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Revenge porn:
the concept and practice of combatting nonconsensual sexual
images in Europe

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Abstract

There have been numerous high profile instances of nonconsensual sexual images, or ‘revenge porn’, within the EU in recent years, and growing social and political awareness of its existence. However, previous research focusing on the online violations of human rights has included little emphasis towards the impact of a horizontal relationship, and the potential for response. This thesis attempts to rectify this omission by considering the defining aspects of revenge porn, impacts for those affected, how far we can consider revenge porn ‘gendered’ or an act of violence, and whether it is a violation of human dignity. Building upon this, national and possible regional responses are weighed in turn. The existing revenge porn laws in the UK are measured for efficacy and impact, in contrast to the current data protection laws in Italy and the recent case of Tiziana Cantone. We then turn to the potential for a regional response from the EU; data protection laws, the right to be forgotten, and ratification of the Istanbul Convention are analysed through the lens of a potential regional revenge porn response. These areas combine and lead us toward an overarching realisation of the actors required, and next steps needed, to combat revenge porn within the EU.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of contents	iii
List of abbreviations	iiii
1. Introduction and definitions.....	1
1.1 Methodology and chronology	4
1.2 Limitations	6
1.3 Ethical considerations	7
1.4 Definitions of terms	8
1.4.1 Defining ‘Revenge Porn’	8
1.4.2 Victims or Survivors	11
2. How damaging is revenge porn?	13
2.1 The online isn’t ‘real’	13
2.2 Anonymity and the comments section	14
2.3 A picture is worth a thousand words	15
2.4 Permanent shaming and intent	16
2.5 Are nonconsensual sexual images gendered?	18
2.6 Are nonconsensual sexual images a form of violence?	23
2.7 What are the impacts for those affected?	29
2.8 A violation of human dignity?	34
3. National responses: the UK and Italy	37
3.1 The UK’s revenge porn legislation	37
3.2 Italy and the case of Tiziana Cantone	42
3.3 A comparison and next steps	46
4. Regional protection: The EU	47
4.1 EU and the internet today	47
4.2 The right to be forgotten	52
4.3 Gendered violence and the EU	60
4.4 Impact and next steps	66
Conclusions	68
Bibliography	70

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