

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE IN PORTUGAL

Policy Brief

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**Title**

Sexual Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace
in Portugal

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Publishers

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e no Emprego (Commission for Equality in Work
and Employment), CITE
Rua Viriato, n.º 7 - 1.º, 2.º e 3.º andares
1050-233 Lisboa
Portugal

Design

Estúdio João Campos

ISBN

978-972-8399-67-2

Legal Deposit

409 194/16

Place and date of Edition

Lisbon, February 2016

Edition

750 copies printed

Policy brief published in the scope of the project
Sexual and Moral Harassment in the Workplace
in Portugal led by CITE (Commission for
Equality in Work and Employment) and funded
by European Economic Area Financial Mechanism,
EEA Grants, Programme PT 07 - Mainstreaming
Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance.

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Introduction

The research project Sexual Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace was conducted by CIEG (Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies), in 2015 as part of a partnership project led by CITE (Commission for Equality in Work and Employment), involving a number of different partners, with funding from EEA Grants.

The starting point for this research, the findings of which are summarised in this brochure, was a comparison with the data gathered in a pioneering survey conducted in 1989 (Amâncio and Lima, 1994) on sexual harassment of women in Portugal.

Considering the huge changes in society over the past 25 years, the scope of the research in 2015 was expanded to include bullying, and to include men as survey subjects, and not only women, as had previously been the case.

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

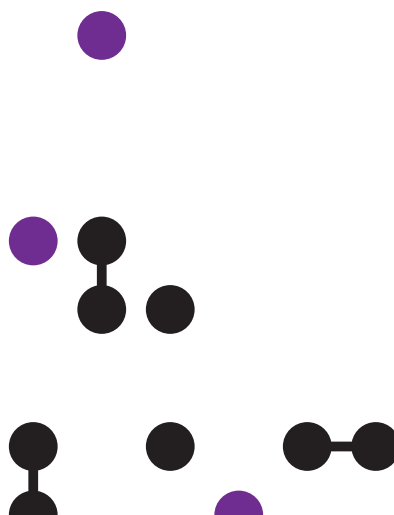
At a later stage, the great diversity of employment situations and the complexity of gender inequalities prompted researchers to take a deeper, interdisciplinary approach to the subject, looking at both the female and male universes, their interactions, power relations and the organisational context.

Bullying in the workplace is a social phenomenon to which little attention has yet been paid in Portugal, but which takes a serious toll on the physical and mental health of the individuals targeted. Internationally, research started to shed light on this problem in the 1980s, but it was in the 1990s that the debate and research in this area really developed.

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

Civic movements and international organisations, such as the ILO and the Council of Europe, have worked to gain greater visibility for these problems, voicing their condemnation, pushing them up the legal and political agenda, mobilising States and alerting employers, unions and public institutions to the advantages of preventing and combating these phenomena.

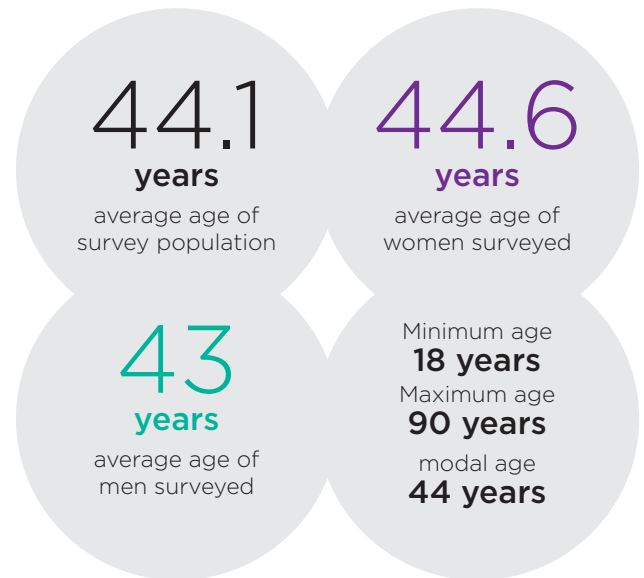
In order to obtain a picture of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace in Portugal, the researchers decided to combine and triangulate extensive and intensive methodologies. A representative sample of the Portuguese working population (mainland Portugal, excluding the primary sector) was surveyed by means of a questionnaire. At the same time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with men and women who had suffered bullying and/or sexual harassment.



01. The surveyed population

The survey was applied to a representative sample of the working population of mainland Portugal, excluding the primary sector. Responses were received from 1801 individuals: 558 men and 1243 women. For methodological reasons, it was decided to over-represent the women in the sample.

The survey was designed so that the findings could be compared with those of the survey applied in 1989 concerning sexual harassment of women. In 2015, the survey was extended to include male subjects and questions dealing with bullying in addition to sexual harassment.



The survey population presented levels of educational attainment close to those of the Portuguese working population (aged 15 years and over, INE, 2014). The deviations are related to the exclusion from our sample of the population working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, where educational levels are lower.

So whilst, for the Portuguese population as a whole, in 2014, 57% had completed only basic education (up to the 9th grade), this group represented only 47% of our sample, and higher educational levels are represented more strongly (Figure 1).

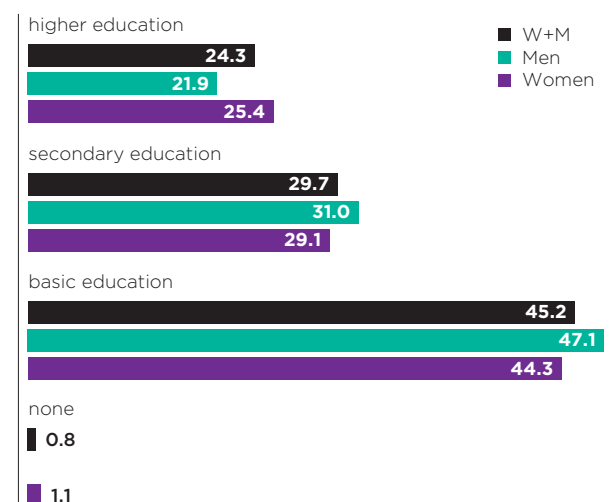


Figure 1 - Level of educational attainment of survey population, by sex (%)

Analysis of the economic sectors in which the women and men surveyed work reveals a structure in which the tertiary sector is strongly represented.

- 72.6% of men work in skilled or unskilled services and only 27.4% in industry and construction.
- The same tendency is even more visible for the women: only 11.5% work in sectors (industrial and construction) other than the service sector.

Economic sectors	Women (%)	Men (%)
Manufacturing, power, gas and water	10.9	15.9
Construction	0.6	11.5
Wholesale and retail	18.8	17.9
Transport and storage	1.0	7.2
Hotel, catering and similar	13.0	8.6
Information and media	1.7	3.4
Financial, insurance and real estate	2.7	2.9
Consultancy, science and technology and international organisations	5.5	6.6
Management and supporting services	9.9	5.2
Public administration and defence; obligatory social security	4.1	8.2
Education	9.3	4.7
Human health and social welfare	13.1	4.3
Arts, performing arts, sports and leisure	0.8	1.1
Other unskilled services activities	8.7	2.5
Total	100	100

Table 1 - Breakdown of survey population by economic sector

The size of the companies and organisations in which the women and men surveyed work reveals an industrial fabric in which small and micro-enterprises predominate: 61.4% of those surveyed work in companies or organisations with up to 49 workers, whilst 37.5% work in organisations with no more than 9 workers.

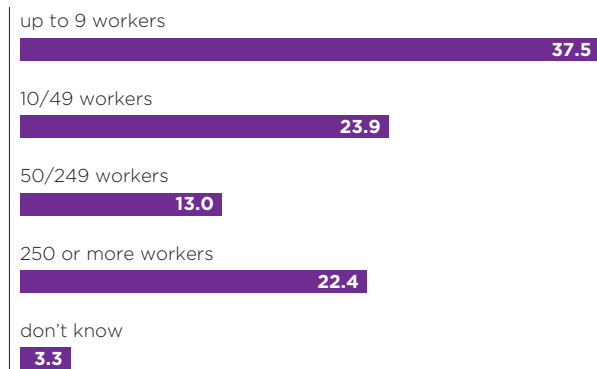


Figure 2 - Company size (%)



02. Sexual harassment and bullying¹

Harassment can be psychological (bullying) and/or sexual, and consists of behaviours perceived as abusive and intended to intimidate, coerce or undermine the dignity of (an) other person(s), and is not to be confused with consensual seduction or a professional discussion. It should be stressed that, in general, harassment is an ongoing process over time.

sexual harassment

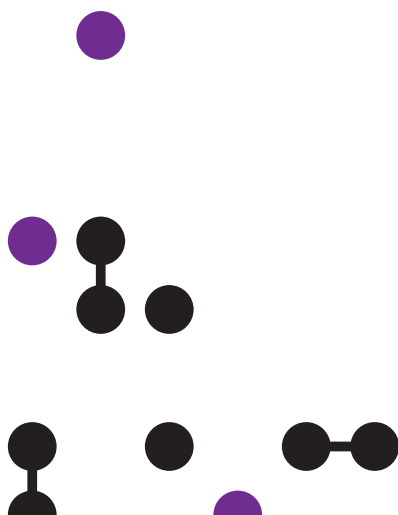
Sexual harassment consists of a range of unwelcome behaviours, of a physical, verbal or non-verbal nature, perceived as abusive, and may include pestering through attempted physical contact, requests for sexual favours with the aim or effect of obtaining advantages, blackmail and even the use of force or strategies involving coercion. Although generally ongoing, sexual harassment can also consist of one-off episodes, or episodes of an explicit and threatening nature.

bullying

Bullying or psychological harassment consists of unwelcome behaviours perceived as abusive, which are persistent or repeated, and may consist of verbal attacks with offensive or humiliating content or subtle acts, which may include psychological or physical violence. It is intended to lower the self-esteem of the target(s) and, in the last instance, to undermine their connection with the workplace.

Targets are involved in situations where they generally have difficulty in defending themselves.

