify their arbitrary actions. As it becomes clear that they have better resumes, slander against their professional or even personal lives and the groups that support them proliferates much more.

Omerta (36): Freedom and "freedom" according to harassers and their victims

Emilia Aiello

Enjoying two years of work as a researcher at Harvard University (at its Kennedy School) is making me even more aware of the difference between university structures that promote scientific and human excellence while radically condemning harassment, and those university structures that promote and perpetuate impunity for harassment and attacks on those who denounce it.

Spanish university structures fostered the conception of "freedom" of the harassers. That is, "freedom" to continue harassing and to accuse the victims who complain and those who supported them of being against "freedom", closed and sectarian. During the decades in which universities denied having sexual harassment, they consolidated among the faculty the idea still deeply rooted today that those who say they have been harassed are of age and they have consented to it and even provoked it; unfortunately, this is a discourse that sounds familiar to us. Therefore, those who broke the silence by managing to convince first society and then parliaments to force universities to recognize the problem and take action were and are accused of being enemies of "freedom". Contradictory, isn't it?

The freedoms of expression, of beliefs, of ideologies, of voting, of choosing friends, of choosing with whom to have relationships, of deciding leisure activities, of entertainment... are very clear today because it has taken centuries to achieve them. They are all, moreover, legislated in democratic countries. The victims and their supporters not only advocate that these freedoms should be enjoyed by everyone, but they also work to achieve them and take risks to do so.

The research group that broke the silence practices in its operation the freedoms with an internationally considered exemplary consequence. There are Muslims, Jews, Catholics, evangelists, agnostics, atheists, ... and all enjoy the utmost respect from others. And the same as with beliefs happens with their ideologies, voting, sexual orientation and gender choices, lifestyles, leisure, The "freedom" to harass claimed by the harassers is not admitted. This is not freedom, but the opposite, a reactionary attack on freedom.

In most social science and humanities research groups such freedoms were not enjoyed. While there were permissiveness and silence in the face of sexual harassment, dynamics were practiced that made it very difficult and often impossible to practice religions or even to vote for options different from those in positions of power in the group. These groups considered themselves "normal", "open" and defenders of "freedom", even knowing that they had among them people who harassed, even if there was no diversity of ideologies or otherwise. And on the contrary, they considered as aggressors of "freedom" and closed groups that practiced and consistently defended all individual and collective freedoms but did not accept harassment.

But things are already starting to improve and international support is a key part of this process. In universities where it is scientific and also human excellence I find admiration for the group that broke the silence and a radical rejection of the harassers who are still attacking.

Omerta (37): Having fun with the harassment

Cristina Pulido

J found three male and one female professor laughing loudly. They tried to change the conversation, but she could still hear some details. She was explaining the situation she had overheard between another professor and a student without being seen. They were reviewing an exam, the student was protesting about the grade until she became very quiet when the professor, in a insinuated way, told her that there were other ways to raise the grade. Such facetious and "funny" comments about sexual harassment observed by her colleagues were very common in the offices and corridors of these universities.

J told them that this had to be reported and that the professor had been known to engage in the same behavior many times. He got only very forceful refusals and some disqualifications towards the girl saying that she was of age and that if she put up with it nothing could be done. J insisted and said that he would then report himself; the professor warned him not to use any of the information she had given and that, if he did, she would say that he was lying. The aforementioned professor continued to harass until his retirement without ever receiving any complaints.

When there were already started to be complaints from a professor in the same department, this female professor was one of the most active and most dedicated allies in spreading all the worst lies about the victims and about the few faculty who supported them. She was and still is a person without any scientific curriculum but that activity against the victims led her to be highly valued by the authorities of her university, even by a professor who until then had said that she was mediocre.

Omerta (38): Retaliation for not trying to force an intern to work for him

Ana Vidu

P was the Head of the Department and had previously held higher level positions in the university. When the campaign against the research group supporting the victims was launched, he defended it by dismantling the lies of the harassers before the university authorities. He felt that what he had done deserved to be paid for and demanded that the research group gave him one of their scholars to work for him. He was told that it was impossible because the scholarship holders are free to decide what and with whom they work, that he could propose it to them, and they would decide. Then he went on to make a threat: if you do not manage to convince any of them to work with me, I will have to tell the Rector that I have made a mistake and that I have now realized that what is said about you is true.

He used all the power of his position to attack the victims. So much so, that a professor presented at the department meeting a proposal for a vote to prohibit insults and shouting at scholarship holders. This Director prohibited debating this proposal and did not pass it to a vote, so the mistreatment continued. In the competitions for stabilization and promotion of the teaching staff, to the extent that he could he imposed members of the committees to select people with less scientific merits than the people of that research group, shielding himself in the aforementioned lies; and not only did he choose them with that criterion, but he called those who could have doubts to his office to lecture them before the committee met.

But the greatest service he provided to the harassers' lobby was to play the role of "irrefutable" proof that the lies about that group had to be believed, "since even P, who had not believed them to the point of having defended them, later realized that he was wrong." It no longer mattered that the lies were not only lies but that they were the opposite of the truth, that this research group was the one that most clearly did not engage in the behaviors that the fake news attributed to it. It did not matter that most other groups did engage in such behaviors, the only thing that mattered was to attack the research group that supported the victims.

Omerta (39): They said and they say "With adults, there is no sexual harassment".

Mar Joanpere

The corridors and university offices were full of comments aimed at excusing the harassers, apologizing to those who looked the other way, and attacking those who helped the victims for meddling where they were not called. "And why do they accept it?" "And why do they put up with it?" "And why don't they report it?" "They are of age; those they don't want to, they don't do it."

When they spoke directly to the few people who helped the victims they tried to dissuade them by saying that they would lose out, that they didn't know who they were dealing with, that they were questioning the whole system. Not only did they see them and want them to see them as victims, but they wanted them to see themselves that way too and abandon the victims. That's why they couldn't stand those who made the step from martyr victims to triumphant martyrs. They then launched another lie: that they had created a good business by inventing sexual harassment when it would not exist at the university since they were all of age.

These lies are created by the harassers, but they echo in every person who wants to justify why they did nothing, why they looked the other way. The damage they do with that revictimization and that second-degree sexual harassment is also justified by the "they asked for it, those of us who don't get into trouble are not subjected to those attacks". Those who make these attacks are the answer to the question: "Why don't they denounce? Because supporting victims means receiving those attacks and the terrible reprisals that accompany them. Without support, victims cannot report because the attacks they receive are even more painful than the harassment they received in the first place.

We have come a long way thanks to the brave few who stood up to it and those who have supported them. There is less harassment now. But in the collective culture of many university corridors and offices, there are still those comments and those thoughts. There have been many years of total impunity for sexual harassment in universities and many years of total submission to those who carried it out.

Omerta (40): Director of NGOs and repeat offender

Montserrat Sánchez

A large organization asked us to design and carry out a plan to explain the SEAs (successful educational actions) to families and to advise schools that wanted to implement them. The SEAs are those endorsed as such by the international scientific community, including Harvard, Cambridge and the European science program. They were very pleasantly surprised when they asked about our remuneration, and we told them zero cost. Already the first project was a great success in terms of grassroots participation, never before had so much quantity and diversity been achieved. Some schools began to achieve great improvements in the educational results of their students, never seen before.

Our work was recognized and valued, both in the educational field and in overcoming gender violence in universities. There were very clear positions, both to admit educational interventions when they were accompanied by scientific evidence, and when asking for collaboration to make the first document to stop sexual harassment generated by two Internet applications in schools.

