***Sexual Violence and Harassment in the Brussels Nightlife: A Qualitative Study of Survivor Testimonials on Social Media***

The Privacy Policy provides transparency regarding the processing of personal data in the context of the study.

Since this study is based on:

- pre-existing data

whereby asking for prior consent is not reasonably workable, VUB bases this processing of personal data on the public interest.

This Privacy Policy is published on the RHEA website. Below you can find more information about the study and how it will proceed practically. If you want additional information, you can always contact the researcher or his/her supervisor.

Contact details researcher(s) and supervisor

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1. **Purpose of the study**

This study is part of doctoral thesis on “Development of a Citizen-led Intervention to Address Sexual Violence and Harassment (SVH) in the Urban Night of Brussels”. This doctoral project has three phases. Phase 1 consists of studying SVH in the context of the Brussels urban night setting, and understanding the challenges and support structures for violence prevention. In Phase 2, Brussels residents and night stakeholders will be engaged to co-develop a preventive intervention for bystander training and awareness promotion. In Phase 3, the intervention will be pilot tested and evaluated through a mixed-methods approach.

As part of the first exploratory phase of the project, individual’s experiences of SVH and seeking support will be studied through a range of data collection methodologies, such as interviews, group discussions, city walks and social media analyses. Social media has proven instrumental to generating public awareness about SVH, with violence survivors sharing their experiences through the #metoo campaign. In the context of the Brussels nightlife, an Instagram account called ‘Balance ton bar’ drew public attention to the issue of SVH by sharing testimonials from survivors.

The present study intends to qualitatively analyse these testimonials to develop a deeper understanding about the experiences of violence and the challenges and facilitators faced by survivors. The insights from this qualitative study will be used to inform the development of an intervention to prevent SVH in the urban night of Brussels.

1. **Who can participate in the study**

The study will use testimonials published on the social media account ‘Balance ton Bar’. The individuals who submitted these testimonials are the participants of the study.

1. **Practical course of the study and completion/completion of the questionnaire**

Publication of the testimonials (data) on the social media account ‘Balance ton Bar’ for public access will be considered as practical completion.

1. **Possible risks and inconveniences - measures taken to mitigate them**

The study uses data that is already publicly available on social media in the form of testimonials. These testimonials are published on a social media account without any identifying information. Hence the risks to participation are minimum. The main risk to be considered is that the testimonial may contain information that can be traced back to an individual. The researchers will remove such details when collecting the data from the social media account.

1. **Advantages**

The results of the study will be used to inform the development of an intervention to prevent violence in the Brussels urban night setting. This intervention will aim to create a safer environment and benefit the broader society.

1. **Privacy and confidentiality**

First, you should know that as a researcher I have a duty of confidentiality regarding the data collected. This means that I undertake, for example in the context of a publication or conference, never to reveal your name or other data that could identify you. Individual results are also never published.

Second, the collection and processing of your data becomes possible because I conduct academic scientific research, which serves the public interest. A processing of personal data based on the public interest is permitted by Art. 6.1.e AVG. Scientific research serves the advancement of knowledge for the benefit of society and has been recognized within the teaching and research mission of VUB, including from the Codex Hoger Onderwijs.

The collection and processing of data is done in accordance with the legal principles imposed by the new European General Data Protection Regulation (AVG)1 in force since May 25, 2018. I Danielle Fernandes, oversee the correct processing of your personal data and the information obligation that accompanies it.

This information obligation means that I must inform you about:

1. What personal data I collect from you, specifically: your testimonial of violence that was published on the ‘Balance ton Bar’ Instagram account with the location in which this encounter occured.
2. That the VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, CBE 449.012.406) acts as controller of your data.
3. That the data is collected and processed in the context of the purpose of the above-mentioned study. In accordance with the relevant legislation, the data collected as part of the study will be kept for 5 years.'
4. That I may only use your personal data for scientific purposes.
5. That you have the right to access and correct your data. You also have the right to erasure of your data, to restrict its processing, the right to object to its processing and the right to transfer your data to third parties. If you have any questions, please contact the researchers.
6. That your data will be viewed only by the researchers named above and will not be shared with other institutions.
7. Your data will be kept and secured in accordance with the VUB guidelines.
8. Should you wish to exercise your rights or should you have further questions concerning your rights and the processing of your personal data, you can always contact the VUB data protection officer: dpo@vub.be.
9. The following protection measures are taken to guarantee your privacy:

* When your data was collected from the ‘Balance ton bar’ Instagram account, it had already been pseudonymized by the account holder. Thus, the researchers did not have access to identifying details of each testimonial.
* The testimonials were published on social media with the name of the nightlife establishment where the incident occurred. To prevent identification, the researchers will remove the name of the nightlife establishments when publishing the results of the study.
* The researchers will identify testimonials that can be traced back to an individual, such as testimonials that mention a birth date or names. These details will be removed when preparing the data for analysis and will not be used in any published material.
* The testimonials will only be stored on SharePoint of the VUB, which has strict access conditions and offers a high degree of protection.

1. Finally, you also have the right to file a complaint about how your data is handled. You can do this with the Belgian supervisory authority responsible for enforcing data protection legislation, specifically:

Gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit (GBA)

Drukpersstraat 35

1000 Brussel

Tel. +32 2 274 48 00

e-mail: contact@apd-gba.be

Website: [www.gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit.be](http://www.gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit.be)

1. **Declaration of the researcher**

I, the undersigned Fernandes, Danielle researcher, certify that I have verbally provided the necessary information regarding this study as well as a copy of the information document to the participant.

I confirm that no pressure was exerted on the participant to get him/her to agree to participate in the study and I am willing to answer any additional questions.

I confirm that I work in accordance with the ethical principles as stated in "The code for scientific research in Belgium" and the ethical principles within my specific research discipline.

I confirm that I work in accordance with the legal obligations regarding the proper processing of personal data as stated in "General Data Protection Regulation (AVG)".

Fernandes, Danielle, 25/01/2023