



## Vulnerability of women in Mexican universities

Women's vulnerability is a topic studied across the social, political and cultural spectrum. We understand that these environments are mediated by organizations that are part of the structures of everyday life. Many scholars have built critical knowledge on the subject, focusing their analysis on different organizations of social life. The university has not been exempted from these questions. A growing number of women attend universities every year, populating the campuses as students, academics or administrators. This article analyzes the actions that universities have taken to reduce the vulnerability experienced by women and we highlight practices that have become normalized in these institutions.

According to the report "*Mujeres en la educación superior en México*", published in 2016 by the *Centro de Estudios para el adelanto de las Mujeres y la equidad de género de la Cámara de Diputados*, it was during the late 1960s and early 1970s when Mexican women began to access university life en masse. At that time, they made up about 17% of the enrollments in higher education. By 2018, women accounted for over 50% of enrollment in higher education (52% in postgraduate studies). Women's spaces have had a rapid growth; however, a question could be asked: has this growth been reflected in gender equality as well?

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During the last 10 years, university life in Mexico has experienced a series of movements and actions to draw attention to the vulnerability experienced by women as students, academic and administrative staff. These movements have emerged as a consequence of a community demand. Universities have institutionalized some remedial actions, mainly as a reaction to student, academic or administrative staff demands.

We want to draw attention here to one of the most significant spaces where vulnerability is still experienced, the university, as well as some of the actions that are formally or informally carried out to face it. In order to do this, we first discuss experiences in Mexican universities, focusing later on actions carried out at the specific case of *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California*. Finally, we describe our own and student experiences, as well as those from academics from private and public universities in Baja California.

### Entering the Mexican university

At the end of the 19th century, Mexican women gained access to the university. "Indecent and dangerous" were some

of the words that accompanied Matilde Montoya's attempts to study medicine. In the paper "*Matilde Petra Montoya Lafra-gua. Breve historia de una mexicana ejemplar*", the authors compile the difficulties experienced by who would eventually be the country's first female Doctor of Medicine.

Legislation on traditional family roles limited the position of women in medicine at that time. Matilde Montoya, who at the age of 16 worked as a midwife, was strongly questioned when she decided to study medicine. Her attempts to access to higher education when applying at *Escuela de Medicina de Puebla* and years later at *Escuela Nacional de Medicina* demonstrate that gender disqualifications were firmly in place and support for women who sought to overcome old-fashioned constraints and a prejudiced culture were nonexistent.

Matilde was noted for "daring"; she was branded as an "impudent woman", who only sought to "see corpses of naked men". Disqualification appears as one of the most prominent elements used to generate and/or enhance female vulnerability. In addition to disqualification in-



*Equal half. accortez.*

side and outside the *Escuela*, Matilde experienced a type of de facto administrative segregation. Particularly significant was the use of the Spanish term "*alumno*" (male student) to refer to her and not the term "*alumna*" (female student). Her registration in the *Escuela de San Ildefonso* to study non-revalidated subjects was rejected and, subsequently, her application to be examined, denied.



Tejiendo el 8M. Yalily Ramos Delgado.

Matilde Montoya wrote to the then-President of Mexico who, through the *Secretario de Ilustración Pública y Justicia*, issued “suggestions” to grant facilities to female students and allow them to sit for exams. In the second case, at the request of Matilde, the statutes of the *Escuela Nacional de Medicina* were updated allowing women Doctors of Medicine to graduate. However, this was questioned by part of the public that doubted Matilde’s abilities and pointed out that she “graduated by presidential decree”, not by her merits. However, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1887, Matilde Montoya prevailed and be-

came the first female medical doctor in the country.

The same story has been replicated before and after, with different names, in different countries, at different universities, but always with the same gender. It is a clear example of how women experience vulnerability in higher education.

### Women and universities in Mexico

A century later, the presence of women in universities is more relevant and important than ever; yet they continue to experience other types of vulnerability. The journalist Jessica Xantomila, in her article “*En seis sexenios, sólo ha habido rectoras en siete instituciones de educación superior*”, published in 2020, points out that 27 state public universities had not had, until 2018, a single female Rector in their six past administrations. Xantomila interviews Janette Góngora Soberanes (UAM Xochimilco), a gender studies scholar, who emphasizes that this dynamic is mainly due to “a culture of segregation and discrimination”.