We introduced them to the European organization and facilitated their incorporation into it. We elaborated a project to extend the SEAs to all schools that wished to do so. The project was selected and a large amount of funding came in to carry it out. But when it arrived, this organization had a new director who authoritatively imposed a radical change. The funds would not be used to extend SEAs, but for what they called Areas of Successful Actions, which have no scientific base and are in fact failures that worsen educational outcomes. The schools that had achieved improvements with the SEAs began to lose them when the SEAs were replaced by occurrences. Some workers denounced this director for his behavior with them, without the support of a part of the board of directors of the organization that hired him.

We decided to terminate the collaboration for not being able to ensure ethical and professional use of the funds obtained, for worsening the educational results of the students, for disillusioning and deactivating the increase achieved in family participation, and for the treatment of these workers. Since then, the praise we received from this organization was replaced by its collaboration with the dissemination of lies elaborated by those who attacked the victims of gender violence at the university and those of us who had supported them. Some of the complaints that this director received in the different organizations in which he worked resembled those made by the victims of gender violence in the universities and he devoted himself with rage and intensity to spreading the lies that were being told about them.

In that climate, one more lie was added against the victims of sexual harassment of the first and second order in universities. Still today, some say on the internet that members of that organization have confirmed that they could no longer cope with our obsession that they understood that all schools had to implement SEAs and become learning communities. This

new lie encouraged the bullying lobby's attacks to hide the fact that the public funds allocated for SEAs dissemination were not being used for that task. The funds had been granted to disseminate the SEAs and we always defended that they should be applied only by schools that wanted to and freely decided to do so.

Today that organization has changed its board of directors; neither that director nor those who supported his actions are no longer there. But that director has been hired by another organization, many of whose workers have denounced him for the same behaviors. We see that the new management is making changes that we hope will be sufficiently profound so that this will not happen again. One of the indicators to assess that transformation will be if a public apology is made for the actions that took place during that director's time, including those that affected victims of gender-based violence at the universities.

Fortunately for the girls and boys of Europe, that director and his accomplices were not able to hijack the SEAs. Those who generated the knowledge for that project have put it at the real service of European citizenship, and it is improving the educational results of more and more students, including those of a growing number of schools in Catalonia. We continue to collaborate directly with the European organization, bringing scientific knowledge about SEAs to European families, to which they have a right as specified in Article 27 of the Human Rights.

Omerta (41): Defend the harasser to make a living from journalism

Ana Vidu

A. worked for a magazine belonging to a powerful international group. She wanted to make a successful career in journalism, and to that end he tried to increase the number of readers of his articles and made sure they were valued by decision-makers. She thought she had found her best opportunity when a group of people with power in the university and in the media decided to defend the professor with the most harassment complaints by launching a campaign against his victims on the very day he was returning to the university where he had done most of these behaviors.

She saw clearly that the campaign was so powerful, massive and cruel that it would easily achieve its objective of guaranteeing the incorporation of this professor and destroying those who had denounced him. In the very group to which the magazine belonged, she received encouragement to carry out this action; which is normal, because some time later numerous harassments of the workers of that group by some of their bosses came to light and, logically, they were very happy to have such a militant young journalist to defend those who in the university behaved as they did in their companies.

She was told that the article she was preparing was a revictimization of the direct victims and second-order sexual harassment against those who had supported them. It was suggested to her that she contrasted it with those victims. She refused, not wanting anything to get in the way of what she believed was going to be her greatest journalistic success. The slander she was going to spread generated a morbidity that she did not want to disappear by telling the truth. She miscalculated. The recent breakthrough of the international anti-sexual harassment movement reached her group of companies where there was such widespread and scandalous behavior that the corporate group was forced to publicly apologize and take steps to rectify it.

Some time later she was fired from the magazine. She thought she was going to make it and ended up going out on the interwebs begging for someone to pay her to write. The current strength of the anti-bullying movement means that more and more people who thought they were winning by supporting bullies and attacking victims are losing far more than they ever thought they would. And that also helps reduce the number of harassers because, when they win, almost all of them reoffend but, when they lose, there are many who think twice the next time.

Omerta (42): The jester of the harassers

Mar Joanpere

The university's harassers lobby needed a buffoon to play the gross game while they hid behind anonymity and could, thus, continue harassing. To that end, the strategy proved to be as pathetic as it was unproductive, choosing the best recruit to make it happen.

For years and with great determination, the buffoon is dedicated, almost obsessively, to pursue each of the events in which members of the group that broke the silence against gender violence in universities participate or organize and tries to boycott them through social media. He does it with so much determination that, for each attack he tries to project, he gets at most one retweet from the association that is dedicated to attack the victims of those university harassers, while the group gets progressively not only an improvement of the universities, but that, before each attack, more people decide to denounce or explain what is happening in order to find solutions, from political parties to nobel prizes, through citizen entities and individuals.

While one of them shows his face and the rest act cowardly in hiding, the fight against gender-based violence in universities continues to grow and become stronger. Contrary to what they had imagined, and in accordance with what the group already thought, neither the harassment strategy of the buffoon and the lobbyists nor the attacks have succeeded in getting anyone to take a stand in their favor.

Omerta (43): Expecting a moral act from an immoral person

Ana Vidu

When they received the letter from the District Attorney's Office notifying them that the charges against the most reoffending professor of the University were filed, the victims could not believe it. They met -some of them knew each other then-, they did not know very well what to do, but they knew they wanted to do something. They had in their hands a valuable document. The cases expired from administrative proceedings, not criminal proceedings; that is, due to dates, not facts, which constituted a crime. It was therefore clear that the professor had sexually abused several students. Faced with such evidence and with the judicial route having expired, there remained the institutional route, the university. The victims then asked to meet with the Rector, the Equality Commission and the Dean.

The meeting with the latter was tense and unpleasant, with continuous interruptions and acts of revictimization. The Dean assessed the filing by the District Attorney's Office as a matter of very bad luck for us and, on the other hand, of very good luck for the harasser. She defended that the only move that the university could make after the legal way was done was the "moral way", so they talked to the harassing professor to ask him to stop teaching. She claimed that the faculty tried to negotiate with him so that he would do so freely and pressured him by telling him that if he did not agree, there would be a scandal in the press and he would be harmed. She said that, but when two years later the professor was reinstated, the Dean and the Rector defended that he had to teach and harshly attacked the movement that successfully proposed not to allow him to teach.

The Dean continued to blame the victims for having spread the news to the press before the negotiation with the accused professor. She argued that they could no longer play the card of making him voluntarily decide not to teach any more classes. Faced with this statement, one of the victims present there directly asked the Dean if what she was expecting was a moral act from such an immoral person. Faced with the Dean's affirmative answer, the victims were clear about two things: that the university would continue not to position itself on the side of the victims, quite the contrary; and that they would continue their struggle, which was a different struggle, which consisted of supporting all the victims and of not allowing the professor and others with acts like his to find in the university a space where they could harass with impunity.

Omerta (44): If you do not collaborate with the harassment, you will never achieve a professorship

Ana Vidu

Professor J wanted to stop Professor R from supporting the victims of his harassment and believed that it would be as easy as it had been with others. He had yet to meet anyone who would give up the possibility of becoming a full professor for supporting the victims of his harassment. R was an exception that had him worried.

"Coincidentally", they both happened to be members of a tenure-track examining board and R met J in the next seat on the plane. He soon showed him the list of 51 upcoming professors, telling him that the ones appearing in the list are the only ones who will achieve it, no one outside that list would ever get a professorship.

The question was very clear: Do you want to be on this list or off? The answer to which J was accustomed was: "inside", but from R he expected another: "I would rather never become a professor than support your behavior". He preferred the former, but the latter was not bad for him either, because it would further confirm an essential element of the law of silence: whoever does not collaborate is excluded from any professional promotion.