¹ We have opted not to translate *assédio moral* literally as moral harassment as the term is little used in the English-language literature, possibly because in English the term "moral" implies a value judgement which is misplaced in this concept. The terms most often used to designate this phenomenon in English are *bullying* and *mobbing*. The second of these is preferred by Leymann (1996), a leading author in this field, because in his view the first presupposes physical violence, whilst harassment can take subtle and insidious forms. However, we have opted to use the term *bullying*, as pioneered by Adams and Crawford (1992), as we consider it to be the term most frequently used in English-language academic literature. The terms and concepts used in different languages are discussed in depth in chapter 2 of *Sexual Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace in Portugal* (Torres, Costa, Sant'Ana, Sousa e Coelho, forthcoming).



Sexual harassment and bullying in Portugal, 2015

In 2015, it was found that 16.5% of the Portuguese working population had at some point in their working lives experienced a situation of bullying. Sexual harassment had been experienced by 12.6% of the population surveyed. Women are the primary target of these two forms of harassment in the workplace. On the one hand, 14.4% of women had suffered sexual harassment whilst only 8.6% of men had the same experience in the workplace. On the other hand, 16.7% of women had experienced a situation of bullying, as compared to 15.9% of men. (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - Frequency of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, Portugal, 2015 (%)

The concept of sexual harassment was operationalised by identifying four main dimensions or major types of harassment: (i) sexual insinuations; (ii) unwanted sexual advances; (iii) quid pro quo harassment; (iv) physical contact and sexual assault. Each of these dimensions breaks down into a series of specific indicators of sexual harassment (in all, twelve practical forms of sexual harassment).

Similarly, the concept of bullying is also divided into four fundamental dimensions which then sub-divide into nine specific indicators.

sexual harassment

sexual insinuations
 Offensive jokes or comments about their looks;
 Offensive jokes or comments about their body;
 Offensive jokes or comments of sexual nature.

Unwelcome sexual advances
 Unwelcome pressure for dates
 Explicit and unwelcome sexual propositions;
 Unwelcome sexual propositions by email, text message or through social networks; Sexually offensive phone calls, letters, text messages, emails or images;
 Suggestive looks;
 Intrusive or offensive questioning about the target's private life.

Physical contact and sexual assault
 Unwelcome physical contact (touching, stroking, hugging, groping, kissing or attempted kissing);
 Sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.

Quid pro quo harassment
 Asking for sexual favours in return for promises of a job or improved working conditions.

Figure 4 - Operationalisation of the concept of sexual harassment in four dimensions.

bullying

Social isolation
 Isolating or cutting off the target from co-workers;
 Isolating or cutting off the target from superiors.

Professional persecution
 Setting unattainable goals;
 Systematic devaluation of the target's work;
 Inappropriate duties.

Intimidation
 Systematic threats of dismissal;
 Subjecting the target to stressful situations designed to cause them to lose control.

Personal humiliation
 Humiliating reference to physical, psychological or other characteristics.

Figure 5 - Operationalisation of the concept of bullying in four dimensions.



03.

Sexual harassment in the workplace: women 25 years later

Portuguese society has undergone profound changes in the past 25 years, from the structure of the economy and the employment market to sexuality, including levels of educational attainment. So has it also changed as regards what women and men perceive as being, or not being, sexual harassment? And have reactions to sexual harassment changed?

The first research in Portugal on sexual harassment in the workplace was conducted in 1989. (Amâncio e Lima, 1994). The survey subjects consisted exclusively of women of working age. Twenty-five years later it is important to understand what has changed, and how. In a quarter-century, Portugal has experienced significant change in access to education, technological progress, expansion of the service sector and in the way men and women perceive and experience sexuality.

Comparison of the 1989 survey data with the findings in 2015 shows that women are clearer about what they perceive and identify as sexual harassment in the workplace.

In 1989, perceptions of what was or wasn't sexual harassment at work were particularly diffuse in relation to what we have called sexual insinuations (Figure 6). At that time, lewd comments about how they dressed or their physical looks were identified as forms of sexual harassment by around one third of women. But 25 years later, in 2015, 65.8 of women identify banter and remarks about their appearance as sexual harassment and 84.2% perceive remarks of a sexual nature as a form of harassment. Twenty-five years ago, offensive comments about women's body parts were identified by around 50% of women as a form of sexual harassment, but this figure has now risen to 72.9%.

Other research-action projects in this field also point to these changes (UMAR, 2014).

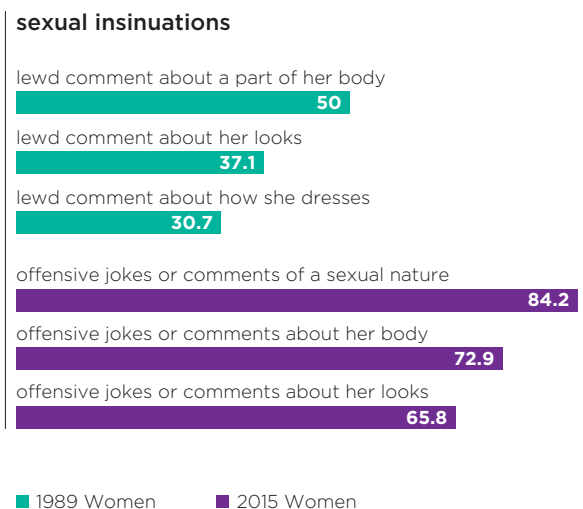


Figure 6 - Women's attitudes to sexual harassment in 1989 and 2015, in relation to the dimension Sexual insinuations (%)

In relation to unwelcome sexual advances, an increase can also be observed in the percentage of women identifying situations constituting sexual harassment of this type.

unwelcome sexual advances

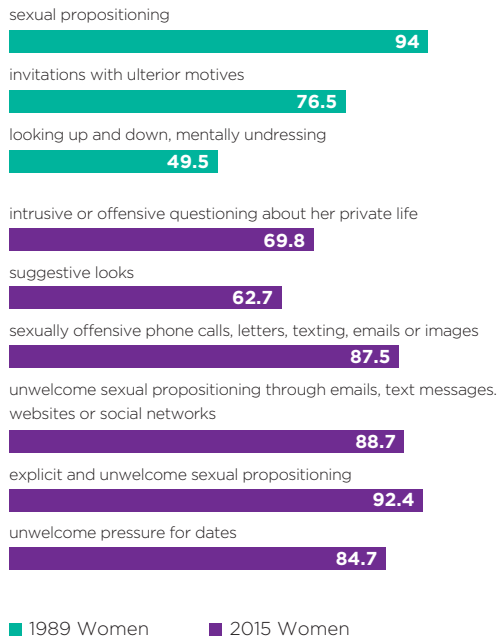


Figure 7 - Women's attitudes to sexual harassment in 1989 and 2015, in relation to the dimension Unwelcome sexual advances (%)

The differences between the 1989 and 2015 figures as to what constitutes sexual harassment gradually diminish as the study turns towards more explicit forms of sexual harassment. In other words, when the harassment involves physical bodily contact. Just as 25 years ago, more than 90% of women identify these physical incidents as sexual harassment.

unwelcome physical contact and sexual assault

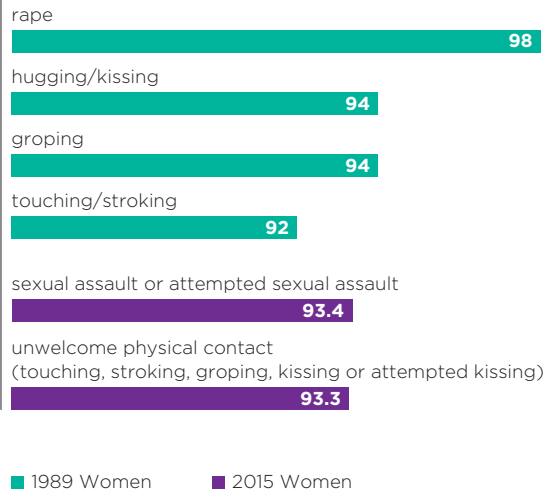


Figure 8 - Women's attitudes to sexual harassment in 1989 and 2015, in relation to the dimension Unwelcome physical contact and sexual assault (%)

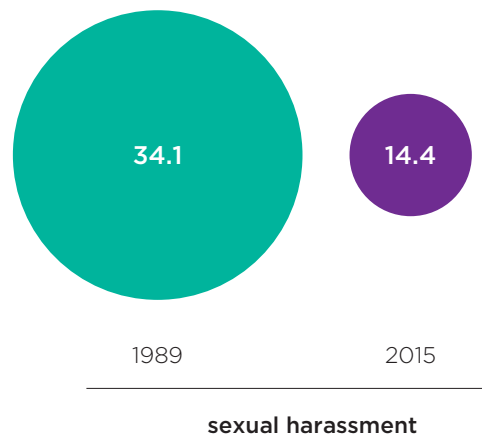


Figure 9 - Sexual harassment of women in Portugal, in 1989 and in 2015 (%)

Looking at this quarter century, we can also identify a tendency for a reduction in sexual harassment of women in the workplace. In the late 1980s, more than 30% of women suffered sexual harassment in the workplace. This figure now stands at around 14%.

As regards the perpetrators of the sexual harassment experienced by women in the workplace between 1989 and 2015, two fundamental changes are clear:

Firstly, whilst the most frequent perpetrators in 1989 were co-workers, in 2015 they are superiors or managers.

Secondly, in relation to 2015, a significant proportion of perpetrators of sexual harassment in the workplace are third parties: customers, suppliers or users account for around 25% of cases of sexual harassment suffered by women. This information underlines the need, when researching sexual harassment, for a broader conception of the workplace that includes people from outside the workplace, with whom the targets have dealings in the course of their work.

Lastly, although their importance is merely residual, we should not neglect to mention that some situations of sexual harassment suffered by women are caused by their hierarchical inferiors or other people working in the organisation.