The phenomenon of the “glass ceiling” in the Mexican university remains the tip of the iceberg and is justified by a

“disinterest” of women to apply to those positions of power. However, Rosa María Valles Ruiz, in “*¿Liderazgo transaccional o transformacional? El discurso de cinco rectoras de universidades mexicanas: una aproximación*”, published in 2019, points to the “double scrutiny” to which female Rectors are usually subjected as a significant cause of this segregation. This “double scrutiny”, in addition to the difficulties of work-life balance work-life, which affects more women than men given the “imposed” role of “caregivers”, are the main factors preventing women in Mexico from presenting themselves for university managerial roles.

Some research has indicated that the absence of women at the top of university hierarchies can generate the effect of a lack of insight when discussing and promoting policies to prevent gender discrimination. It is clear that women’s presence and participation in those roles are more than necessary. Women assuming managerial roles would contribute to making visible the difficulties faced by female academics and administrators at the university, an institution often traditionally considered as replete with gender



stereotypes. In effect, the glass ceiling is a net contributor to the reproduction of women's vulnerability.

Female students in Mexico have participated in diverse actions to address the vulnerability they experience during their university careers. In recent years, even during the Covid-19 pandemic, groups of students have emerged as a reaction to the apathy of universities to cope with women's demands. Many public protest actions have focused on evidencing student sexual harassment as an embedded practice at universities, while other actions have been undertaken to make visible how gender stereotypes are reproduced in the university students sphere. In a recent social media interaction, a student posted an eloquent testimony that illustrates this point: "[the professor] told us to distribute hand sanitizer because he said that women are better caretakers". These reactions seek to address unequal power relations, both vertical and horizontal, that have been evidenced during 2019 and 2020 as the consequence of a greater involvement of university women, such as Gloria Careaga Pérez, a university academic recognizes in social media.

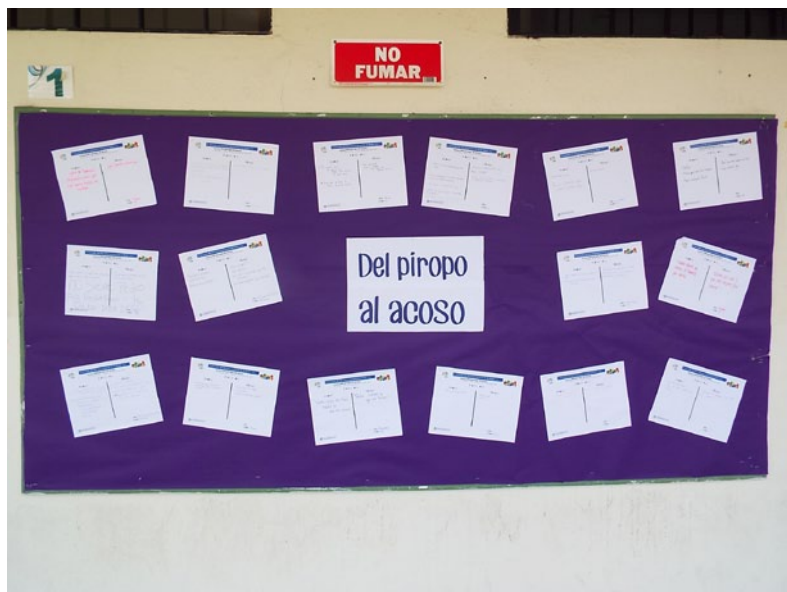
However, these reactions have also increased the vulnerability of those who speak out and who consequently face misogyny for their comments and public display. The intention is to silence them, as Rosa María Ramírez de Garay denounced in the webinar *"Violencia de Género y Hostigamiento Sexual: Avances y Desafíos"*. Magali Barreto described in her paper *"Violencia de género y denuncia pública en la universidad"*, published in 2017, the way allegations of harassment are characterized by shame, stigmatization of those who dare to break the silence, and fear of revictimization. The consequence is the reproduction of vulnerability in other forms. Women at universities are vulnerable when they stay silent, and vulnerable when voicing their discrimination. In this way, we can understand how vulnerability is a phenomenon that can be recycled and reused in many ways, even amidst attempts to fight against it. So, the determination for change must be radical and profound, tearing down stereotypes and moving the primary social structures, and resilience needs to be at the forefront of all initiatives.



*Intervención morada. Yalily Ramos Delgado.*

### **Actions and experiences in Baja California universities to eradicate women vulnerabilities**

Universities in the borderland area of Baja California are not left out of the major events of recent decades. Campaigns such as the "#MeToo" Twitter campaign, initiated in 2017, reached universities and served as tools to denounce misogynistic and sexist behaviors that prevail in daily practices. The campaign served as one of the antecedents that exerted pressure on university governments to create con-



*Del piropo al acoso. Isis Díaz Carrión.*

crete actions aimed at addressing cases of gender vulnerability, in particular violence against women.