However, he was surprised to hear an even worse answer for him: "I will never remain silent in the face of such behavior, I will always support the victims and therefore I will not be on that list, but I will become a professor". If this were true, the foundations of feudal power and its harassment would collapse, but the group of professors in this area of knowledge would ensure that this would not happen.

Twice R was suspended in competitions for professorships by tribunals whose members had scientific curricula vitae far inferior to his, but who actively collaborated in maintaining feudal power and silence about harassment. Although he did not yield and that was negative for the harassers, it was a lesser evil because it also meant an example of what those who wanted a professorship did not have to do.

However, the meritocratic reform of the feudal universities arrived and external accreditations with objective scales began. Since then, an article in a Harvard scientific journal had the highest score whoever published it, previously it had the lowest score if the person who had published it was someone who supported the victims.

R was the first to be accredited in his area and thus became a professor not only without submitting to the feudal dynamics that had been all-powerful until then, but with a very active commitment to all the victims of all the harassers. Since then, the only retaliation that the harassers and their accomplices have been able to make has been slander, which has hurt and hurts but does not prevent more and more people from following R's example and supporting the victims without ending up as martyrs but as winners.

Omerta (45): Legal Services, at the service of whom?

Ana Vidu

A national newspaper was one of the newspapers that echoed a file that the Labor Inspectorate opened at the University following a case of alleged sexual harassment, stating that "sources have assured that in the files of the legal department of the center there is no formal complaint of M against A, although the complainant keeps the receipt of her claims, so no proceedings have been initiated to investigate the facts." The Legal Services of a public university should be at the service of students, faculty or PAS who suffer gender violence. However, we are many victims who were not defended, but attacked by their actions.

Rectors and Legal Services justified the "status quo" by saying that, since the alleged victims were of legal age, if they "got into" these situations, it was because they wanted to, and that nothing happened to those who did not want to. They categorically affirmed that gender violence did not exist in the universities and that, therefore, no commission, office, protocol or any other type of action was necessary, that the legal services were sufficient. And if a woman suffered gender violence, that was a private matter, that it had nothing to do with the university and that she should go to the ordinary justice system. They considered that the victims who denounced and those who defended us were disturbing the university peace, discrediting the university and interfering in the private lives of the people who assaulted us.

A Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities has requested several times an interview with successive rectors and they have never answered our request. Some of us who have managed to open files on alleged harassers have been treated in the investigation process as defendants instead of accusers. We have hardly been asked about what the harassers were doing to us, but we have been asked insistently about our alleged sexual relationships, especially those that the harassers' lies attributed to us with the people who supported us. It was the university powers that meddled in our private lives, that brought the university into disrepute, that maintained the impunity of those who disturbed the university peace.

We are sorry to say that neither the Rector nor any university authority has yet answered our request for an interview, much less to our request to open an informative file on the revictimization and sexual harassment of the second order that we are still being subjected to. But there are more and more changes, the harassers and the university powers that support them are moving backwards and it is increasingly unsustainable to say that you are against harassment and that you do not decisively support those of us who have always acted to eradicate it.

Omerta (46): Frustrations in the service of stalkers

Elena Duque

A wanted to be a successful researcher, but without working the way those who become excellent do. She was like a person who signed up for a theater group wanting to go on stage as the main character but hardly attending rehearsals because she said she did not enjoy them and that they took time away from other activities. She thought she would die of jealousy when someone else was chosen as the lead, who did much better because she took rehearsals very seriously. From then on, she did not stop criticizing the theater group, even believing the lies she herself had invented. This and other frustrations caused her psychological problems that she attributed to her time in that group.

The same thing happened with E. As an undergraduate student, she wanted to work in the research group that trained excellent young people. She thus obtained a stipend from the group's own funds and finished her degree with an average grade that allowed her to have a pre-doctoral scholarship contract for four years with remuneration from the government. In the meantime, she and another student in the same situation told the director of the research group that other groups worked less and he said that, if they preferred, he could introduce them to the groups of their choice. They asked him if they would also achieve excellence in them and he said that those who were trained in excellent kitchens were usually better cooks than those who were not. The directors of these groups told them that this was not the case and they were both able to enjoy two pre-doctoral contracts in these groups.

After the four years, neither achieved sufficient excellence to pass the accreditations necessary to have full-time faculty contracts at the university. Both knew that this would not have happened had they remained in the initial group. E. accepted it well as a product of her decision and looked for a job outside the university. However, A. was filled with anger because she wanted to be a university professor and had to settle for many years with very precarious contracts while others who were younger and with an excellent education got the contracts she wished to have. At the beginning, almost nobody paid attention to her, but when she added to her attacks those usually made by the harassers' lobby to the same group, she found a great deal of support that made her more and more active. For the harassers' lobby, she is a very effective collaborator because she backs up her lies with the expression: "I know very well because I was there".

Omerta (47): Additional requirements facing the rejection of a dissertation

Ana Vidu

Upon receiving the letter with the first rejection of her doctoral thesis, the doctoral student, a victim and participant in the pioneering complaint against a professor for sexual harassment in her faculty, was asked to conduct an interview with one of the two people who refuted the thesis.

According to the dean of the faculty where the complaint was made, this thesis rebuttal was motivated by several elements of the content of the thesis, the most important being the following: (a) the responsibility of the institution before the case of sexual harassment and its filing; (b) the lack of response by the dean herself when the first letter of complaint was received; (c) the approval of the protocol for prevention, detection and action against sexual harassment; (d) the lack of support and information to the victims in the process followed by the university; (e) the academic reprisals suffered by the first complainant and the second order sexual harassment of those who supported her; (f) the importance attributed in the case to the intervention of Harvard University; (g) the statements of the dean in the investigation of the case; and (h) the complicity of the institution with the facts denounced. These elements, which occupied a minimal part of the doctoral thesis, were undoubtedly relevant for the image of the institution and of the dean herself.

In view of these aspects, the signatories of the letter, the dean and the president of the faculty's Equality Committee, asked the doctoral candidate to interview the people they considered. The interview with the Equality Committee is a matter for another Omertá chapter. The interview with the dean was tense and with constant contradictions and attacks. The lack of arguments on her part was evident and her anger and shouts were also recorded.

The doctoral candidate went to the interview to ask questions such as the following, as part of her doctoral research: a) How do you explain the difference between the accusations against the accused professor, which took a year to reach the District Attorney's Office (when the time limits of the crime had already been passed) and he had the opportunity to know who was accusing him and to defend himself; and, on the other hand, the accusations against the people who defended the victims, which are anonymous, without them being able to defend themselves, and arrived very quickly at the District Attorney's Office? b) How is it that in the University the women who have not only defended the victims the most, but have also done most research on the subject, are removed from the Equality Commission? c) What explanation is given for the fact that there are victims who do not dare to denounce? Could it be that they do not feel protected by the institutional positions?

These issues precisely motivated the rejection of the thesis, the obligation of the interviews and the need for justification by the institution. Not only that, but the approval of the thesis was conditioned to the affirmation of a positive involvement by the institution in the case, a

fact which not only lacks truth, but is contrary to reality. The victims met with attacks and retaliation, and so did their supporters, who suffered second order of sexual harassment for their courageous stance in favor of the victims and against the harasser. Issues such as the procedure of the dean's office and the Equality Commission, together with the lack of institutional intervention, were thus made clear during the course of the interview, which ended in anger and with the physical expulsion of the doctoral student from the office.

