

#MeToo. La ola de las multitudes conectadas feministas

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#MeToo: breaking the silence to build a collective narrative of resistance

Guiomar Rovira Sancho, with a PhD in Sociology and renowned for her research into social movements, feminism and digital communication, in *#MeToo. La ola de las multitudes conectadas feministas* (*#MeToo: The wave of connected feminist crowds*) presents us with a much-needed analysis of the disruptive impact of the #MeToo campaign. Continuing a career marked by the study of new forms of activism in the digital age, Rovira Sancho offers an in-depth look at this global phenomenon that transcended social media to irreversibly impact the political and social spheres. Her experience as an activist and her immersion in the feminist movement endow her analysis with a committed perspective.

The book explores the #MeToo phenomenon as an unexpected and radical political event. Rovira Sancho argues that this campaign not only marked a shift in the way we report and combat sexual violence, but also subverted the intended use of corporate digital platforms, which were traditionally oriented toward consumption and profit. By becoming a space for the mass aggregation of testimonies of sexual violence, #MeToo exposed a widespread and invisibilized reality, achieving a force that traditional means (institutional statements, commissions of inquiry and legal frameworks) had failed to achieve.

In the first chapter of the book, she argues for friendship as a political act: "The error in the system is the friendship between women. It is among friends that one takes

notice" (p.20), the author points out. Social media acts as a mirror that allows us to recognise the attacks we have suffered. In the second and third chapters, she discusses the mobilisations of women at a transnational level and their mass entry into the digital world, and reviews what she calls "femitags", a term used to describe feminist collective action. In the following chapters, she analyses the rise of #MeToo in the United States and its spread to different parts of the world, taking an in-depth look at the campaigns in Mexico and France. Regarding the Mexican movement, which the author knows very well, she highlights the emotional activism, support and care networks that have emerged around this campaign. In France, #MeToo has its own peculiarities: it begins with the hashtag #BalanceTonPorc and, later, allegations of incest (#MeTooInceste) gained prominence. The author also reviews the careers of some of the women who started the hashtag campaigns on social media and, finally, reflects on the transformative power of this movement, the criticisms it has received and the misogynistic reaction it has triggered.

One of the most notable aspects of Rovira Sancho's analysis is her emphasis on the nature of "direct action" and "hacking" typical of the digital culture that #MeToo also used. By bypassing the formal institutions responsible for addressing sexual violence (courts, NGOs, care centres), the campaign burst onto the digital public scene with unprecedented force. The accumulation of personal accounts, in which the alleged attackers were exposed, generated unprecedented collective awareness and social pressure. This process, as the author points out,

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occurred in parallel with the street protests denouncing femicide with chants of “They’re killing us” and “I do believe you”, demonstrating a synergy between virtual and in-person protests.

The book’s central thesis revolves around the idea that #MeToo, while emerging as a wave of connected individual testimonies, transcended its digital origins to promote specific changes in the real world and contribute to a collective discourse on gender-based violence, which has partially altered society’s collective imagination. This wave involved a mass breaking of the silence around the pain and harm, which previously had been experienced in hushed tones or in solitude. The density of the silence in which this violence tends to settle in patriarchal logic is correlated to its magnitude. In this case, however, as the author says, the “aggregative effect of harm” revealed a massive diversity of violence, weaving a powerful plural narrative that expresses the harm, but also the rage. This plural form modified the emotional grammar: it allowed the expression of anger, and gave new meaning to the sense of shame and fear. Furthermore, it focused on where the responsibility for the violence lay, shifting the blame away from those who suffer it. #MeToo “turns the spotlight around” and specifically exposes the violence perpetrated by powerful men or by men who, using their naturalised privileges, are aggressors in the family environment, a form of violence that is even more heavily silenced.

Rovira Sancho explores how this digital mobilisation generated pressure that forced a review of laws and public policies, demanding more effective responses to gender-based violence. However, the author also emphasises that #MeToo demands responses that go beyond existing legal frameworks, requiring a profound cultural transformation and a sustained commitment to combating impunity.

In her analysis, the author examines in detail the power dynamics at play during the campaign, the way social media facilitated the breaking of the silence, and the construction of a collective narrative of resistance. She also explores the challenges and complexities of #MeToo, including debates about justice in the digital space, the risk of media lynching and the need to ensure fair and equitable trials.

The work is based on a solid theoretical foundation and a rigorous analysis of contemporary social and digital dynamics. Although Rovira Sancho does not take an in-depth look at quantitative data, the strength of her argument lies in her qualitative interpretation of the phenomenon and her ability to connect #MeToo with broader debates about feminism, technology and politics. The bibliography she used reflects a deep understanding of gender studies, social movements and digital communication.

In conclusion, *#MeToo. La ola de las multitudes conectadas feministas* (*#MeToo: The wave of connected feminist crowds*), by Guiomar Rovira Sancho, comes as

an essential work when it comes to understanding the magnitude and implications of this global movement. The author’s research is particularly valuable, offering a rich and detailed account of digital feminist activism, both in the context of #MeToo and in the periods before and after it. In a fast-paced system like the one we currently have, where “turbocapitalism” tends to erode the feminist memory, this book stands as a much-needed exercise in reflection and perspective. Her lucid and well-argued analysis offers valuable insights into how digital technologies can be reappropriated by social movements in order to challenge power structures and thus generate meaningful change. Rovira Sancho highlights #MeToo as a disruptive and massive political event, which erupted unexpectedly and brought women’s voices into the public eye. The book documents how this movement broke the silence about the pain and harm experienced in solitude, revealing the magnitude of the violence and helplessness generated by a patriarchal justice system. Furthermore, it highlights the way #MeToo, by turning the spotlight on the perpetrators, managed to transform the traditional equation that blamed the victims. The clarity of its narrative and the relevance of its subject matter make it a highly recommended read for academics, activists, media professionals and indeed anyone interested in understanding the dynamics of contemporary feminism and the impact of social media in the fight against gender-based violence.