In a special edition of the university gazette (no. 452) published on November 17, 2020, the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California*, through its current Rector Daniel Octavio Valdez Delgadillo, declared the intention of generating concrete actions on gender equality and addressing cases of gender violence. The text was based on the guidelines of UN Women, and the Convention on the Elimination of

all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which establishes guidelines for “the achievement of equality between men and women through ensuring equal access to development, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres”.

It also follows the suggestions made by CEDAW to Mexican schools in 2018 during the report made to UN Women. It was recommended that the Mexican State create effective mechanisms to compensate the absence of protocols for prevention, punishment and eradication of sexual abuse, harassment, and any other forms of violence in schools at all educational levels. UABC points out the importance of understanding the different forms of violence that occur in the interpersonal relations of power that are generated between academics, administrators and other university officials and students in a general sense. It assumes the following definition of gender violence:

“Gender-based violence can occur in different ways, either passively, where aggression is not physically observed, since it is psychological/emotional, and actively, where aggressions are

observable and measurable. While it is true that gender-based violence is not exclusive to women, it is a phenomenon that affects all people, but women have historically been the most vulnerable group to gender-based violence. Violence is found everywhere and among all interpersonal power relations, but in many cases these cases are little known, so it leads to them being ignored and forgotten.”

The initiatives carried out by the *Universidad de Chile*, the *Universidad Costa Rica*, and the *Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú*, among others, have established precedents regarding how to address violence and vulnerabilities against women on university campuses. In Mexico, we highlight the initiatives of *Universidad Autónoma de Mexico*, *Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila*, *Universidad Veracruzana*, and *Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán*, institutions that have created departments, protocols, and specific dependencies to address cases of gender violence and push gender equality forward.

The proceedings to create the *Comité de prevención y atención a casos de violencia de género* at UABC (COPAVIG)

states that its function is to regulate and act in order to address any case of gender violence, as well as to eradicate any form of discrimination and violence due to gender. To this end, it suggests the creation of protocols for cases of sexual harassment and abuse and gender discrimination. In the case of gender violence, it assumed the protocols of the *Laboratorio de Género del Instituto de Investigaciones culturales-Museo de UABC*, defined in 2017. A digital app “NO MÁS” was created, as a tool for making complaints and denouncing these practices. In addition, a zero tolerance policy towards cases of gender violence, non-revictimization, and sanctions were implemented against people who were considered responsible for such acts.

The creation of the COPAVIG and the care protocols came just as the Covid-19 pandemic began. As a result of the health crisis, courses migrated to virtual rooms and digital gender violence become evident, an issue that had already been considered among other forms of violence experienced by women in universities. Some examples include the increase of sexist and *machista* comments, sexual harassment experienced by female students

during online virtual class and misogynist “jokes” questioning women’s ability or capacity using their bodies to either exemplify or criticize their lack of ability. These practices were generated as a result of the physical separation that characterizes virtuality.

Despite the intention of Mexican universities to regulate and institutionalize a policy of non-tolerance towards gender violence, no practical consequences have been evidenced. No concrete actions have been taken by academics, administrators, students, or other officials of the university to avoid sexist, misogynistic and violent attitudes. These attitudes seem embedded into the regional culture and based on socio-cultural practices. Sexist, hurtful, derogatory, and prejudiced comments continue to abound in classrooms and other university spaces. The eradication of the discrediting and harassment of women requires awareness campaigns and a deeper level of cultural change.

### Experiences in universities in Baja California

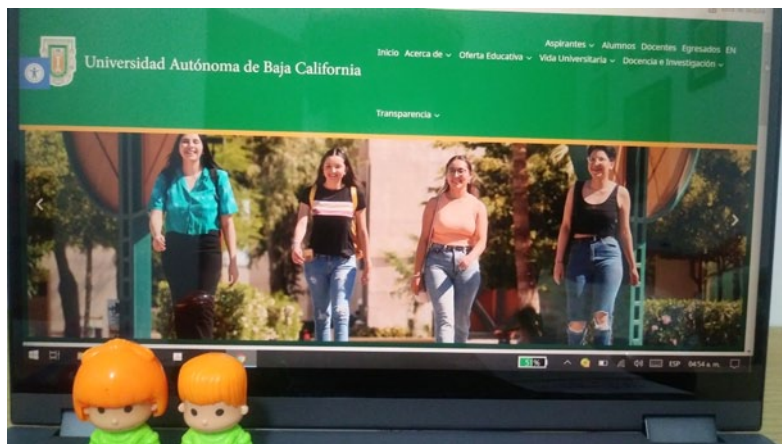
A significant number of the efforts of universities in Baja California to minimize