Omerta (48): Navigating within an harassing university

Mar Joanpere

In his first year, J accepted the invitation of one of the renowned professors of the degree to have a coffee, become friends and talk about issues related to the degree. How lucky he was to be able to talk directly with a researcher, with someone who published books!, he thought. Coffee was followed by meals, sports, sociological topics, and without realizing it, personal topics were included. The professor presented himself as someone who was liberal, who had a wife and children, but also female lovers, as a normal part of his lifestyle.

He never talked about his bisexuality, which J realized the day the professor groped him. J shook his hand off, and it seemed to him that the professor lowered his head in shame and turned away apologizing. J could not get over his astonishment and went home thinking about how he had gotten into that situation..., what he had done to make the other one act like that... Due to his concern, the next time they met he asked the professor what it all meant to him, including the incident, in order to clarify things and any possible misunderstanding.

The professor reacted in an unexpectedly immature and ambiguous way, "it will have whatever meaning you want to give it...". J left even more worried than the first time. He had already decided that it would be the last time he would meet this person. He thought that reporting it would be fruitless, he did not know what the police would do, whether they would laugh, or try to play it down..., and what would happen for the rest of the degree. He discussed it with some of his friends, with his family, and the common advice was "try to avoid it".

And that's what he did every time they met by chance in the faculty. Until the third year of the degree, when he was his professor in a compulsory course. J kept the minimum formal contact to follow the subject, although he stopped going to class, without giving up the evaluation, because of a hint that he thought the professor threw at him one day in the classroom. He finished the course, avoiding the professor, avoiding the time he proposed to meet for coffee, and trying to think of other things.

But inevitably, and perhaps because the university world is small, when he wanted to do his PhD, he had the professor again in a course on Research Projects. In a peer review dynamic, he assigned him to review a relativistic work on adult-juvenile relationships that legitimized or normalized pederasty. He became increasingly aware that he was dealing with someone twisted, manipulative, and maybe sick.

Due to his interest in migration, J decided to pursue a doctorate in migration at another university in a different part of the country. Whether it was because the university world is small, on the other side of the country, his thesis supervisor had the professor who had harassed him as the committee chair for full professorship. The image that his colleagues

had of him and that he had to portray was that of a liberal person, and controversial because of his conception of being liberal.

J only asked his thesis director not to invite him to his thesis committee for personal reasons, and the director agreed. At that time J was already working as an associate professor, giving his first classes while finishing his thesis.

For all these reasons, when J learned that there had been other victims, and that the police were collecting testimonies to file a complaint, he thought it was the least he could do, since not doing so at the time had surely contributed to that professor having harassed many other students.

At that moment he began to know the dimension of the tragedy of sexual harassment at the University. Confused and overwhelmed victims, professors who know about it and look the other way or go home after work as if nothing had happened, an institution for whom the problem are the victims and those who defend them rather than the harassment and the harassers....

Even so, the harm that the harassing professor had caused to J fell short due to the disproportionate reactions, the direct attack, and the cold, calculated and covert mobbing that a department colleague, with whom he seemed to be friends, began to do to him from the moment J told him he was going to denounce the professor who harassed him in his first year.

He justified the attacks in front of J and the rest of the department on the basis of student complaints about his teaching. What he never said and never explained was which students complained, how he got the information and what relationship he had with them. For several years he repeated like a mantra that J did not explain himself well, that he was not understood when he lectured, that he did not master the content of the courses, that he became defensive when students asked him questions in class. Classes in which he was not present.

At the time of a promotion position with which J had his first opportunity in 10 years to stabilize his position, going from associate to assistant doctor, he stated that he considered that the wrong person was being promoted, that J would not be able to fulfill the tasks and requirements of the accreditations. He tried to put a position profile that did not favor J and promoted the committee's challenge of the position.

To find an explanation, J believes that his colleague probably felt questioned and must have seen his career in danger, because he took advantage of his position as a professor to meet with female students, go on dates and look for a girlfriend or partner among them. He never recognized that there was a position of power mediating that relationship; he argued that both, professor and student, were adults deciding freely.

Whether it is because it is a small world, a friend of J's mother held important management positions related to education, first in the university and later in the government. Inexplicably, not only did he do nothing against the harassing professor, but he attacked

professors who took a stand against him and against sexual harassment at the university, covering up for other professors who were known to have harassed female students.

Truly, each case that comes to light, each page we write, reveals the magnitude of the tragedy. It is an institution that in its positions of power has people who are either harassers, or cover up for harassers; people who, instead of taking advantage of their position to generate or build a space of freedom, truth and equity, show inaction and contribute to the reproduction and continuation of sexual harassment and abuse of power. It is an institution that, instead of seeking the truth, supporting and protecting victims, gives oxygen to hoaxes, gives wings to subterfuge, and allows the attack and revictimization of victims and those who support them or denounce and take a stand against sexual harassment in the university. Both harassers and cover-ups feel attacked and questioned when the truth comes out. Then poor management is seen and the corporatism of an institution that allows sexual harassment is revealed.

Omerta (49): Sexist alliances are among different political options

Mar Joanpere

Last February 17, the well-known politician G was expelled from a well-known television program for not rectifying and apologizing after insulting the audience days before. The scandal of the moment was also evidenced on twitter.

Last September 27, 2016, this man was united with journalist E in their joint attack on the research center that investigated and denounced gender violence at the university. G, right-wing anti-independist, and E, left-wing independentist, were united in their common identification with the aggressor and with the rage against the victims of gender violence. Researcher O responded on twitter to this sexist alliance, clearly positioning himself against the attacks that both were perpetuating with the sole effect of protecting the harassers and those who protect them. Years later we see how politician G has removed the defamations, it is not clear why, while their dynamics are the same as on September 27.

Once again, we see how there are those who, instead of rectifying their insults and accusations, prefer to set fire to social networks portraying themselves as victims, which silences and ignores the real victims, in this case of gender violence at the university. Despite these discriminatory and arrogant attitudes, we refer to the evidence. Of them, although hidden, there is always evidence.

Omerta (50): A very sexist pedagogue

Ana Vidu

The director of the organizing institution and coordinator of the panel exclaimed: "Sexist!", a shout that the microphone made resound throughout the whole room, creating a sense of relief among the indignation felt by many women in the audience. The famous pedagogue F had said with much disdain: "When you pass by the exit of the schools you no longer see the women of earlier times devoted to their children, now you no longer know if they are mothers or what they are".

R, the other speaker on the panel, had promoted excitement among the audience by demonstrating the great improvements in student outcomes that were achieved with an educational project that opened schools to the full participation of families. F was angry that he could not demonstrate that any of his proposals had improved outcomes in any school, it made him mad that R rejected all kinds of corruption and harassment, but what got on his nerves was that he was much more liked than he was.

While R continued to improve results in education and overcoming gender violence, F continued to say and do whatever was best at any given moment to earn more money and fame, which brought him closer and closer to the harassers' lobby. Already as a public radio pedagogue, he engaged in insulting and harshly attacking the research center that supported the victims. The public radio promised to rectify by giving a voice to the victims, but never kept its word, which shows the alliances that sexist men like F have with high levels of academic, media and political powers.

Omerta (51): “Changing their coat” on equality issues

Mar Joanpere

For many years, the victims of gender violence in universities have been silenced and even attacked by people who have held positions in the Equality Commissions of some universities, deans, researchers in the area of gender in social sciences and a long etcetera.

Supporting the victims meant for many of them giving up their positions, projects, achieved with their scientific merits and often deprived of them through the pointing finger of the harassing professor.