"With Mr. R, he harassed me all the time, took advantage, I had to put a stop to it, I had to pack my bags to leave if he continued. (...) Yes, he did, he promised to marry me, said I could have whatever I wanted, I could have the people I liked, he would do everything I asked and in return I would give him all he wanted and what I never wanted to give, which was to stay there at home and satisfy him sexually. (...) and he would say, Look, go and buy yourself something, go and buy a nice dress... and I would say: "Mr. R* I don't want anything from you just my wages, I'm not here to earn dresses, if I wanted dresses I would buy them, what I want from you is just my wages."*

Andreia Sousa

Live-in housekeeper /
/ personal assistant

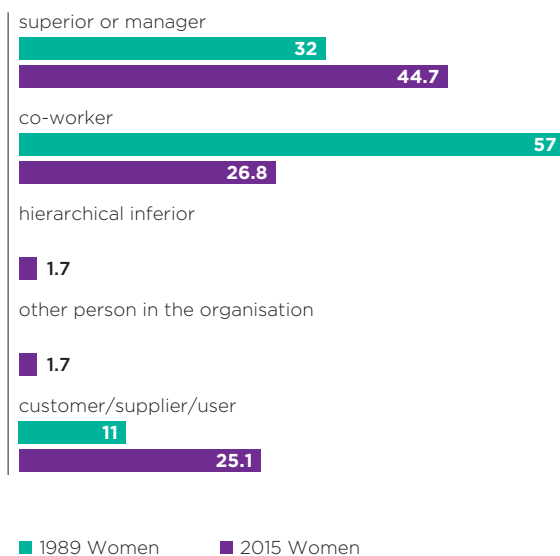
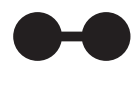


Figure 10 – Perpetrators of sexual harassment of women in Portugal, in 1989 and in 2015 (%)



A distinct change may also be observed in how women react to situations of sexual harassment in the workplace. This can be seen in a less passive response to sexual harassment.

In the first place, the proportion of women pretending not to notice what is happening has fallen from 49% of those suffering sexual harassment in 1989 to 22.9% in 2015.

Secondly, in the late 1980s, pretending not to notice the situation of sexual harassment in the workplace was the most frequent type of response (49%), whilst the most common response to this situation in 2015 is to immediately show their annoyance (52%).

Women are also now more likely to confront immediately the perpetrators of sexual harassment, telling them not to do it again, expressing annoyance or showing that the behaviour was offensive.



“I mean in terms of the bar... we’re girls too, but there are men who don’t know how to behave... What happened... there was this thing you passed to get to the bar and he would edge up and physically stand so close it was actually uncomfortable... and my co-workers would say: “Lena, get mad and we’ll beat him up,” but I wasn’t feeling myself so I pushed him against the wall, grabbed his shirt and said: “touch me again and I’ll do you in”, and my boss took hold of him and threw him out. But it’s that feeling... that sort of person that when you give them their change their hand seems to linger...”

Alexandra Costa
Bar tender

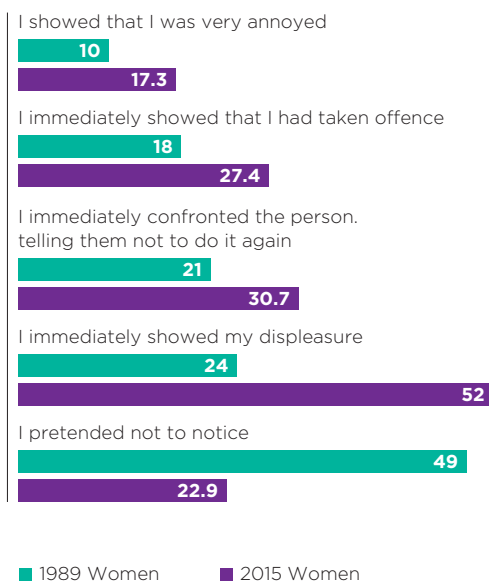


Figure 11 – Women’s reactions to sexual harassment, in 1989 and in 2015 (%)



04. Sexual harassment in the workplace

Assessing the frequency of sexual harassment in Portugal in 2015, the rate of harassment (12.6%) is visibly high when compared with the average European rate of 2% recorded by the European Working Conditions Survey (Eurofound, 2015: 16).

sexual insinuations



Figure 12 – Frequency of sexual insinuations, by sex (%)

If we organise the specific indicators and the particular forms taken by sexual harassment in the workplace under the four fundamental dimensions of the concept of sexual harassment, we can see that the most frequent forms of sexual harassment, for both women and men, are those which fall into the category of unwelcome sexual advances (Figure 13).

unwelcome sexual advances

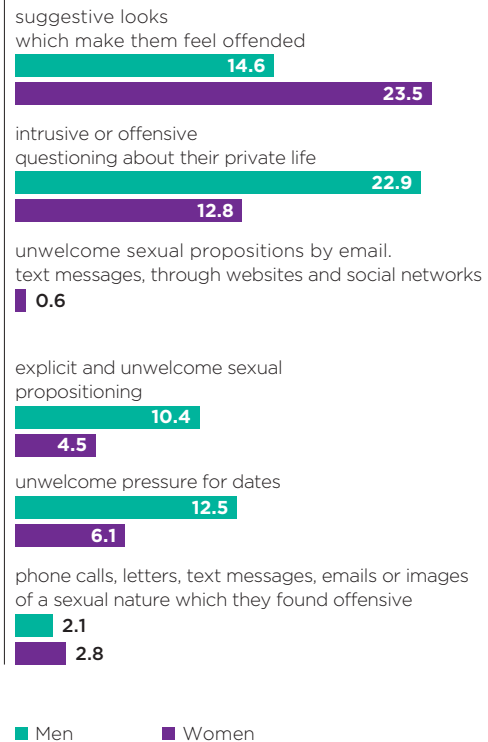


Figure 13 – Frequency of unwanted sexual advances, by sex (%)

These are followed by the dimension relating to forms of sexual harassment classified as sexual insinuations. Unwelcome physical contact is particularly relevant in the case of women, but much less frequent for men, who are less affected by these forms of harassment.

Lastly, quid pro quo sexual harassment (requests for sexual favours in return for promises of a job or improved working conditions) is the least often mentioned, with 4 specific cases referred to by women and 2 by men.

We will now look in more detail at the specific sexual harassment practices encompassed by each of the four main dimensions.

In the case of women, the most frequent variety is that which takes perhaps the most subtle forms in their everyday working lives, i.e. “suggestive looks that they find offensive”. For men, on the other hand, the most common form of sexual harassment is intrusive and offensive questioning about their private lives.

With regard to forms of sexual harassment included in the ‘sexual insinuations’ dimension, we find that women and men are subjected to offensive jokes and comments about their appearance to an equal degree: men report the highest rate of offensive jokes about their bodies, whilst women complain most frequently of offensive jokes and comments of a sexual nature.

The greatest difference between men and women is found in the category of sexual harassment in the form of unwelcome physical contact and sexual assault. This contrast is clear with regard to situations of unwelcome physical contact, such as touching, stroking, groping, kissing or attempted kissing. And also in the fact that only women complain of being the targets of sexual assault or attempted assault (1.1%).

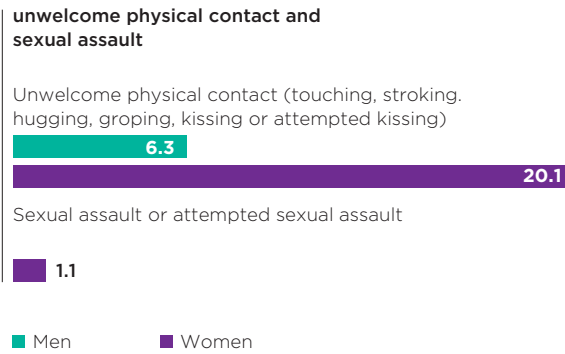


Figure 14 - Frequency of Unwelcome physical contact, by sex (%)

Sexual harassment in the workplace is something that affects men and women most often during their youth: 59.2% of women and 58.4% of men experience harassment up to the age of 34 years.



Figure 15 - Frequency of sexual harassment by age range and sex (%)

But what sort of sexual harassment do women and men experience at different ages?

In the case of women experiencing sexual harassment, there is a tendency for the types of harassment through physical contact or quid pro quo harassment to diminish as we move from younger to older women. Unwelcome physical contact accounts for 32.5% of cases of women being harassed up to the age of 24 years; amongst women suffering sexual harassment between the ages of 25 and 34, this figure drops to 22.7%; in women suffering sexual harassment aged between 35 and 44, physical contact represents only 16.3%; finally, amongst women aged over 45, unwelcome physical contact is reported by only 8.3%.

Men present a more even pattern across the age ranges. The most common type of sexual harassment experienced is unwelcome sexual advances, and this type of harassment is particularly high amongst men suffering sexual harassment aged 45 and over. In contrast to the tendency amongst women, the highest rate for unwelcome physical contact is recorded among men aged 45 and over.

Among individuals suffering sexual harassment up to the age of 24, significant differences can be noted between men and women. Firstly, women experience a wider range of sexual harassment behaviours, in which no single fundamental type emerges. Sexual insinuations, unwelcome sexual advances or unwelcome physical contact each account for around one third of cases of harassment experienced by women up to the age of 24. Men of this age report one dominant form of sexual harassment: 61.5% of the men were subjected to unwelcome sexual advances.

Secondly, up to the age of 24, quid pro quo harassment affects only women.

For women aged 25 to 34, unwelcome sexual advances are the main type of sexual harassment, accounting for more than half of all instances. Compared with women in the lower age range, we can observe an increase in instances of unwelcome sexual advances and a reduction in instances of unwelcome physical contact and sexual insinuations.

Men aged 25 to 34 years present a pattern of sexual harassment similar to that for the younger age range.

Among women aged between 35 and 44, it is possible to identify a tendency for a reduction in the relative importance of unwelcome physical contact (a phenomenon already noted in the comparison between the two previous age ranges), and an increase in the proportion of harassment situations consisting of unwelcome sexual advances (to levels even higher than the percentage of men affected by this type of harassment). In turn, only in this age range do men report situations of quid pro quo sexual harassment (around 16% of cases).

Focussing now on the type of employment contract, the men and women subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace divide into two main groups: those on permanent contracts and those on fixed-term contracts. But if we add other precarious forms of employment (casual labour on a no-contract basis, and paid or unpaid interns) to those on fixed-term contracts, we find that most of the men and women suffering from sexual harassment are employed on a basis that affords them little job security or stability.