*Todas intentamos tomar el control. wendyjuerslopez.*

any form of vulnerability of women have been the result of female academics’ initiatives, whose protagonists have seen how the topic is generating more interest in recent years. Although each academic unit has its own dynamics, at the *Facultad de Turismo y Mercadotecnia* there is an increasing awareness of the subject. One of us, Isis Arlene Díaz Carrión, remembers just starting to work at the university and





Vulnerablxs. Isis Díaz Carrión.

seeing a mural in the corridors highlighting the role of science in society. Among the six personalities selected, none was a woman. Even though, this *Facultad* had what could be considered *feminized careers*, not even winners of Nobel prizes such as Marie Curie, Maria Goeppert-Mayer or Julieta Fierro were named. However, years later, the need to include equity and inclusion began to grow in conferences and scientific meetings.

In recent years we have seen invitations to conferences and workshops more frequently coming to address the vulnerabilities experienced by women at universities. The last two semesters the number of tutors who were interested in carrying

out the course of "Gender Equity" offered by UABC at the undergraduate level has grown significantly. Talks on the subject, usually at the initiative of students, have also increased in number. They are small actions, but they are important.

Increasing the visibility of women and promoting, for example, sisterhood spaces, in order to avoid isolation as actions to counteract vulnerability have made some positive impact. This is important because situations of harassment and sexual assault continue to be experienced by students. That is why we consider it relevant, as academics, to talk about the subject with students in open spaces and to include these conversations as part of the curricula. We ask ourselves: Do we teach them not to violate? When we provide training to companies, do we talk about the importance of avoiding making women vulnerable and subject to violence? When we investigate, do we propose actions and strategies to avoid vulnerability? Do we do anything else to raise awareness on the issue? Do we know what types of vulnerability occur in the sectors where our graduates will be eventually work? And do we do something to eradicate it? Or do we

hide it by ignoring it, and thus contribute to making the dimension of the problem invisible? As we said at the beginning: this is a complicated and unpleasant issue, but when the dignity of people is at risk, it is important to address it.

### Experiencing vulnerability: Ramos' experience

When Yalili Ramos (one of the authors of this newsletter) arrived at the *Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales-Museo de la UABC* as a graduate student, in 2016, she realized that there was no gender parity. Most of the academic staff were men, research groups were led by men, and the institute was managed by men; the few women who worked there belonged mostly to the administrative staff. Another aspect that caught Ramos' attention was that although the *Laboratorio de Género* already existed, there were no lines of research that specifically worked on the issue of women and women's vulnerability in universities.

By 2018, the number of female students interested in completing master and doctoral studies on topics related to a gender or with a feminist perspective had

grown exponentially, which contributed to the establishment of gender studies as a line of research in the curriculum of both postgraduate programs. Additionally, the *Laboratorio de Género* created a network of gender studies that facilitated collaboration among students and researchers from different universities. Since then, there has also been a greater effort on the part of the institution to deliver studies from a gender perspective and the incorporation of more qualified personnel with expertise in these areas of research.

During Ramos' experience as a student, she came to know about some sit-

uations of classmates harassed by male students, and she listened to other stories of teachers harassing students. Cases like these were not always reported or dealt according to the protocols established at the institutional level, which is due to the fact that the channels of action were not yet well known. On the other hand, she noted the gratifying experience that in 2017 female students, academics and administrators united to craft and sign a statement in favor of the reduction of vulnerabilities towards women as a way to commemorate March 8th.

In a general sense, Ramos believes that the institution that she considers her *alma mater* has been moving towards an awareness of issues of vulnerability because there is more and more interest in training professionals who engage in critical sociocultural analysis through feminist and gender lenses. However, the structures remain traditional and unwieldy, and the time for claiming victory is still far away.

Students of different campuses of the *CETYS Universidad* in Mexicali, Ensenada and Tijuana have pointed out that there is no protocol established or approved by



*Tendedero sobre violencias.* Yalily Ramos Delgado.

the institution. In cases when the reputation of the university is compromised, measures such as suspending the professor or the student are taken. Female students who studied in the field of engineering, both undergraduate and graduate, point out that in their groups the number of men was always much higher than

*Experiencias de mujeres.* Yalily Ramos Delgado.







*Donde ponemos al patriarcado. Isis Díaz Carrión.*

women. One of them explained that in her group there were only two women, and this happens for most groups of students studying engineering. For these students, this is a symptom of the cultural and institutional differences created by the area of knowledge. Students' narrative are populated by anecdotes about humiliating or discrediting comments towards them and about the fear of receiving negative feedback after sharing their intention to raise complaints, due to the top-down power relations that exist in the institution. However, these students also state that when they have made complaints of this nature, they have been escalated and positive responses have been given.