Today, however, we see how many of those who positioned themselves against the victims, for their own benefits, have changed sides - as it is said in Spanish, they have “changed their coats”- also for their own benefits, not for those of the victims. They have proclaimed themselves to be "experts" and "leaders" of a struggle to which not only did they not contribute, but put up resistance so that their voices would be heard more and from farther away than those of the people who were and are suffering harassment.

Despite the queues that exist today to have the best recognition of gender in universities, the networks of victims and citizens know well who were at their side to become survivors and who have never been, nor will be.

Omerta (52): The veto due to defending victims

Ana Vidu

Defending victims of gender violence in the university can involve defamation, attacks and also vetoes. As discussed in previous chapters, there are people who have been removed from important positions, suffered repercussions on university tenure tribunals, and have even been vetoed from being part of tenure tribunals.

When you are a victim of gender violence in the university, one of the things you are always told is that, if you want to have an academic career, you need to be careful about who you might have on the tenure tribunals. Indeed, there is a relationship between the two facts, just as there is a relationship between faculty who support victims and their presence, or lack thereof, on certain tenure tribunals. There are professors who have never presided over a chair or tenure tribunal at a university, even though they have much more curriculum in their area than others who have.

When the profile of these people is related to their active support for the victims who have broken the silence in the university, it is no coincidence that their veto is produced and that the power relations that for so many years have maintained the silence about the cases of harassment in the university want to remain present, thus trying to diminish the solidarity that the victims need so much.

On the other hand, people who were sometimes on the side of the harassers are trying to get on the winning side as the struggle has been won by all these mobilizations led by the victims and their supporters. This trend has been coinciding with an increase in resources related to the fight against harassment. More activities, conferences, research projects are beginning to be financed with public funds. When those who present themselves as "experts" in gender violence try to ignore those who have always fought, fight and will fight prioritizing the victims and actively supporting them, they not only harm the fight and discourage survivors, but they drastically discredit themselves for such an unethical trajectory.

Omerta (53): Requesting that the ethical codes of our universities include SOSH

Ana Vidu

When a Spanish university drew up its Code of Ethics, more than three years ago, the *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities*, following our commitment and because of the importance it has for us and for the collective we defend, we asked the Rector to include in this Code of Ethics measures of prevention and action against Second Order Sexual Harassment (SOSH). SOSH refers to the attacks and reprisals received for taking a stand with the direct victims. We did so trusting that its initiatives would project the university towards the scientific and human excellence that every academic community says it desires.

The Solidarity Network was founded precisely with the aim of providing support and solidarity to a group of direct victims who wanted to be survivors and also to second-order victims who filed a complaint against a professor for sexual harassment, which was reported by different media. The victims who coincided as witnesses in the course of this case formalized ourselves as a Network at the end of 2013. It was the time when the District Attorney's Office communicated the decree of archiving the complaint; however, it legitimized the facts and, therefore, the need for joint actions in support of the victims and everyone who supported them, thus positioning ourselves against harassment at the university.

In this vein, and always with the aim of supporting the direct and SOSH survivors, we were pleased that finally a university institution picked up our proposal to start taking very useful measures, in what seemed like the beginning of a new stage with ethical commitment. The elaboration and use of a Code of Ethics is essential to ensure the proper functioning of any institution by adhering to basic common principles. Addressing SOSH is key to ending the problem of sexual harassment in the university environment. If the person who supports the victim is not also protected, it makes it difficult to break the silence, an essential factor in helping to build the universities that society deserves, free of any kind of harassment.

We continue to hope that Second Order Sexual Harassment will one day be included in the Codes of Ethics of Spanish universities and in the codes of conduct and individual and collective behavior of any institution that seeks to prevent and be free of harassment.

Omerta (54): The resistance of some professors to combine face-to-face and online teaching at universities

Mar Joanpere

This article is not about those who oppose the hybrid system of university teaching, but only about a very small minority, only about those who oppose it because this system makes it difficult to harass face-to-face. The introduction of the hybrid system of teaching poses a resistance from those people who vindicate and need the previous university, since virtualization in hybrid mode makes it difficult to harass in person, which has been going on for decades, because they can no longer force their students to attend their classes or tutorials in person, to have to endure their unwanted looks and because online they run the risk of having their obscene comments recorded.

The feudal university is increasingly breaking down walls and silences, transforming itself, thanks to those who work in this direction, into a space free of violence, power relations and submission. In this sense, the changes that have been taking place, while marking new horizons for the future towards democracy and equality, have generated much resistance on the part of those who have desired and desire to maintain their power in order to be able to continue to harass with total impunity.

While some resist change, those who suffer these harassments in the university feel liberated from this feudal system that is less and less within the reach and dominion of those who have sustained and controlled it for so many decades.

However, as has already been known for some time, there are besiegers who use the media to sexually harass; in the last published case, the professor of a University used whatsapp to repeatedly violate students. Therefore, protocols for prevention and action against sexual harassment in the university should be applied both in online and offline spaces.

Omerta (55): The denunciation of some media, a prerequisite for transforming victims into survivors

Ana Vidu

The reality of sexual harassment in the university is suffered beyond the first harassment itself. Many victims speak of revictimization, referring to all the attacks and questioning they suffer after having broken their silence. Therefore, one is not only a victim of an act of harassment in itself, but of many acts subsequent to that harassment, coming from different people and groups. One such area is the media.

Some media have contributed to unveiling the revictimization that those of us who had denounced were suffering, and the sexual harassment of second order (SOSH) that the few professors who supported us were suffering. Many press articles followed the international orientations as did a television program and international scientific journals, the Platform against gender violence in Catalonia and voices from Harvard, Cambridge, the European Women's Lobby, etc.

Thus, while there are many media that have stood on the side of the victims, giving us a voice and sharing our cause, there are also some that have done the opposite. Even if they are few, their attacks do a lot of damage, while discouraging other victims to denounce. In addition, defamatory articles are having harsh consequences on the personal and professional trajectories of both direct victims and second-order victims. For example, if they are going to give a lecture, if they are bidding for a contract, the harassers immediately send links to the defamatory articles everywhere.

In such cases, the victims and the *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities*, have been forced on more than one occasion to ask for rectification from certain media outlets. We have asked them to clearly and quickly rectify the references which are so detrimental to us, the victims. We have also asked them to remove these articles from their website, thus stopping the attacks and starting to contribute to society's goal of overcoming sexual harassment by taking the position that more and more people, institutions and governments have decided to undertake. Even if they agree with us, they do not want to rectify, they do not want to publicly acknowledge that they have made a mistake. It is not an intelligent position because in this way they are discrediting themselves internationally and are leaving evidence that they collaborated with sexual harassment, which is becoming increasingly serious as well.

Omerta (56): Do we know how to thank survivors for the freedom of our daughters and granddaughters who will attend college?

Mar Joanpere

There was no freedom in our universities before the courageous action of the then victims and now survivors. Although still with important limitations, today it exists and can be enjoyed by the girls and boys who are now taking the entrance exams. As S, a Director of Harvard's Office for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, wrote about the few professors who supported her allegations, "Future generations of students and faculty will undoubtedly have a very different experience because of her work".

As the most important research, published in the top scientific journal on this topic "Violence Against Women", showed that 62% of Spanish university students were suffering harassment or knew someone who was suffering it in silence, and 92% did not know where to turn. After that research, those figures began to be drastically reduced, although now the harassers and their accomplices are trying, in vain, to prevent the same survey from being replicated to make a difference clear and quantified.

People who feel grateful and share the goal of their effort do not perform the heroic acts the survivors and their supporters did, but they do act by defending them clearly and forcefully in private and in public, in addition to disseminating their publications and stories. Those who do not have this feeling and choose the unsupportive attitude of looking the other way are part of that silent mass that is so convenient for the harassers and so detrimental to their victims. Fortunately, in recent years, public discourse has been moving rapidly towards more and more people showing solidarity with the survivors and towards making it worse not to get involved, to look the other way.