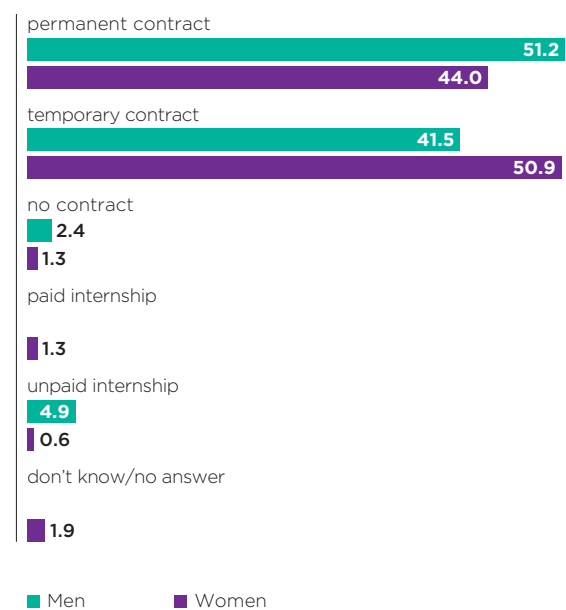


Figure 16 – Frequency of sexual harassment, by type of contract and sex

Looking more closely at the two forms of employment contract most common amongst people subject to sexual harassment, we can see that unwelcome sexual advances and quid pro quo harassment are slightly more frequent amongst individuals on fixed-term contracts than those on permanent contracts. In turn, unwelcome sexual advances and sexual insinuations are most common amongst people on permanent contracts.

In effect, considering only individuals experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace in the two most frequent forms of employment arrangements, we find that 53.8% of targets employed on permanent contracts and 51% of targets on fixed contracts report situations which fall within the dimension of unwelcome sexual advances.

Sexual insinuations is the second largest type of sexual harassment experienced by targets employed on the basis of contracts of these two types: 29.7% for employees on permanent contracts and 27.6% for those on fixed-term contracts.

Unwelcome physical contact comes in third place amongst targets on these two types of contracts (15.4% for permanent contracts; 17.3% for fixed-term contracts).

Lastly, quid pro quo forms of sexual harassment are of almost negligible importance, and were most commonly reported by men and women on fixed-term contracts (4.1%).

economic sector

The economic sectors most representative of sexual harassment experienced by women are:

Wholesale or retail (20.9%);
Hotel, catering or similar (14.1%);
Human health and welfare (12.4%).

The economic sectors where sexual harassment of men is most frequent are:

Hotel, catering or similar (14.9%);
Construction (12.8%);
Industry/Scientific, technical and similar consultancy (10.6%).

In order to understand sexual harassment in the workplace we have to take into consideration two dynamics of fundamental and structural importance: (i) gender-organisation; (ii) gender-sexuality.

The phenomenon of sexual harassment is associated with specific gender regimes which structure organisations and workplaces. These gender regimes are produced where two fundamental forces intersect and reinforce each other: the hierarchical lines along which work is organised, and the gender ideology, or the wider established gender order, which defines what a male worker or a female worker should be and which demarcate the place of one or the other in society and the world of work. In essence, these are two mechanisms that produce and reinforce an unequal distribution of resources and powers between people.

It is also important to stress that sexual harassment in the workplace results, at least in part, from the importation into a specific interactional and social setting that which is produced at the intersection between gender ideology and sexuality. In other words, conceptions of how men and women should behave from the point of view of their sexuality are implicit in sexual harassment in the workplace. And the main idea implicit in this harassment is that of the double sexual standard and the normative expectations that, in very general terms, attribute sexual hyperactivity to men and sexual containment to women.

This has two material consequences: the workplace is another of the multiple interactional and social settings in which people live their lives and sexuality is one of the dimensions of this social life marked by inequality and gender ideology. One particular way of seeing how these two vectors combine to produce sexual harassment in the workplace is to look at the perpetrators of situations of sexual harassment experienced by men and women in Portugal.

Sexual harassment in the workplace may present different configurations. However, it may be observed that the top-down configuration is particularly relevant, with superiors or managers (both men and women) being the most frequent perpetrators of sexual harassment experienced at work, by both men and women: 44.7% of women targets identify their superiors or managers as perpetrators, as do 33.3% of men.

Down-top sexual harassment is more frequent among male targets (6.3%) than among women (1.7%), a fact probably not unconnected to forms of inequality in the way the employment market and organisations are structured, in particular, glass ceilings which prevent women from gaining access to management and leadership positions within organisations.

The figures for the frequency of horizontal sexual harassment, or harassment by third parties (suppliers, customers or users + other people in the organisation) are similar for both male and female targets of sexual harassment. For women, these two types of perpetrators present identical frequency figures (26.8% = suppliers, customers or users + other people in the organisation or for co-workers).

female target of sexual harassment

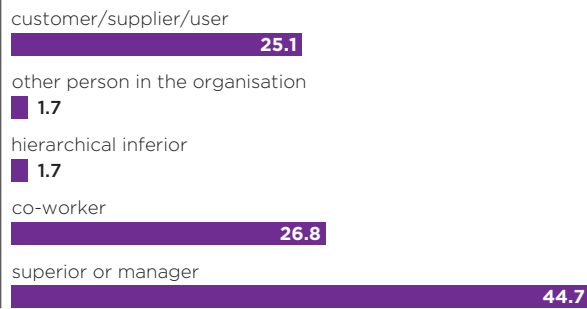


Figure 17 – Perpetrators and female targets of sexual harassment (%)

male target of sexual harassment

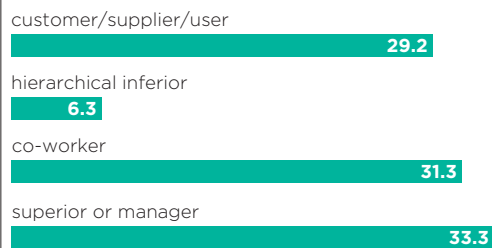
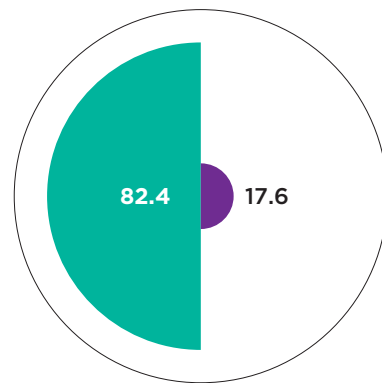


Figure 18 – Perpetrators and male targets of sexual harassment (%)

As regards the sex of the perpetrators of sexual harassment experienced by women and men, the findings show that in 82.4% of all cases of sexual harassment the perpetrators are men.

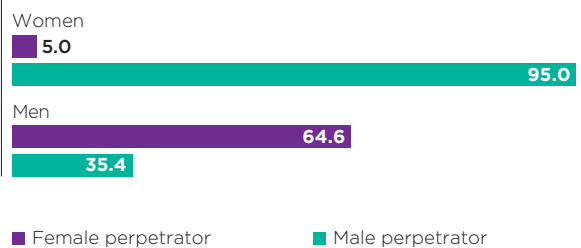
For nearly all women experiencing sexual harassment, the aggressor was a man, with only 5% of women being sexually harassed by other women. Men, on the other hand, mostly experience sexual harassment by women (64.6%). However, a non negligible percentage of cases refers to homosexual sexual harassment: 35.4% of male targets were harassed by other men.



■ Male perpetrator ■ Female perpetrator

Figure 19 – Perpetrators of sexual harassment, by sex (%)

target of incident



■ Female perpetrator ■ Male perpetrator

Figure 20 – Perpetrators and targets of sexual harassment, by sex (%)

Women are readier to react and express their annoyance at situations of sexual harassment than men.

Men and women react in different ways when confronted with an incident of sexual harassment in the workplace. The findings show that 52% of women immediately show their annoyance; in contrast, only 31.3% of men have this reaction. Half of the men pretend not to notice what is happening (Figure 21).

Forms of non-immediate reaction reveal an attitude of greater hopefulness from female and male targets of sexual harassment. Hoping that the incident will not be repeated is the attitude taken by 60.3% of women and 47.9% of men. In the case of male targets of sexual harassment, this hopeful attitude is reinforced by the passivity revealed by nearly 40% of targets (did nothing).

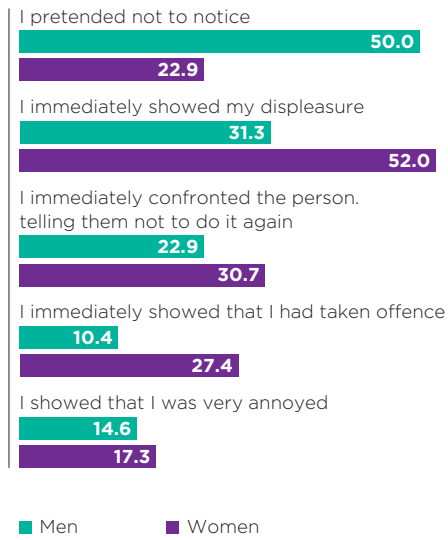


Figure 21 - Immediate reactions to sexual harassment, by sex (%)



Figure 22 - Action in response to sexual harassment, by sex (%)

Men are more concerned about keeping their job and women about not suffering professional consequences.

The opportunities for men and women to react may explain their different forms of reaction.

The findings suggest that men appear to point to a degree of disorientation to explain their reactions: around a third say they reacted in this way because they didn't know who to turn to. In the case of women, fear of negative professional consequences is the reason most frequently given.



Figure 23 - Reasons for reaction to a situation of sexual harassment, by sex (%)

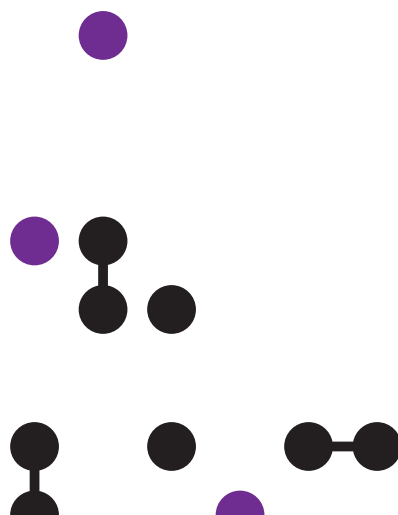
Friends and co-workers are the people to whom the targets of sexual harassment turn most for support.