### Remaining tasks

Much progress has been made in recent years in terms of gender equality and prevention of and attention to assault, harassment and gender violence at the Autonomous University of Baja California. However, there are still many pending tasks and points on which to continue to focus in order to eradicate discriminatory attitudes towards women and reach a degree of respect for diversity. To achieve it, a review of the protocols must be made and their operation must be verified in real time, verifying that protocols address the realities that women experience within the university. In the case of universities that lack = such protocols, it is of the utmost importance that they urgently produce and apply one.

Work should also continue on the articulation between the committees that address gender-based violence, as well as the follow-up of cases of gender violence applying university regulations; so that there is consistency in the actions taken by the university in terms of the sanctioning of attitudes that violate women and that constitute cases of harassment, violence and assault. University statutes

must also be adapted to the language and perspective of gender equality assumed by the institution. We also recommend a broadening of campaigns that are part of the awareness policies on gender equality and gender violence within the framework of the university.

In addition to these pending tasks, we believe that universities should continue to work on social inclusion from an intersectional perspective; that is, attending not only to gender equality, but also taking into account other contexts such as the low percentage of indigenous women in universities and the scarce incorporation of returned migrants into university classrooms, to cite just two examples.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Yalily Ramos Delgado

Yalily Ramos Delgado is a research assistant in the Project: “Reducing Organisational Vulnerability of Women: Applying Organizational Research in Mexican-US Borderlands” (Newton Fund-British Council- Conacyt). She holds a PhD in Sociocultural Studies from the Institute of Cultural Research-Museum of the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (Mexico). Her main lines of research are migration and gender; migration policies, subjectivities, emotions-body and violence in migratory itineraries. Her latest publications are: “Cuban women in Mexicali: the reconfiguration of their female subjectivity, in 2018, in *Training and Research Itineraries in Social Sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean*, y “Cuban women: their social and political construction in Socialist Cuba”, in 2019 in *Intervention and social policy in Colombia, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay*.

### Isis Arlene Díaz Carrión

Isis Arlene Díaz Carrión is Associate Professor in the Facultad de Turismo y Mercadotecnia, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (Mexico). She holds a PhD in Human Geography from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain). Her research focuses on gender as well as tourism and the impact of the sustainability agenda on tourism. Her recent publications include: “Sisterhood to Promote the Rhizomatic Bodies of Mexican-mestiza Women Mountaineers” (2022) in *Gender, Place & Culture*; “Mexican women’s emotions to resist gender stereotypes in rural tourism work” (2021) in *Tourism Geographies*; “[Emotional embodiment to face street harassment during the practice of adventure activities in Mexico](#)”, in *Annals of Leisure Research*; and “Embodying Gender and Risk: Mountain Bike Tourism in Mexico” in the book *Tourism and Gender-Based Violence*.

### Hugo Gaggiotti

Hugo Gaggiotti is Professor at the University of the West of England, UK. He has a PhD in Anthropology and a PhD in Management. He was a foreigner at birth and has remained displaced all his life. The focus of his writing is on the intersections between rhetoric, rituals, liminality and the symbolic construction of the meaning of work in mobile transnational workers. He conducted his fieldwork for many years in the industrial, borderlands regions of Pindamonhangaba (Brazil), Ciudad Juarez (Mexico), Almaty (Kazakhstan) and currently in the US-Mexican borderlands of Baja California (British Council-Newton Fund Grant-Conacyt) and in the UK (British Academy-Leverhulme). His work has appeared in a range of interdisciplinary journals including *Culture and Organization*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *Journal of Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, *Leadership and Scripta Nova. Organizational Ethnography: An Experiential and Practical Guide* (with Pandeli and Sutherland) is his last book (published by Routledge). His own passions are the uses of abductive reasoning (Peirce) to DIY improvisations and spontaneous cooking.

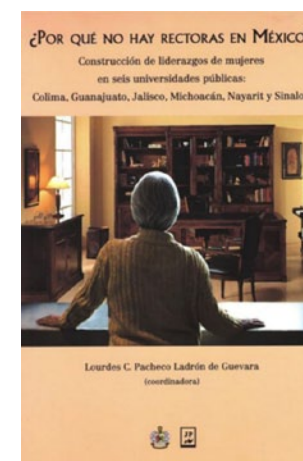
## FURTHER READING



Puente-Esparza, M. L., Briano-Turrent, G. C. y Ramírez-Flores, E. (2020) **El Techo de Cristal en Universidades Públicas de México** *Ciencias Administrativas*, 16(2), p. 88-101.