Omerta (57): Equality technicians attacking victims

Ana Vidu

The first known case of a Spanish university's public and explicit decision in favor of a complaint of internal sexual harassment ended very well, despite the direct and public attack on the victims by the only colleague who was an equality technician and held a position of responsibility in the association of equality professionals. The victims of sexual harassment by a colleague in the master's program decided to contact the entire class, except for the one who was later expelled for his harassing behavior, to explain how they felt and ask for help from the group.

The email was very clear and sincere. She, the equality policy technician, responded personally to the victims stating that she too had felt harassed and intimidated, to the point of having to change public transportation for fear of being chased.

With this information, together with their own experiences of harassment, the victims decided to talk to the coordination of the master's degree to put an end to the harassment, also knowing that the harasser had already been judged previously for the same case of peer harassment when he was studying the degree, although in that case there had been no condemnation by the university. With this decision, they contacted the group again to present their position in order to obtain support. To their surprise, the person who responded the worst, openly before the whole group, was the equality policy technician, who a few days before had written claiming to be also harassed, ending the email with "you have my support".

When measures were taken and the empowered victims decided to pull strings to put an end to the situation - not only for their own well-being, but also thinking of the students of the master's program, the teachers, the library managers, etc., even thinking of those who attacked them -, the equality policy technician, citing her position and experience in the subject, asked for "objectivity and awareness of the damage that can be done by an interpretation of facts of relative gravity [...] and that, in my opinion, we are not in a position to judge".

Her words served to sow doubts among the group, blaming the victims for the situation and placing the aggressor as if he were the victim. The first support for the victims had come from a professor and, at the time, the technician offered her support. Then, the university, faculty and master's degree authorities became very much against the victims and their supporters. It was then when the equality technician attacked them harshly and led the change of position of the class that ended up being totally against the victims. However, the professionalism and ethics of a law full professor made it impossible for the university to maintain its position and had to publicly and explicitly pronounce itself, for the first time in history, against a sexual harasser and in favor of his victims.

Omerta (58): New generations of students empowered

Ana Vidu

The fight against harassment carried out in recent decades in universities has made new generations have a more favorable context to not remain silent. So much so that, in the state conference against harassment and gender violence in universities, organized by networks of victims and activists against sexual harassment from different Spanish universities, some female professors shared statements such as: "it is very exciting to be here, I thought I was going to retire with this baggage". "You women give me hope". "You are the generation that has taken the reins to put an end to this issue".

Indeed, the historical moment that characterizes the new generations of the current student body is aligned with all the steps that have been taken so far. This is possible thanks to the few professors who have not been silent and have denounced the injustices that were happening around them; thanks to the faculty that has always supported the victims and has promoted the student body to see that it can be in the university while being on the side of the victims, without that loyalty to the faculty complicit in the harassment that has been undermining the universities for decades.

However, we are at the best moment: the courageous faculty, the solidarity networks, the victims who, having broken the silence, have been achieving success thanks to the support, and a different context in which looking the other way is getting worse and worse, generates an empowerment in the new generations of student boys and girls who have a more solid base not to remain silent in the face of any act of harassment exercised by a member of the teaching staff or by a peer, either towards themselves or towards someone close to them, thus acting as active bystanders preventing harassment and responding to it by supporting the victims.

Omerta (59): He admitted that he knew it was false, but spread it anyways

Ana Vidu

Second order sexual harassment, already defined in multiple publications, is suffered in different forms and in multiple spaces. What coincides in all these spheres is the attack on people who show solidarity with the direct victims, thus turning them into second order victims. The most resounding denunciation in the media and one of the first in the state against a professor for recurrent sexual harassment in the university made some people, connected with the harassment lobby, spread their attacks in different social networks.

The first aggression of this type detected from the aforementioned case was made from an anonymous Twitter account. Among other defamations, this account included an alleged conversation with a female doctor of the same university in which the professor who most supported the victims is personally attacked by saying that he had received complaints of sexual harassment at the university. The harasser who made that tweet was quickly identified. He was so clumsy that he put in the mouth of that supposedly anonymous doctor a sentence whose first part stated the opposite of the attack that the tweet intended to make ("he never harassed me") and whose second part was the typical attack on all the victims attributing to them the blame for the harassment they suffer ("because the one who does not want to, does not get harassed"). This attack resonated in other social networks, as this alleged conversation was reproduced on Facebook by another person, a member of a large Facebook group, where most of its members are students of the same discipline as the professor who was publicly receiving these attacks, the second order sexual harassment.

The Equality Commission, despite its intense tensions with the network of victims and the professor who was supporting them, followed international standards against gender violence and unanimously approved a letter stating flatly that no complaint of sexual harassment had ever been received against this professor. The Commission's action also led the student to remove the lie he had put from the Faculty's student Facebook page. A few days later, already having caused the wrong, the person who spread the accusations of the professor supporting the victims added a comment, acknowledging that he knew that it was "a hoax", but that it did not prevent him from spreading it since what was pursued was the "slander that something remains".

Not intervening in second order sexual harassment drastically prevents ending direct sexual harassment; what is more, this changes the focus of the debate, as it shifts the attention from the person denounced for harassment, to the people who break the silence, support the victims and thus contribute with their courage to bringing the cases to light and overcome the taboo on sexual harassment in academia. Second order sexual harassment is born and fed by criticism and slander from different instances and contexts, which are used as an instrument even by people who know with certainty that they are false when they want to attack someone who takes the side of the victim. For this reason, it is essential to denounce them and stop them.

Omerta (60): After showing his support, silence followed

Mar Joanpere

After listening, while sharing a meal, to the story of one of the victims of gender violence at the university, J, director of one of the influential media among the Catalan left, explained to her and the other people present that he had been a student of the first professor accused of sexual harassment at the university when he was studying journalism, and that at the time things were already being said about him.

From that meal and the shared stories, J and the victim agreed that she would send him information about the slander spread about the first group that denounced sexual harassment at the university in order to publish about it.

Soon after, she wrote to him as they had agreed and, for some unknown reason, perhaps coinciding with the feudal relationships that exist between some people within universities and some journalists, he chose, like many others, to remain silent.

Omerta (61): Taking advantage of the alternative to defame it

Mar Joanpere

One of the most prominent flag-bearers of alternatives and "progressivism" tended to use his cooperative means for his own benefit. While he publicly criticized private property and set himself up as the maximum defender of equality and housing alternatives, he did not hesitate for a second to ally himself from machismo with those who attacked not only equality but also the victims of gender violence at the university.

The fact that they were opposing political options both in national and social issues was not inconvenient for machismo to unite them. They joined in making derogatory public comments about the alleged personal lifestyles of some of the people who had positioned themselves and defended the victims and who exercised their freedom to live how and with whom they wished. This was something that the standard-bearer J, despite his speeches, could not stand because of his profoundly sexist and authoritarian behavior.

Omerta (62): Exerting SOSH, Asking about the private lives of his students

Rosa Valls

On the first day of the master's program at a Spanish university, a professor had asked the students to introduce themselves, as was customary and as they had done in other classes. The students explained things like where they were from or what they had studied previously; some explained their professional career related to the master's degree and why they were interested in taking it.

Following the order in which the students were seated, it was G's turn to speak last. She explained, like the rest, where she was from, what degree studied and that she was working with a research center of that same university, the first research center to break the silence on sexual harassment in Spanish universities. When she said the name of the center, she already noticed that the professor's face changed.