In seeking emotional support (someone to talk to), the targets of sexual harassment in the workplace are largely guided by affective ties, and above all by ties of friendship. Friends are the people chosen by 37.4% of women and 45.8% of men when they seek to talk about the sexual harassment they have experienced.

It is interesting to note that in a situation of sexual harassment, women and men most frequently choose co-workers of the same sex to talk about the matter than members of their families: 36.9% of women talk with their co-workers and 35.8% with their family. In the case of men, 37.5% of targets talk to their male colleagues and only 18.8% talk with their family.

More women than men tell their partners about the incident. More men than women opt to keep quiet and talk to no one about the sexual harassment they have experienced.

It should also be noted that the take-up rate for more institutional forms of support was low for both female and male targets of sexual harassment (although higher for men than for women): institutions (CITE, ACT, unions) or lawyers.



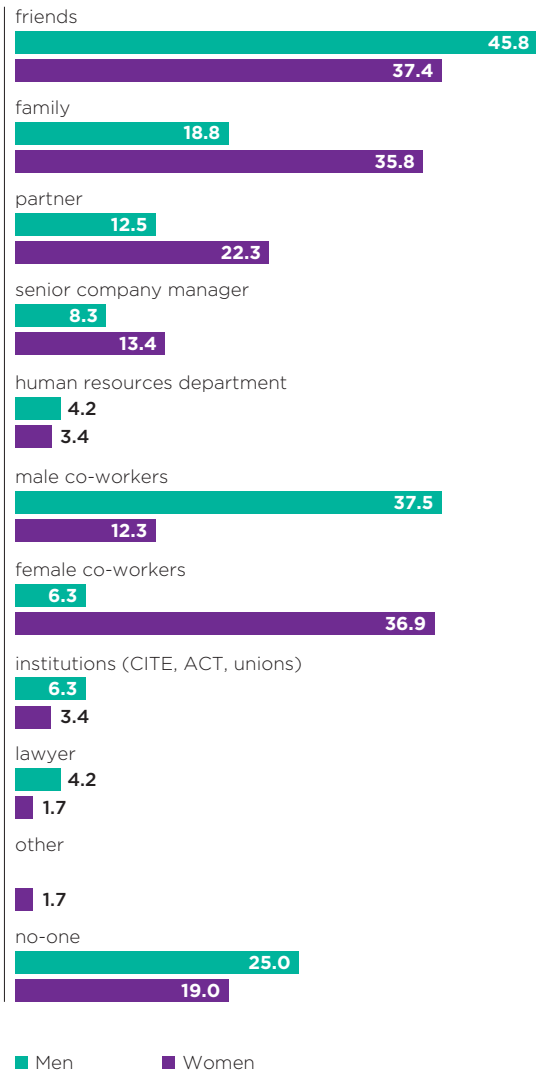


Figure 24 - Persons that targets spoke to about sexual harassment, by sex (%)

In order to rationalise sexual harassment, it is possible to point to exogenous reasons or to endogenous and individual reasons.

Although the findings show that the great majority of sexual harassment incidents are perpetrated by superiors and/or managers, few women or men point to their position of inferiority vis-à-vis the perpetrator as the reason for the sexual harassment.

Disrespect for others is the reason identified by most female targets of sexual harassment (58.1%) and most male targets (37.5%). There is also a significant percentage of men who say they are unable to explain the reasons for the situation of sexual harassment (31.3%).



Figure 25 - Reasons which explain the occurrence of sexual harassment, by sex (%)



05. Bullying in the workplace

Although most of the targets of bullying are also women, these forms of psychological violence in the workplace also affect a significant proportion of men (15.9%), as may be seen in Figure 26. Comparing these findings with the average figures for other European countries leads to the conclusion, as with sexual harassment, that the numbers in Portugal are very high. The figures for *Bullying and Harassment* recorded by the *European Working Conditions Survey* pointed to an average of 4.1% (Eurofound 2015: 16). Previous research in Portugal in specific sectors of the labour market also reveal this phenomenon (Ferrinho, et al., 2003; Pereira de Almeida et al., 2007; Araújo, 2009; Verdasca, 2010; Pena dos Reis, 2014; Amante, 2014).



Figure 26 - Frequency of bullying, by sex (%)

The concept of workplace bullying was operationalised by identifying four main dimensions or major types of harassment: (i) social isolation; (ii) professional persecution; (iii) personal humiliation; (iv) intimidation. The writings of Heinz Leyman, amongst others, have contributed to the design of these dimensions and indicators (Leyman, 1996).

The most frequent situations of workplace bullying in Portugal are intimidation (48.1%) and professional persecution (46.5%). The figures for situations of bullying belonging to the dimension of personal humiliation are relatively low, at 3.7% of the responses; situations which fall under social isolation are even less frequent, at 1.7%.

We know that gender has structural effects on employment relations and the organisation of work, leading to the assertion that work and organisations are gendered (Hearn & Parkin, 2001). In this sense, it is fundamental to understand whether there are differences between women and men in relation to these types of bullying.

The proportion of women and men who say they have been the target of intimidation or professional persecution is relatively close. However, more women than men said they have suffered intimidation (49% of women and approximately 46% of men), and attention should be drawn to the fact that around half of all female targets of bullying experienced harassment in the form of intimidation. At the same time, the number of male targets of professional persecution is higher than that of female targets (approximately 49% of men and 45% of women), accounting for around half of male targets of bullying.

Although the breakdown of figures for workplace bullying appears not to yield any fundamental distinction between women and men, the fact is that the figures reveal how gender acts in organisations, structures employment and working relations and defines forms of workplace bullying. The fact that more women than men were the targets of intimidation is related to behaviours included in this dimension, reflecting a devalued perception of the other, considering the person as someone with difficulty in responding to situations.

Underlying the types of bullying to which women and men are most commonly subjected in the workplace is the general view that to be a woman points to a place of fragility and resigned acceptance. In contrast, to be a man is more generally associated with an aggressive and competitive stance. The competitive character of masculinities and the construction of professional success as a fundamental pillar of what it is to be a man is related to the fact that men are more frequently the targets of professional persecution.

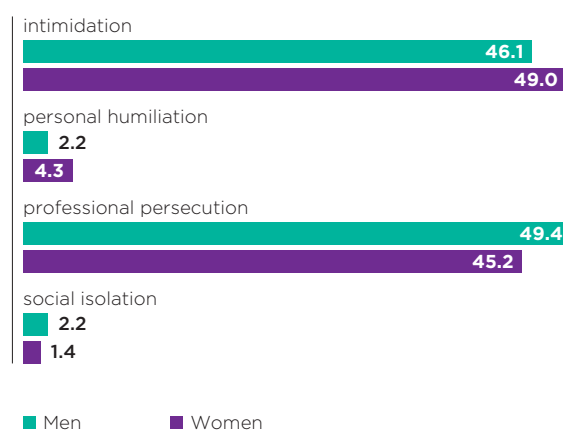


Figure 27 - Types of bullying, by sex, 2015 (%)

A deeper analysis of the indicators for the four dimensions of bullying leads to a clearer understanding of the specific forms of bullying experienced by women and men in the workplace.

The relative importance of intimidation as a dimension of workplace bullying is largely due to the fact that the most frequent specific form of bullying for both women and men corresponds to “being systematically subject to stressful situations designed to cause them to lose control”, this being the case for 41.8% of women and 38.2% of men. In relation to this dimension of bullying, it should also be taken into consideration that systematic threats of dismissal also affected practically the same percentage of women (7.2%) and men (7.9%).

At the same time, the relative importance of professional persecution as a dimension of workplace bullying is largely the result of the high frequency with which women and men say they have been subjected to systematic devaluation of their work: 31.3% for women and 27% for men.

Professional persecution characterises more experiences of women and men in the workplace, with 15.7% of men and 9.1% of women being set unattainable goals and impossible deadlines. The frequency of situations of personal humiliation is fundamentally explained by the relative importance of the indicator ‘felt systematically humiliated due to physical, psychological or other characteristics’, corresponding to 4.3% of women and 2.2% of men targeted at least once by workplace bullying.

Of the four dimensions of bullying, social isolation is that with the least relative importance. Forms of bullying that involve social isolation are more frequent among men than among women. Even so, it should be noted that isolation by co-workers, preventing or hindering contact by male or female workers with their superiors is a situation experienced only by women.