Vázquez, A. López, G. y Torres, I. (2021) **La violencia de género en las instituciones de educación superior: elementos para el estado del conocimiento** *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos*, 51(2), p. 299-326.



Pacheco Ladrón De Guevara, L. C. (coord.). (2021) **¿Por qué no hay rectoras en México? Construcción de liderazgos de mujeres en seis universidades públicas** México: Universidad de Colima, Juan Pablos Editor

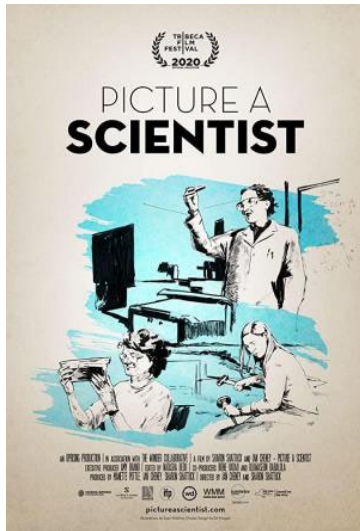
The aim of this study was to identify the level of women's participation in leading positions in the public universities of Mexico during 2018. The data was obtained through the websites of 37 public universities, as well as other websites related to higher education such as CONACYT, ANUIES y ANFECA, using descriptive statistical techniques and correlations. The results show that gender equality was not achieved in leading positions at the central level, with an average of 36% of female representation. The conclusions of the study say as well that the size of the university is not significantly related in the level of inclusion of women in leadership positions.

The aim of this study was to analyse the academic literature on gender violence in Higher Education Institutions (IES), with the goal of systematising the revised work to guide a critical reflexion about the ways in which violence happened in IES. The methodology used was descriptive discourse analysis. The social relevance of the proposal is that the studies on gender violence require an interdisciplinary perspective. Therefore, because of its socialising role, education is a key area to promote equality between men and women.

This book portrays the inequality and the gender gap in access, permanence, promotion, and leadership positions between men and women in Mexican public universities. The aim is to provide strategies and actions to promote new models of leadership and a greater number of women in leading positions to bring a change in institutional management that guarantees gender equality. The research took place in the University of Colima, the University of Guanajuato, the University of Guadalajara, the Autonomous University of Nayarit, the University of Michoacana of San Nicolás de Hidalgo, and the Autonomous University of Sinaloa.

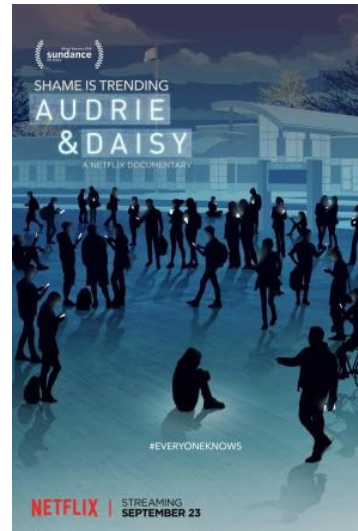


## FURTHER VIEWING



Cheney, I. & Shattuck, S. (2020)  
*Mujeres en la Ciencia*  
 [Documentary]  
 USA, 97 min

This film is about the movement of women researchers that is writing a new chapter for women in science. The biologist Nancy Hopkins, the chemist Raychelle Burks, and the geologist Jane Willenbring take the audience on a deep journey through their own experiences in science, which range from subtle snubs to brutal harassment. Throughout the movie we meet brilliant researchers, including social scientists, neuroscientists, and psychologists, and we see them in different areas of their lives and jobs, both in crowded laboratories as well as in their fieldwork in Antarctica. These characters show a new perspective on how to make science more diverse, fair, and open to everyone.



Shenk, J. & Cohen, B. (2016)  
*Audrie & Daisy*  
 [Documentary]  
 USA, 95 min

One night Audrie goes to a party with her friends. There she tries alcohol for the first time, and she passes out. Three guys -long-time friends of hers- undress and rape her while they take pictures. The day after she cannot recall what happened until she finds out that the pictures are circulating across her high school. Though Audrie's story this documentary shows the effects of cyber bullying among teenagers and their community.



Peet, A. & Wyman, A. J. (2021)  
*La directora*  
 [TV Series]  
 USA, 30 min

This fictional series tells the story of Dr. Ji-Yoon Kim, the first woman to assume the title of Chair at the English department in a prestigious university in the US. In her position, she will have to face the challenges of leading an institution in crisis while balancing her professional and personal lives. The show focuses too on the generational problems in the university ecosystem, which happen not only among professors and students, but also among new professors and older ones who, even if they are the ones who have fewer students in their classes, resist new teaching methods more than anyone.