Then, the professor asked her where she lived. G and the rest of the students were surprised because he had not asked that question to anyone else in the group. G answered that she lived in that city, and he went on to ask her if she lived in an apartment. G responded yes, and he insisted, getting angrier and angrier, asking if she lived with people from that research group, to which she replied the truth: no, and ended the conversation. She already knew, and it was evident to the class, that the professor was engaging in Second Order of Sexual Harassment (SOSH), asking a student publicly about her private life.

Omerta (63): Pursuing scholarship fellows through SOSH reproduction

María Padrós

The first day J saw a female scholar in the microwave room of her department, she began by asking her where she lived, to which the scholar, surprised that a professor would be so interested in the private life of a newly arrived young scholar, told her that she lived with some colleagues downtown. The professor insisted that she lived in an apartment, which the girl still did not understand. She also asked her who she voted for and other questions along those lines, out of context and out of place. The scholar was very surprised because there was total respect for individual liberties in her research center, and no one had asked her those questions, much less had anyone interfered with where or with whom she lived.

From that moment on, J. took every opportunity to say things to the scholarship fellow. Whenever she saw her, she talked to her (the professor could not understand why she did not go after her and had decided to collaborate in an ethical and excellent research center). Continuing with the persecution, they met again at an international congress. Specifically, in a ceremonial act of the congress, J. went to talk to her again, in front of several people, to ask her where she was working, since she had changed universities. J. asked her if she had already left the research center, to which the scholar replied that she had not, that she continued to collaborate. Then the professor said to her: "*To create or to not create, you are still at that research center?*" She thus reproduced a slogan that the harassment lobby had invented, making a play on words to spread slander against the research center, which had always taken a stand on behalf of the victims of GBV in universities. The scholar replied that it was the best place for her to be. At that point, she was not as surprised as with the first interaction. She had identified faculty who maintain the law of silence in the university, doing Second Order Sexual Harassment (SOSH) with the scholarship fellows, asking about their private lives and chasing them wherever they are.

Omerta (64): When those who turned their backs on the victims occupy positions of equality

Patricia Melgar

In 2009, M was elected Head of Studies at her Faculty. The first conference she organized was an unprecedented success; it was an inauguration of the course with the most internationally recognized Spanish author in her discipline. It filled the faculty's largest hall. The second action she carried out consisted on inviting S, the director of the Office for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Harvard University, as a speaker to open the debate at M's School on sexual harassment in the academic context. Almost no one attended this second talk; most of the faculty working on gender issues at that university had a particular interest in hiding this act from their students so that the contradiction between what they said and what they did would not become evident. The Dean of the School did not refuse to preside over the event, in a very explicitly uncomfortable way, but fulfilling her institutional role, and excused herself immediately afterwards, thus avoiding attending the talk.

S commented on the difficulties encountered by the student body in breaking the silence against bullying in the academy, just as the few faculty members who dare to do so also suffer harassment. In addition, S made reference to these professors who supported victims' complaints, saying that: *Future generations of students and faculty will undoubtedly have a very different experience because of their work.* It was only recently that, in the same faculty, Professor L had reported to the Dean's office of her faculty about unwanted behavior on the part of faculty in the house. In the meantime, faculty like L were waiting for a response from their authorities, committed people like SR praised their acts of generosity and standing with the victims.

Thanks to the courage of professors like M and L and the international support coming from Harvard and other institutions, sometime later, Equality Commissions were created in each faculty and in the University itself. The Rectors vetoed to be part of them those who had achieved their existence, those who had always supported the victims, those who research and publish at the highest international level on this issue. In their place, they appointed those who had kept silent, who did not hesitate to collaborate with this veto. Currently, many people recognize that they are not making much progress in their complaints. Still, they continue to hide why and even in many cases collaborating with sexual harassment of the second order against those who have always wanted to and knew how to address it while those in office remained silent.

Omerta (65): Motion of censure against those who take a stand against harassment

Ana Vidu

Shortly after S's visited the Faculty (see Omerta 64), M, the Head of Studies received a motion of censure from the student body, or rather, from its representatives, through the association of students who called themselves representatives of the entire student body of their discipline and who had an important weight of representation in the Council of Studies, where the heads of studies, deans, etc. were voted.

Taking advantage of M's trip to the United States for a relevant lecture, the student body representatives, moved by some of the professors they had as mentors, filed a motion of censure against M, which they had voted unanimously in the Council of Studies.

That election had meant a renewal of what had been done so far in the discipline's studies. Responding to student support, in 2009, for the first time in the Faculty, M organized an inaugural session of the course, inviting the most internationally cited Spanish scholar in that field, filling the largest auditorium in the Faculty. For the first time in a similar event and in a disinterested way, C agreed to come to motivate the students in the discipline and because of the appreciation he has for M. and his research group, so highly valued internationally.

The second talk that M. organized from her position as Head of Studies was to invite S, from the Office for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Harvard University, to discuss this topic at the Faculty. Precisely in retaliation for opening the debate on sexual harassment at the university, the students launched the censure motion, moved by particular faculty who still wanted to keep silent about harassment in the academy.

That is also why, several years later, it was crucial for the student body to lose its fear of its professors and lecturers and to take the side of the victims and show broad solidarity with their female colleagues.

Omerta (66): There are consequences of stopping working with people in the stalker lobby

Elena Duque

Seeing J.'s lack of ethics in some of his practices as a researcher, E. decided to stop collaborating with him. As J. had previously told another teacher, in similar circumstances, there would be consequences. The consequences were not long in coming. E unfairly lost the next competition for an associate professor position because J. arbitrarily awarded it to someone else close to him.

The evidence of this injustice was clear. J. was the president of that board, and the winner was a school teacher with no research experience and no university teaching experience. E. had taught that subject in the same studies before, obtaining good evaluations from the students and had research experience. Thus, objectively, E. did not lose that competition because she was not the most suitable candidate, but because she had decided to stop working for J.

Omerta (67): Did not reach survivor status

Esther Roca Campos

A. did not survive an accident after nightfall. Days later, B received a letter of many pages handwritten and registered on her death morning. Tears did not prevent him from reading the depth of explaining the process that had led her to become convinced of the meaninglessness of her life. They hardly knew each other, but many people who did not know B, knew that no one helped victims as much as he did in Spanish universities. The letter made it clear that she could not stand living in this world and did not want anyone to try to change her mind. B saw very clearly in those pages that she wanted him to continue transforming that context so that what happened to her would not happen to others.

The words told the story of what bullying could do to a girl who, not long before, had entered as a teacher full of ideals of transforming the world through education. She soon saw that the atmosphere inside the university was not exactly a better world. She also felt pressured to give up her ideals to teach theories that denied the possibility of transformation. She sought some air by doing a research stay at a prestigious institution in another country where she hoped to find an environment free of harassment and less hopeless theories.

C, a more senior Spanish professor, was also doing a stay at that institution. At first, he seemed to be a pain in the ass who made his head spin with theories denying the ideals of improvement and calling him childish for upholding them. Years before, C very quickly became a harasser by making a very macho and violent analysis of the heartbreak he had with his wife. He found a resource for his harassment in the theories of a very fashionable author who had advocated the decriminalization of pederasty and rape. He didn't ask the girls if they wanted to talk to him or not. He wouldn't leave them alone, even if they asked him to, giving the image of a critical intellectual to try to get to have sex with them. It was the worst thing A. could have encountered at that point in her life.