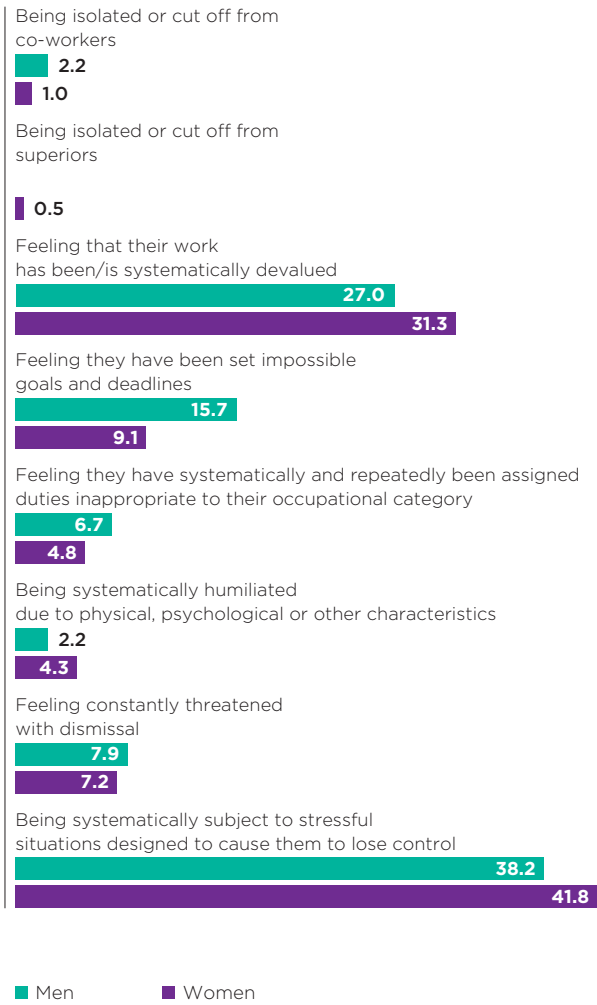
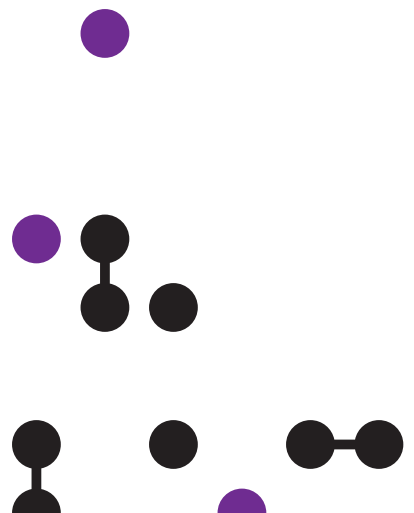


Figure 28 - Indicators of bullying by sex, 2015 (%)



Workplace bullying affects around half of women (51.9%) and men (50.5%) in the two lowest age ranges, in other words, up to the age of 34 years. Despite this, men are more frequently subject to bullying between the ages of 35 and 44 years, whilst amongst women it is more frequent between 25 and 34 years, the lower, i.e. younger, age range.

In the age range corresponding to the youngest people, up to 24 years of age, intimidation practices affect 54.5% of men and 43.8% of women and professional persecution practices affect 56.3% of women and 45.5% of men.

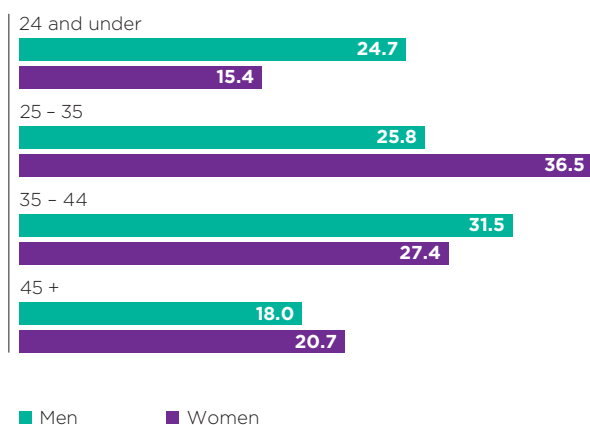


Figure 29 - Frequency of bullying, by age range and sex, 2015 (%)

The majority of women and men subject to workplace bullying are employed on a basis that affords them little job security: fixed-term contracts (48.8% of men; 52.3% of women), no contract/'recibos verdes' (2.3% of men; 1% of women) or paid internships (1.2% of men and 2.5% of women).

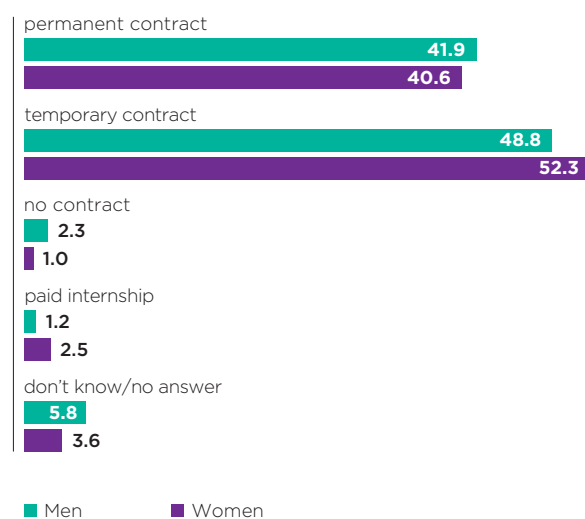


Figure 30 - Frequency of bullying by type of contractual arrangement and sex, 2015 (%)

economic sector

The economic sectors most representative of sexual harassment experienced by women are:

Hotel, catering and similar (16.9%);
Wholesale or retail (16.4%);
Administrative and supporting services (9.7%).

The economic sectors where sexual harassment of men is most frequent are:

Wholesale or retail (17%);
Hotel and catering (15.9%);
Human health and welfare (12.5%).

Perpetrators of bullying

Who are the bullies? What hierarchical position do they occupy within the organisation or employer? Are they men or women?

The hierarchical position of the perpetrators of workplace bullying reveals that bullying accentuates inequalities, including inequalities in socio-professional standing. Superiors and managers are the main perpetrators of workplace bullying in Portugal. This fact is consistent and there is no fundamental distinction between women and men. In the case of women, 82.2% suffer bullying by their superiors or managers, whilst in the case of men the proportion rises to 83.1%.

Although with a much lower frequency than for bullying by superiors or managers, co-workers are also perpetrators of workplace bullying, accounting for 12.4% of cases involving male targets and 13.9% of cases with female targets.

Hierarchical inferiors and other people working in the organisation or customers, suppliers or users are identified as the perpetrators of bullying in a negligible number of cases, for both male and female targets. We should recall that bullying implies a working relationship between a superior and an inferior, in which authority and power come into play, which is less likely to happen in cases where bullying is perpetrated by hierarchical inferiors and/or third parties, persons who interact with workers but are not their co-workers, such as customers, suppliers or the providers of services to the organisations constituting the workplace.

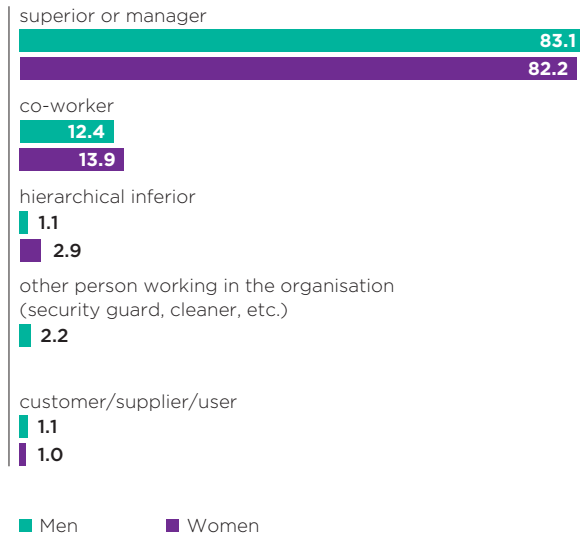


Figure 31 – Perpetrators of bullying by sex of target, 2015

The perpetrators of workplace bullying vary according to the dimensions of bullying. Intimidation and professional persecution, dimensions which account for most cases of workplace bullying, are perpetrated primarily by superiors or managers, in more than 80% of cases (rising to almost 86% in the professional persecution dimension).

In the intimidation dimension, co-workers were the perpetrators of bullying in 15.4% of cases and in the professional persecution dimension in 9.4% of cases. The social isolation dimension differs from the previous two dimensions in that, although superiors continue to be the main perpetrators of bullying, co-workers account for 40% of situations. In the dimension bringing together situations of personal humiliation at work, hierarchical inferiors are the perpetrators of bullying in 9.1% of cases.

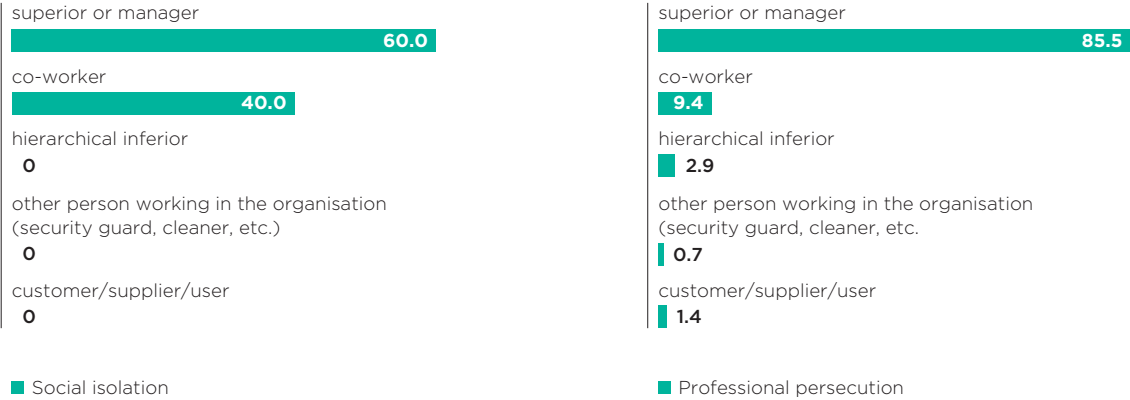


Figure 32 - Perpetrators in the Social Isolation and Professional persecution dimensions of bullying, 2015 (%)

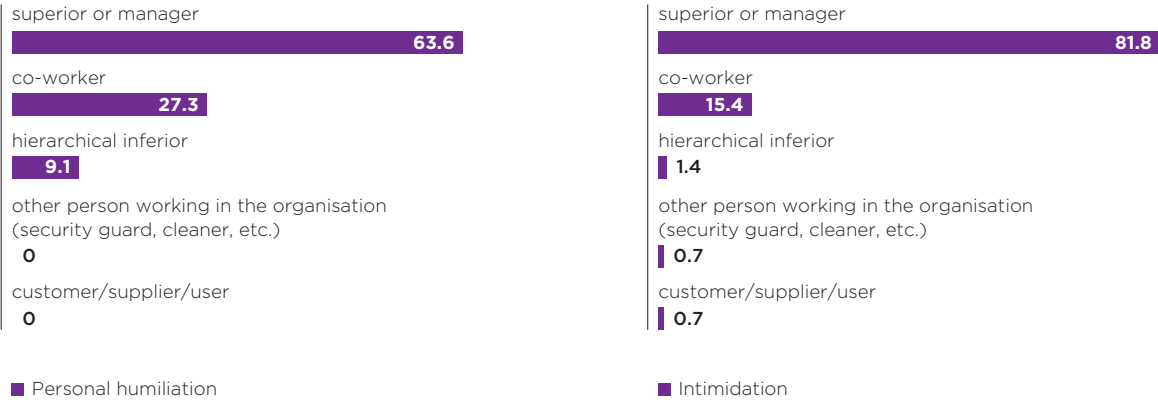
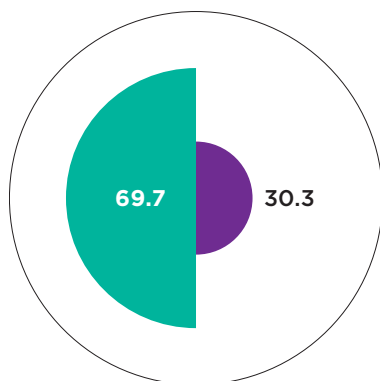


Figure 33 - Perpetrators in the Personal humiliation and Intimidation dimensions of bullying, 2015 (%)

Perpetrators by sex

The gender perspective is relevant when analysing the perpetrators of workplace bullying because it helps to describe the phenomenon and the sociological relationship between two power structures (hierarchy and gender) concentrated in organisations with the ability to generate inequalities.