- [Auge del acoso sexual en colegios y universidades británicas](#) [Rise of sexual harassment in British schools and universities]. Deutsche Welle Español (2021).
- [Paran y marchan en la UNAM por violencia y acoso](#) [Protest in UNAM for violence and harassment]. Reporte Índigo (2018).
- [¿Cómo avanzamos para enfrentar el acoso sexual en la Universidad de Chile?](#) [How can we face sexual harassment in the University of Chile]. Universidad de Chile.
- [Campaña Únete UABC](#). Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales UABC, Cultura UABC y Vicerrectorías UABC (2021).
- [Como Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, nos sumamos a la Campaña internacional ÚNETE de las Naciones Unidas](#). Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales UABC, Cultura UABC y Vicerrectorías UABC (2021).

## AFIN NEWS

### Summer course: "From protection to inclusion"

The application for a place in the Summer School "From protection to inclusion: Creating more inclusive schools for children in alternative care and adopted children", which will take place between August 29 and September 2, at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), is now open. Its main objective is to present innovative approaches that facilitate the development of inclusive practices and appropriate responses to the needs of students who have experienced early adversity.

This activity is organised under the auspices of the [European project Brighter Future](#), in which an international team is working to, among other things, develop a training module that can be taught in the faculties of Education, in order to provide teachers with the foundations for their professional practice that will allow them to better care for those who have suffered experiences of adversity at an early age and, in particular, for children living under the care of the State (either in centers or in foster care) and adopted children. The Summer School is aimed at graduate students, university teaching and research staff, and professionals in the field of education or working in the field of childhood.

Participation will be accredited with a certificate equivalent to 2 ECTS issued by the University of Groningen. The European Union subsidizes this activity, so that participants will only have to pay a fee of 150 euros to cover the costs of meals and materials. Those enrolled in a program at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona or the Università degli Studi di Verona can apply for a scholarship to cover registration, travel and accommodation costs.

All the information about the Summer School and how to apply for a place in it is available [on the Brighter Future project website](#), where you can also download in PDF the first materials developed in the framework of the project.



## Adoption, diversity and citizenship

Nadja Monet, member of AFIN, published the book chapter “*Les paradoxes de l’adopté: des corps extraordinaires au sein de la nation catalane*” in the book *Pratiques de la diversité et de la citoyenneté*, de Bianca Botea y Dana Popescu-Jourdy (Editions des Archives Contemporaines, 2022). In the chapter she elaborates on the influence of international adoption in the making of the Catalan nation and its effects on adoptees. What kind of bond is established between the category “citizens” and the rest of the society? Focusing on this aspect, the chapter discusses the different mechanisms of connection and disconnection between adoptees, their adoptive families and society.

## AFIN Seminars

During March and April there were four AFIN Seminars. The 10<sup>th</sup> of March Dr. Hugo Gaggiotti (UWE, England) and Dr. Isis Díaz-Carrión (UABC, Tijuana, Mexico) explored the organisational vulnerability of women, focusing on organisations working on tourism in the frontier between Mexico and US. The 21 of march, Vanessa Mantilla (FPU grant, UAB) and Josep Perelló (doctor at the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau) talked about endometriosis, a disease related to the menstrual cycle affecting women of reproductive age. The 7<sup>th</sup> of April, Dr. Santiago Insausti, María Zambrano researcher, elaborated the history of gay masculinities in Latin America. Finally, the 12 of April, Dr. Burcu Mutlu (Istanbul Ozuegin University, Turkey) centred on the reproductive mobilities related to gamete donation of Turkish citizens towards the north of Cyprus.

The seminars are available at the [YouTube AFIN Channel](#).

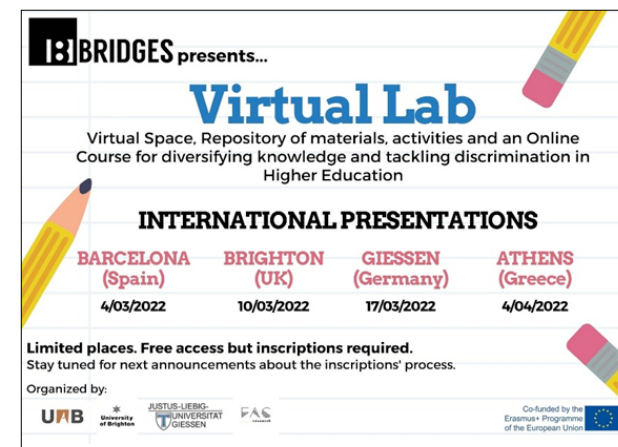
## BRIDGES presents its virtual lab to four European cities

In March and April the team of the Erasmus+ BRIDGES project has presented publicly its Virtual Lab (VL) at four European cities participating in the project: Barcelona (Spain), Brighton (UK), Giessen (Germany) and Athens (Greece). The activities that took place in the event introduced some of the tools and exercises offered by the Virtual Lab.

