

Call for participants

Research into university policies regarding (sexual) harassment and (un)safety in the field

Kiki Bijleveld

Dear reader,

My name is Kiki Bijleveld and I am a master student Cultural Anthropology, specializing in Sociology of Policy in Practice at the University of Leiden. In collaboration with LOVA's 'Safety in the Field' working group, I will conduct research into experiences of (sexual) harassment and other forms of unsafety among researchers during their fieldwork research, exploring what is being done in terms of providing support by Dutch universities. This research will take place from the beginning of January till the end of March 2022. More specifically, I plan on researching both the experiences of (sexual) harassment, and how experiences as such are handled by universities once reported to supervisor(s) and/or department.

Even though sexual harassment has gotten more and more attention over the past few years due to the #MeToo movement, this topic is rather neglected when it comes to the field, despite the fact that roughly 70 percent of all women researchers have said to experience (sexual) harassment during their fieldwork period (Clancy et al. 2014). This asks for an investigation into both the experiences of (sexual) harassment (which also consists of its aftermath and the university response) on the one hand, and the universities' protocol regarding researchers' safety on the other hand. A thorough, in-depth analysis

of researchers' experiences may provide a good overview of how (sexual) harassment in the field is experienced, and what is desired when it comes to university support or protocol. I will investigate Dutch universities' protocol regarding researchers' safety abroad, which ideally consists of appropriate preparation beforehand and fitting support and care during and after fieldwork. I plan on collecting the data through mixed methods: for detailed information into the experiences of researchers I will make use of in-depth interviews. I will also make use of a survey which will be sent out to a broader public, to explore how widespread the problem of (sexual) harassment in social research is. Furthermore, I will conduct online research to find out how easily one can get information on where to go, or whom to contact, if an experience of (sexual) harassment was to occur, which serves as a 'follow the procedure' process. Further, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with university policy making officials. These interviews will hopefully shed light on the current policies or protocol regarding experiences of (sexual) harassment during fieldwork, and the reasoning, motivation behind those policies.

My aim is to translate my findings into a report that details an overview of the current state of affairs and recommendations for what practices need to change in order to provide the researchers with preparation and support that suffices. This is in my opinion not only a matter of researchers' rights, but also vital for the sake of science, as an unsafe research environment has its implications not only for responsible and ethical data collection, but also for researchers and their academic careers.

In order to successfully conduct this research, I rely upon people who are willing to cooperate. Do you have any experience or knowledge when it comes to (sexual) harassment or other forms of unsafety during fieldwork? Or do you have any knowledge or experiences with university policy regarding this topic? Are you willing to cooperate by having a chat or an interview with me? Please contact me by using the Safety in the Field mail (safety@lova.network). It should be noted

the sensitivity of this research topic is taken into account. Participants will not be asked to share more information than they are willing to and all cooperating participants will be guaranteed anonymity as all personally identifiable information will be protected.

Thank you in advance!

Best,
Kiki Bijleveld