In a majority of cases (69.7%), workplace bullies are male. Women are the perpetrators of bullying in 30.3% of cases, less than half of those where the perpetrators are men (Figure 34).



■ Male Perpetrator ■ Female Perpetrator

Figure 34 - Perpetrators of bullying by sex of perpetrator, 2015

Sex of targets and of perpetrators

Both male and female bullies choose women as their targets. In the case of male perpetrators, 62.3% of the targets are women and 37.7% are men. In the case of female perpetrators, 87.8% of the targets are women and 12.2% are men.

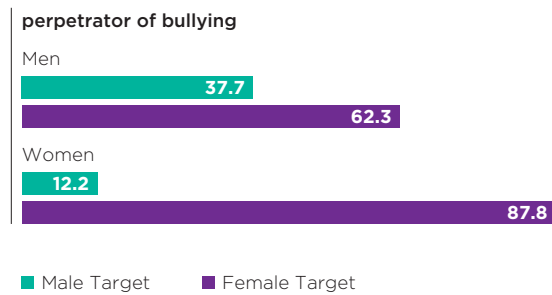


Figure 35 - Perpetrators and targets of bullying, by sex of perpetrators and targets 2015 (%)

Characterisation by sex of the most common perpetrators of bullying: superiors and managers

The most frequent perpetrators of workplace bullying are men and superiors (both sexes). The connection between hierarchical position in organisations and gender tends to create vulnerabilities and inequalities which reinforce each other.

It is therefore important to look more deeply to understand how bullying manifests itself when the perpetrators are male superiors and when they are female superiors.

In general terms, men in managerial positions represent the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of all forms of bullying. Female superiors and managers are more frequently represented in situations of systematic devaluation of others' work (38.4%), systematic humiliation of others due to physical, psychological or other characteristics (28.6%) and, thirdly, although still accounting for around one quarter occurrences, systematically generating stressful situations designed to cause the other person to lose control (24.5%).

It should be stressed that male superiors and managers represent the perpetrators of more than 75% of all instances of workplace bullying, except for the indicator systematic devaluation of work, where they account for almost 62% of all instances. Bullying amounts to reproducing inequalities in working relationships, and inequalities, in general, are based on one form of power, male power.

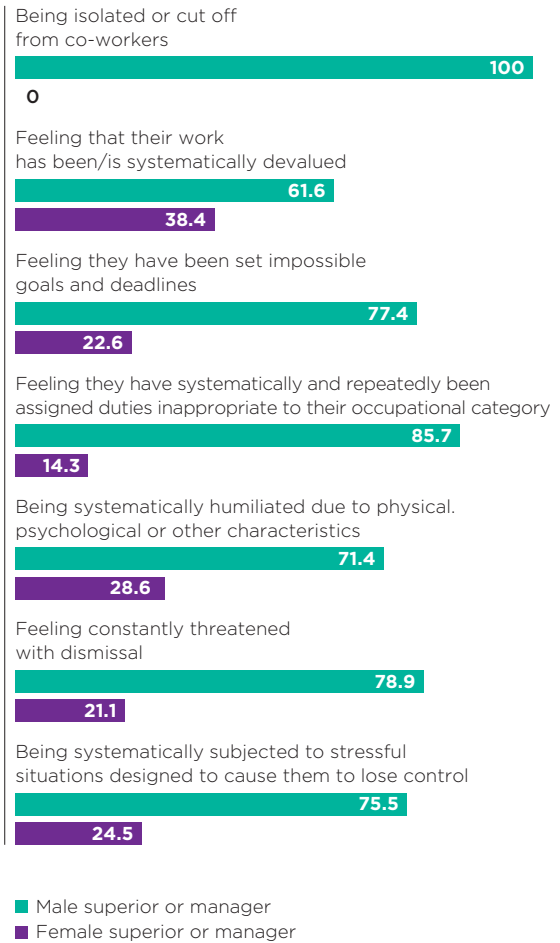


Figure 36 - Indicators of bullying when perpetrators are male or female superiors or managers, by sex, 2015 (%)

Bullying: experiences of Intimidation by superiors



“The management..., this company doesn’t accept sick leave, doesn’t accept maternity leave, doesn’t accept anything like that... I was off for 2 months because of an accident at work, and when I came back they leaned on me heavily for 2 months for me to leave, the pressure was intense for me to go and they didn’t want to give me anything, just unemployment benefit, it’s what often happens here”. (...) I started to hear things I never imagined I would: “your dismissal’s been ordered”, so what this means is that someone ordered my dismissal, but without spending money, without wanting to take responsibility for this (...) they fired loads and loads of people like that, in a way that allowed them to claim unemployment benefit, it was that or nothing, that was the line they took and most people accepted it”.

Manuel Cristo

Health and safety officer



Shut up or you’re out” is common practice and women had it even worse than me. I’ll give you another example, at the place where I work, we have a surgery block and the operating theatres have a number of filters which are for filtering the air which goes inside (...) to protect the patients from diseases. There’s a thing called germicidal lamps, these lamps have a useful life of 3,500 hours, after which they have to be replaced, where I was working, the limit of 3,500 hours had been exceeded in 2 or 3 operating theatres, I told my boss and he said to turn the counters to zero and pretend the lamps had been changed and I said I wouldn’t do it, I wasn’t going to put people’s lives at risk, and that’s not all, if anything happened a commission of inquiry would come after me, not after him, because it was all just word of mouth, nothing written down, so I put that in the report and sent it to the board of directors alerting them to what had been suggested to me, of course... the answer as the response was ‘either do as I say or you’re out”.

Paulo Maia

Head of a hospital maintenance team

Reactions to bullying

When asked about how they reacted to workplace bullying, the pattern presented by men and women is relatively similar. The most common reaction for both male and female targets of bullying was to hope that it wouldn't happen again: 42.7% of men and 40.9% of women has this reaction. Another common form of reaction is markedly passive: 22.1% of women and 21.3% of men say they did nothing. And also talking to their co-workers: 24.7% of men and 20.2% of women. As the frequency of responses was very close for men and women, it should be pointed out that more women than men (respectively 18.3% and 12.4%) feel comfortable talking directly to influential people at work.

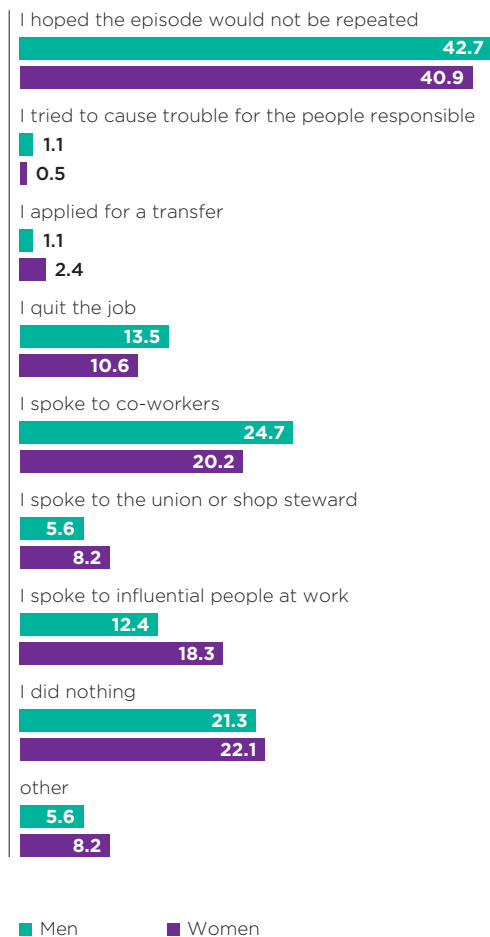


Figure 37 - Action in response to bullying, by sex, 2015 (%)

Why did you react in this way?

Fear of the professional consequences and even fear of being fired are the reasons most frequently cited, by both men and women, to explain their failure to take action or react in these hostile environments.

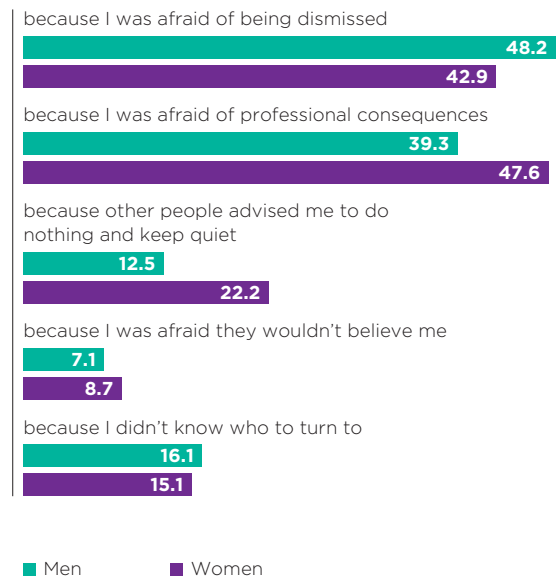


Figure 38 - Reasons for reaction to bullying, by sex, 2015 (%)

Who did you talk to about the bullying incident?

