



“The mob and the whore”

“During the summer I was working as a youth worker in a public square. One day, a group of youngsters started to make a fuss and to organize themselves. When I approached them to see what was happening, they explained they wanted to beat up a girl who had passed by the square, because, according to them, she was a “slut” for uploading erotic images of herself on social media. Afterwards, I found out that many other girls in the neighborhood were doing the same, because they were all getting money for it. The group of youngsters I was working with were between 16 and 21 years old. Many of the girls who were uploading the images came from families at risk of social exclusion or were under state care.”

Public Square, Salut neighborhood, Badalona (Barcelona Metropolitan Area), summer 2018.

IDENTITIES OF THE NARRATOR AND THE PERSON(S) TRIGGERING THE SHOCK

THE NARRATOR

A 29 years old Catalan woman. She works with young people in social education and she's Caucasian.

THE OTHER PERSON(S)

Young people (men and women) from 17 to 23 years old. They are participants in the program the narrator is in charge of and they are unemployed.

SIMILARITIES / DIFFERENCES

The youngsters have different origins (Moroccans, Eastern Europeans...) and also a diversity of languages. This differentiates them from the narrator, just as their age, their employment status and their role in the program. What brings them closer to the narrator is their social classes (which are low, just as the narrator). Also, some people in this group are women.

CONTEXT

PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The situation happens in a public square, where the youth worker facilitates different leisure activities.

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT

There were other people in the square, either hanging around or passing by.

None of the people who were at the square took interest or intervened in the situation.

LARGER SOCIAL CONTEXT

Psychologically, it is summer and most youngsters are out on vacation.

Socially, the public square is a meeting place, especially for youngsters to socialize with each other. They feel owners of the space and there is a feeling of belonging towards both the square and the neighborhood.

PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIP, ANTECEDENTS

The fact that they are gathered in a public space – the square – makes them feel like they can get together and behave according to their own rules. They also feel that they can act violently with impunity and discretionally, since they are in a public space where there is no external institutional authority in the moment.

FRAMES OF REFERENCES OF THE NARRATOR

ANGER

IMPOTENCE

PITY FOR THE GIRL

INCOMPREHENSION

The fuss at the square made by the youngsters followed by them confessing they were planning to beat the girl up for putting “erotic” images of herself online.

Individual freedom: girls and women have the right to exercise freedom of choice regarding their body and personal image. When they are not allowed this choice, it is courageous for them to defend themselves.

Gender equality in sexuality: women have the right to express themselves sexually the way they want to. The narrator is concerned how this can affect the girl by used as an object in selling the images sent.

Protection of women from gender violence: it is important to protect women from gender violence.

Respect for physical and mental integrity: women (and anyone) should not receive threats to their physical and mental integrity of any kind and under any circumstance.

Online versus offline freedom: there are certain behaviors and practices that have a greater degree of freedom online than offline. For instance, getting naked online may be seen as less dangerous, because of the physical distance assumed online (not necessarily real).

FRAMES OF REFERENCES OF THE PERSON AT THE ORIGIN OF THE INCIDENT

The fuss at the square made by the youngsters followed by them confessing they were planning to beat the girl up for putting “erotic” images of herself online.

Respect for community sense of honor: when someone violates the norms of the community by losing self-respect, they are violating the community’s honor. When this happens, the community has the right – even obligation - to re-establish that honor.

There are private body parts: there are parts of the body that are private, and women who show these parts publicly are not respectable.

Re-establishment of the social order – this group questions the social norms and values of a wider society/law system as they implement their own ways to punish someone who doesn’t follow the norms of the group. (at the same time reproducing the gender norms of the mainstream society with its double standards in gender roles.)

Physical punishment as an acceptable disciplinary method: physical punishment is an acceptable means to solve a situation, to discipline and re-establish the social order.

Prostitution: making money off your body is prostitution. And prostitutes deserve punishment. Prostitution is not allowed, in fact it’s a great taboo of female roles.

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