On returning to her university she no longer saw any point in her life as a good person who relied on the kindness of other people, but neither did she want to make the change that C had made and was pushing for her to do so, she did not want to become what she thought of as a monster. No tears came from C; there were plenty of others to push. He did do this to become one of the main enemies of those who broke the silence about gender violence in university contexts; it made him very angry to feel that his modus vivendi was being attacked.

B talked to A's acquaintance. They made it clear to him not to say anything, that he would make her family suffer a lot if so, that they knew her relatives very well and that they loved her so much that none of them wanted to know anything about any detail that could make them doubt. B could not and would not forget every word of that letter. He kept forever in his memory the image of a girl who continually encouraged him to continue to break the silence about sexual harassment in universities.

Omerta (68): "If you support the victims, you lose your seat"

Ana Vidu

During the attacks that the faculty supporting the victims was receiving, the Quality Agency published a call for positions to research the departments, with a continuity practically assured forever. The position had scales, which the Quality Agency scored up to 70% of the items and the department, in this case, the director of the department, gave 30%. The Quality Agency valued O.'s merits, and he was in the first place. Still, unlike those who were in first place in other departments, he was not the one who finally occupied the position and had to leave for another university. O. had been one of the few professors who supported the victims of the most harassing professor who had been the one who had given the tenure position to the then head of the department. The director used the 30% to ensure that the person who had come in first did not win and that the position went to the person who had come in third and had also attacked the professor who defended the victims. When the file reached the department, its director, together with other professors close to the management, made N. move to a first position, and the candidate who had come first was moved to third.

The results came out and O. filed a complaint with the Quality Agency, which, in turn, sent a letter to the dean of the university. The dean, who is known for her attacks on faculty who support the victims, at that time sent the letter to the director of the department, who formally responded to O. with a long letter, with arguments that fell under their own weight, making it clear that this was a strategy to place N. The director of the department summoned O. to tell him why he had done this if he was there thanks to her. She also told him that before she was the head of the department, she had seen how different department heads had used their positions to place their own, and that she had to do the same. Thus she was making it clear to him that this is the way things go, that hierarchical university behavior has been nurtured this way and that, standing up for the victims of the harassment of those hierarchies had its consequences.

Omerta (69): Attacking those who successfully position themselves for selfishness and personal shortcomings

Mar Joanpere

Attacks on individuals and the research group that from the beginning took a stand against sexual harassment in universities have been reproduced not only by the harassers but by their entire entourage. These attacks have been reproduced by people to whom they owed favors; or people who are not consistent in their speeches and practices; by people who have not promoted respect, equality or democracy in their universities or by people driven by envy and personal shortcomings in the face of the success of those who had consistently positioned themselves with humanity, commitment and science.

There are people who, unable to bear their failures in the university and their inconsistencies, instead of changing intelligently and positioning themselves for harassment-free universities, which in the long run promotes personal and collective success, have joined the side of the worst harassers promoting violence of the second order, attacking the victims and the people who defend them. With the same feudal tactics of favor exchanges and the use and abuse of power, they intend to reposition the university in their favor, ignoring that these practices are not only anti-scientific but also anti-human at the international level.

Omerta (70): Teachers who use any occasion to spread defamation among students, destroying scientific projects

Patricia Melgar

Standing in line at the university cafeteria for a coffee, there were three female students from the faculty in front of A. They were accompanied by Professor B, well known for "going after" the female students and very angry with the research group C that had succeeded in getting measures against sexual harassment of the student body implemented.

The girls were excited to start their internships in different schools soon. One of them commented that she wanted to start in a school that followed the internationally recognized educational project for its improvements in children and adolescents' education. The student commented with enthusiasm that she had heard excellent things about this school, that participation was allowed there, which is why she wanted to start her internship there. The other two classmates nodded with a smile.

At that moment, Professor B warned them to be very careful because, in his words, that would be "entering the orbit of Group C". The girls' puzzled faces prompted the teacher to add: "Be careful, they are a very dangerous group". The girls asked the teacher for more information and sat down at a table to talk further.

Spreading this disinformation by attacking those who researched and acted against male violence at the university is already second-order violence, recognized by the Catalan law 17/2020, of December 22, amending Llei 5/2008, on the right of women to eradicate male violence.

This professor reached retirement without anyone taking action against his actions, protected by his university's complicity and a small part of the faculty that acts in his favor and a large part that looks the other way.

Omerta (71): Newspaper editor defends the person who knew he was the stalker

Mar Joanpere

J had the occasion to have lunch with one of the victims of sexual harassment in college. The conversations revolved around journalism, journalists and the promotion of so-called leftist media. The victim decided to ask Mr. J, director of one of the influential leftist media if he knew about the sexual harassment situation that persists in universities.

As a result of the question, J became very interested in the subject, changing the lunch conversations course. Going deeper, he told the victim and the other attendees that he had been a student of the professor most denounced for harassment at the university and that his practices were already known among the student body. Faced with the facts that the victim told him, J asked him to write to him by mail to publish in his newspaper a revealing article on the subject. As it turned out, a few days later, the victim contacted him with the proposed article but never heard back from him again.

Perhaps it was because she discovered that one of her group's articles had harshly attacked the victims of that professor, whose practices she had known since she was a student, had committed what today the law calls violence of the second order (sexual harassment of the second order). Between being a journalist and rectifying in favor of the victims or being a "journalist" with a guilty silence, she chose the latter. Months later, renowned journalists decided to dedicate part of a documentary to gender violence in universities, positioning themselves above those who, like J, opted for silence.

Omerta (72): Pseudo-journalism that keeps the voice of the victims silent

Ana Vidu

Faced with the attacks -public and widespread on the part of journalism- that we, the direct victims and the second order victims who supported us, were suffering, a journalist invited us to write an opinion article in his newspaper to explain the situation we were going through.

We prepared the article and sent it to the newspaper. Everything was fine until they discussed it with management and the first reaction was to try to publish it in another newspaper of the group, with the argument that they do not have a clear position in favor of the victims who denounce sexual harassment or in favor of the people who slander us, so they would give a voice to all parties.

We survivors are sorry that they talk about two sides, equating victims who come forward with people who slander hiding in anonymity. This decision of "all parties" in a harassment report does not respond to the international code of ethics of journalism. In fact, of the five basic ethical principles of journalism, the third says "objectivity is not always possible or desirable in the face of, for example, inhuman or brutal acts", as in the case of sexual harassment, and the fourth principle is that of humanity, where it is assumed that journalists cannot do harm.

Finally, the person responsible for the publication decided not to publish the article in any media, preferring not to bring the truth to light. We agreed that they would contact us and they never did, it has now been a few years. Far from trying to clarify any slander publicly, the newspaper ended up choosing to silence the voice of the victims, leaving the door open to the "slander that remains" spread by the harassers' lobby.

Omerta (73): Stars and true friendships are best seen in moments of darkness

Ana Vidu and Mar Joanpere

The worst moments of harassment can be described by the quote paraphrased here and written by Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-Western author to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. When first and second order sexual harassment intensified, true friendships and the best people, instead of walking away or looking the other way, actively stood in solidarity in public and in private.

Some people who claimed to be friends showed their true depths by keeping silent or walking away so that they would not be touched by any of the slander launched against us. Other friends proved to be true friends by spreading our position on social networks and denouncing those who attacked us; even more important, they accompanied us in the worst moments, sealing feelings that, like some roots, no one will ever be able to uproot. People we had never met before appeared, like stars in the night, encouraging us to live with joy under their light and protection.

In our transformation from victims to survivors, this better choice of friendships has been very important. Fortunately, we no longer have around us those who claimed to be our friends and did not deserve to be. We are now accompanied by much better friends and people, with whom it is easy to maintain the excitement of continuing to work hard so that no one has to go through what we have gone through.