When we analyse the persons or institutions to whom women and men spoke or turned, we find that the expressive and emotional dimension of their lives is highly relevant. It is to people close to them, with whom they have affective and emotional ties, that women and men first turn for support.

Men turned most to their male friends (37.6%) and male co-workers (34.8%), suggesting that peers are willing to support each other. Women chose mostly to talk to their family (42.8%) and also their male or female partner (34.1%). These figures provide further confirmation that the workplace and working relationships are significantly structured by gender relations and by the social norms and expectations that regulate them socially.

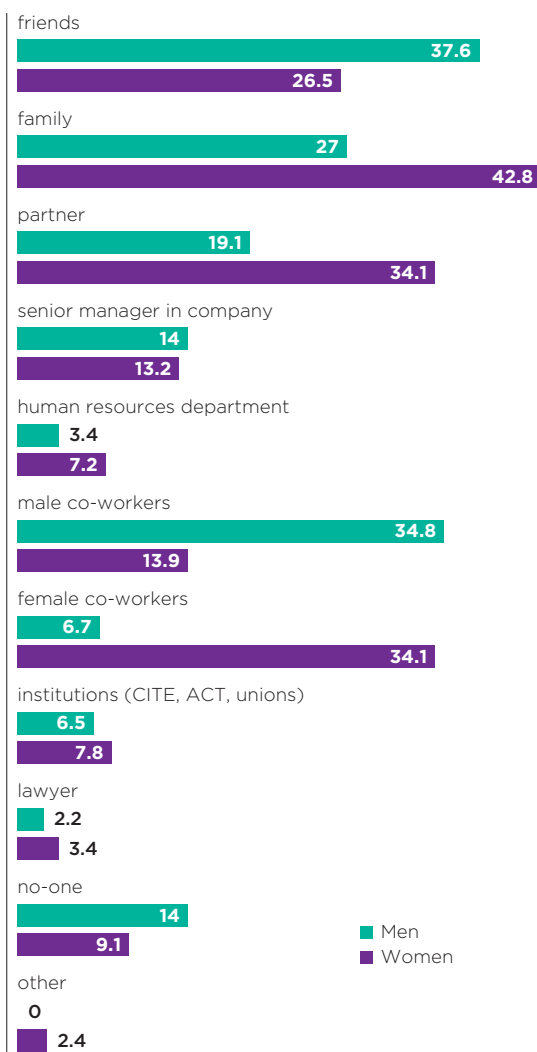


Figure 39 - Who they spoke to about bullying, by sex, 2015 (%)

Personal and professional consequences



“But for example, I had a woman co-worker who committed suicide, she worked there a long time, and was going to get a good redundancy package, her husband didn’t want her to leave, because he was out of work, he felt she had to stick it out to receive what she was entitled to and she didn’t like being there in that situation and we have to respect... and then one day we learned she had been found dead, she had committed suicide.”

Hélia Ramires
Operative in a ceramics factory



06. Key findings

This study has refreshed the data on sexual harassment of women in the workplace (Amâncio and Lima, 1994) and provides a picture of workplace bullying and sexual harassment of men and women. Efforts were made to arrive at a deeper understanding of the context and the processes in which bullying and sexual harassment occur, by analysing the targets' responses about their reactions, the reasons for these reactions, their feelings and the consequences of harassment. It was possible to characterise the setting and understand the experiences by triangulating quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

This brochure summarises the main findings. The presentation combines the survey findings with the voices of the men and women interviewed. Necessarily brief, it provides an introduction to workplace harassment as a social fact. The gender perspective adopted in this analysis, the theoretical approach to the phenomenon, the contributions made by international and national studies and the institutional framework in Portugal are all explored in depth in a publication in book-form on the same subject.

We are confident that these conclusions will encourage readers to read for themselves the publication with the full findings and deeper sociological analysis.

1. Comparing the 1989 findings with those in 2015, it can be seen how the enormous changes which have taken place in Portuguese society over the intervening 25 years are revealed in the way women of working age are now more aware of their rights as women, citizens and workers. Two specific trends can be identified: women show greater clarity in identifying situations of sexual harassment, and women who suffer sexual harassment are better able to react (from doing nothing to immediately showing their annoyance).

2. Comparing the results from 1989 and 2015 we can also see women are now less frequently subject to sexual harassment:

- a) the proportion of women referring to harassment in the workplace fell from 34% to approximately 14%;
- b) in most situations, in 1989 the perpetrators were mostly co-workers (57%) whilst in 2015 they are superiors or managers (44.7%);
- c) immediate reactions to harassment in 2015 involve confronting the perpetrator and immediately showing annoyance (52%), showing that the situation is regarded as intolerable, offensive and something not to be repeated, whilst in 1989 the most common reaction was to pretend not to have noticed (49% of women). In 2015, only 22.9% of women pretend not to notice a situation they identify, in response to the survey, as an instance of sexual harassment.

3. In 2015, the figures recorded in Portugal for both sexual harassment and bullying are very high and well above the average for European countries. The reported rate of sexual harassment in Portugal is 12.6% (MW), as compared to an average of 2% for European countries in 2010; the rate reported for bullying is 16.5% in Portugal, as opposed to 4.1% on average in European countries.

4. Bullying and sexual harassment are most commonly perpetrated by men against women and other men and most frequently affect women - making them a manifestation of male dominance and turning the workplace into a locus for reproducing beliefs and gender discrimination practices prevalent in Portuguese society. These phenomena evidence clear gender and power inequalities and the inequality vis-à-vis sexuality in which women are the principal targets.

5. Bullying and sexual harassment are most frequently perpetrated by superiors and managers against persons at a lower hierarchical level in the organisations - making them a manifestation of the abuse of power and instilling social vulnerability in the workplace, because of the dependency that is created and maintained by the people benefiting and/or taking advantage of it.

6. Poor working conditions, job insecurity, lay-offs, bad organisational practices and hostile environments all contribute to extremely serious forms of psychological violence that undermine the health and well-being of thousands of workers, both women and men, often pushing them over the edge, as illustrated.

7. Sexual harassment and bullying in workplace are an affront to human dignity at work, and cannot be dissociated from more general forms of inequality in access to resources, power and prestige. Firstly, the hierarchical way in which labour is organised and the hierarchical nature of organisations provide fertile ground for situations of bullying and sexual harassment. Secondly, the transposition into the world of work of a gender order and a gender ideology which reproduces inequalities between men and women is a fundamental factor in promoting situations of harassment, because it permits the symbolic and objective devaluation of the place occupied by women.

The following points are also important:

- Sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace are two types of harassment which can overlap, and there is a tendency for bullying to exist in situations of sexual harassment.
- Sexual harassment is referred to by 12.6% of respondents: 14.4% of women and 8.6% of men.
- Bullying is referred to by 16.5% of respondents: 16.7% of women and 15.9% of men.
- In 2015 it was found that most female and male targets of sexual harassment work on a contractual (or non-contractual) basis that affords them little job security or stability.
- The most frequent situations of sexual harassment in the workplace in Portugal are unwelcome sexual advances and sexual insinuations.
- Superiors and managers (male and female) are the main perpetrators of sexual harassment in the workplace in Portugal, accounting for 44.7% of all cases of harassment of women, and 33.3% of all cases against men.
- The most common form of reaction amongst women (52%) is to show their annoyance immediately (which was also the reaction of 31.3% of men), whilst around half the male targets (50%) pretend not to notice what is happening.
- The most frequent situations of workplace bullying in Portugal are intimidation (48.1%) and professional persecution (46.5%).
- Superiors and managers (male and female) are the main perpetrators of workplace bullying in Portugal, accounting for 83.1% of all cases of bullying of men, and 82.2% of all cases against women.
- Co-workers also accounted for 13.9% of cases of the bullying of women, and 12.4% in relation to men.
- The most common reaction to bullying is to hope that it won't happen again: 42.7% of men and 40.9% of women have this reaction.

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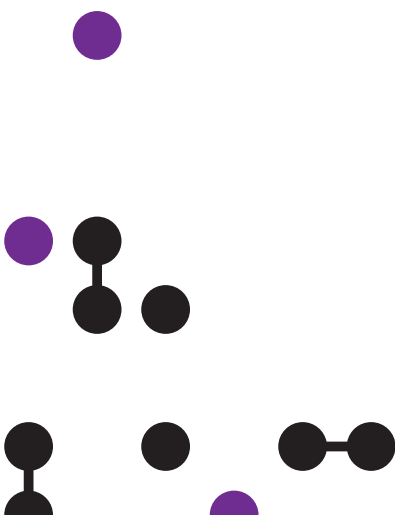
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Project sexual and moral harassment in the workplace

Funding:

European Economic Area Financial Mechanism – EEA Grants, Programme PT 07 – Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance;
CIG – Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género (Programme Operator)

Promoter:

CITE – Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego

Donor partner:

KS - Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

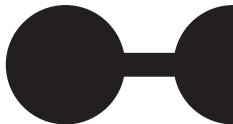
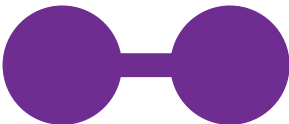
National partners:

ACT – Autoridade para as Condições do Trabalho
CML – Câmara Municipal de Lisboa
CEJ – Centro de Estudos Judiciários
CIEG – Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos de Género
GRAFE Publicidade, Lda
OA – Ordem dos Advogados



CIEG (Interdisciplinary Centre For Gender Studies) was created in February 2012, integrating the network of research centres belonging to FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia) and the Institute of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lisboa (ISCSP-ULisboa). CIEG was evaluated as Excellent by the latest FCT evaluation process and is the only Portuguese centre dedicated specifically to gender studies.

CIEG counts with the collaboration of researchers from several national and international universities, who work gender issues from different perspectives and disciplines. CIEG has as main goals to develop research projects, to offer training, to publish scientific articles and to disseminate knowledge.





Financiamento



Parceiros