Virtual Lab from the project BRIDGES works as the main dissemination tool and as a digital repository of its processes, activities and results: the Tool Kid with definitions of key concepts; the open course for an antiracists and feminist education, and soon, the monographic dedicated to the methodology of narrative production.

We invite anyone to check out and use the materials, tools and activities offered by the Virtual Lab. You can also share your experience with a particular application of these resources to your education contexts through any of the communication channels of BRIDGES: [VL-web](#), and social media (Facebook: @bldgHEbridges / Twitter: @bldg\_he\_bridges / Instagram: @bldg\_he\_bridges).

Remember that you can subscribe to the quarterly Newsletter of the project to receive the latest news of BRIDGES in your email through the website of the project.





## Organizational Ethnography: An Experiential and Practical Guide

The 7th of March, at the University of the West of England (Bristol), there was the presentation of the book *Organizational Ethnography: An Experiential and Practical Guide*, edited by doctors Jenna Pandeli, Neil Sutherland, and Hugo Gaggiotti, published by Routledge. Bruna Alvarez, Estel Malgosa and Diana Marre participated with the chapter "Ethnography on sensitive topics: children's sexuality education in Spain". It analyses the methodology of SexAFIN project about sexual, affective, and reproductive education at primary schools, a project that has been running since 2017 at different schools in Catalonia.

Further information: [about the book](#); [about SexAFIN](#).



## Austerity and Altered Lifecourse Seminar Series

On April 20<sup>th</sup> the project Austerity and Altered Lifecourse launched a series of seminars. This first event gathered more than 40 professionals from different European and English universities, including Manchester University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. The event provided an interesting exchange which led to the need to explore the meaning of austerity in different cultural contexts and life stages, especially for youth. This series of seminars which will take place fortnightly will focus on issues such as housing, socio-political breakdowns, creative methods, employment, and the social reproduction in a context of austerity. They will build an interregional network of researchers, social organisations, and activists in our workspaces and beyond.

More information [at the event's link](#).

## Stories of trans childhood

Lucas Platero, member of AFIN, contributed the prologue to *Historias de la Infancia trans*, by Jules Gill-Peterson, published by Edicions Bellaterra S.L. and translated by Javier Sáez. In this work, Gill Peterson traces trans childhood long before the creation of the term "transsexual". He goes back to the beginning of the 20th century to analyse the process of the institutionalisation of medical care for trans children through the administration of hormones, body modification surgeries and name changes. This work undoubtedly contributes to a new understanding of the life and study of childhood in general and trans childhood in particular.



## Symposium on the construction of otherness

AFIN member Carolina Remorini coordinated the Symposium "The 'Other' in the Construction of Models of Human Development: Contributions from South America", at the Conference organised by the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD). It took place from 2-4 May in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. Based on empirical research in South American communities, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and combining approaches and methodologies, symposium participants discussed the scope and limits of models, instruments and practices in education, clinical practice and research on child growth and development, which are oriented under a concept of normality built from evidence limited to populations with very specific ethno-cultural, socio-demographic and biological characteristics. Through these exchanges, the Symposium became a space to reflect on how this leads to the invisibility of children from indigenous and/or marginalised populations in academic production and public policies. The contribution of anthropological data and the role of anthropologists in the debates on child development in relation to contemporary issues that affect the lives of children in the countries of the region were also recognised.

For more information, we invite readers to visit [the event's website](#).

## AGENDA

### I International Virtual SexAFIN Conference

From 13 to 15 July, the I International Virtual SexAFIN Congress will take place, entitled "(Re)thinking Comprehensive Sexuality Education from a gender perspective focused on children", organised by the AFIN Research Group of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

A distinguished group of experts in sexuality and childhood from different countries around the world will exchange research results and interdisciplinary perspectives to (re)think the sexuality education we offer.

#### Important dates:

- 25 May: Call for papers and posters ends.
- 6 June: Response to submitted proposals
- 27 June: Closure of Registration period

We encourage you to participate and submit your papers and posters before 25 May!

[Further information here.](#)



### AFIN Seminars

The following AFIN seminars are planned:

- May 12: Paola Galbany: "Enfermeras, hacia la visibilidad"
- June 9: Anindita Majumdar: "Ageing and Reproductive Decline in Assisted Reproductive Technologies in India: Mapping the 'Management' of Eggs and Wombs".